



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
January 2011**

**Media Studies**

**MEST2**

**(Specification 2570)**

**Unit 2: Creating Media**

***Report on the Examination***

---

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2011 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

**Copyright**

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).  
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

## Introduction

This summer a total of xxx candidates submitted work for assessment from xx centres. The small number of entries reflects that for many candidates this is an opportunity to re-work and re-submit work from last year. It should be noted it is expected that candidates resubmitting in January should submit improved work.

Brief 1 was again the most popular from the choices provided. Perhaps surprisingly, given the fact it has only been available since September, a few students completed the new Brief 3. All three platforms were worked on across the briefs although broadcast was a less popular choice for brief 2.

There is evidence that some centres are being very prescriptive with all candidates working on the same brief and, at times, the same tasks. Although not common, some centres are even dictating specifics such as the genre for Brief 1 and/or the publications created for the print tasks. This is not appropriate and candidates should be able to select from the briefs provided. Not allowing them to do so inevitably reduces the candidate's individual approach to the tasks and, therefore, their ability to achieve the higher marks.

Please note that January submissions need to be responding to the briefs published the September beforehand.

## Administration

Most of the paperwork was submitted efficiently and completed accurately. Some centres omitted to include the Centre Declaration Sheets when sending work for moderation. Please ensure that this is included with work when posted along with the Candidate Record Forms for each folder.

Candidates' work was, in the main, accessible and submitted appropriately. Some centres, however, submitted data files instead of working web sites and/or DVDs for moving image. Moderators do not necessarily have access to a range of different web building or media playing software therefore it is important to submit work in universal formats. This is especially relevant for web sites as viewing them in a browser allows the full range of students' creativity and technical ability to be viewed. Please avoid sending moving image work as QuickTime files as these can be particularly problematic for moderators to access. It is also good practice to submit DVD/CD discs in either plastic wallets or jewel cases as some discs are arriving with moderators scratched or damaged.

Some draft print work was submitted with the final productions. Where this is the case, it would be very helpful if this could be labelled clearly.

Annotations and commentaries are an important part of the assessment/moderation process. Some centres send helpful information and this is greatly appreciated. Some work is submitted with minimal teachers' comments and this can be problematic, especially in the understanding of group productions.

## Research and Planning Materials

There are still significant numbers of centres sending too much research and planning material for moderation. It is acknowledged that the 5-6 pages requested in the specification will not reflect the full range of research and planning undertaken but should be seen as an

example to demonstrate the types of activities undertaken in pre-production. The products themselves and the evaluation provide implicit evidence of research and planning.

Research should be individual to each candidate – although there may be some sharing between groups. In addition, research should be identifiably relevant to the requirements of the brief and findings reflected in the production work. Some research appeared to be quite formulaic and the links between brief, research and production were not always clear.

## **Briefs/Tasks**

Most candidates demonstrated an understanding of their chosen brief's requirements. However, some details of the briefs were occasionally overlooked for example the need for the materials for Brief 2 to appeal to a teenage target audience.

Folders occasionally showed that students were stepping outside the brief for productions. Whilst there is no problem if students submit, for example a magazine front cover in addition to the 2-3 page feature article, it is not appropriate for the front cover to replace feature pages.

## **Broadcast**

Broadcast is a popular practical choice. Stronger candidates consider carefully the use of appropriate locations and there was evidence of some creativity in use of costumes, make up, etc. in some submissions. Higher level work is characterised by creativity and attention to detail as well as in terms of technical ability. It is acknowledged that some candidates are limited in terms of locations but there was evidence of some creative use of school/college locations either by using the settings creatively within the work, for example, long shots of a school gym as an establishing shot or by disguising the locations with backdrops and props.

Technically, stronger candidates show a recognition of filming conventions such as the use of establishing shots, two-shots for conversations, occasional close-ups, pans and tilts etc whilst weaker work tended to rely on mid shots and either static camera set-ups and/or the use of hand held cameras. Often, in camera sound is a weakness with dialogue being at the wrong level or, in some cases, almost unintelligible due to ambient sound interference. Often voice over's work better. Post production has been used creatively in editing choices and, occasionally, special effects. Weaker work tends to use slower editing techniques (in trailers especially) and, at times indicates the limitations of the footage captured by repeating shots and/or relying on inter-titles.

## **Print**

Print work is varied with stronger candidates replicating the codes and conventions of the publications they are emulating with attention to detail and creativity in the application of codes and the use of images. Some publications have quite minimalistic house styles. Weaker candidates may perceive these as easier to emulate however, creativity and technical ability still needs to be demonstrated for higher level marks and so photography becomes very important in these cases.

Weaker candidates tend to present work where columns are not used appropriately and use overly large fonts for body text. They often leave white space on the page and the application of house style conventions is limited or inaccurate.

## **E-media**

There was evidence of some real creativity in website submissions. Stronger candidates are aware of web design conventions and the importance of engaging audiences actively. Templates provided by software or on-line limit the candidates' technical and creative engagement with the creation of web sites and can limit achievement of the upper levels of the mark scheme.

## **Use of Images**

Stronger work recognised the impact of images created specifically for the publications where research and planning fed into the photo shoots undertaken. Both creativity and technical ability can be evidenced in the photography work, as well as conceptual understanding and so is an important part of the production. Post production image manipulation has been used by stronger candidates to enhance their work. Weaker candidates tended to use 'snap-shots' to illustrate their work and some still rely on found images.

## **Evaluations**

Evaluations are still often the weaker part of the submissions. Many weaker candidates use the evaluation to retell the story of production rather than evaluate the effectiveness of their own work and some focus on one production rather than both. Stronger candidates demonstrate an understanding of the connections between the brief, the research and planning and the productions themselves in their evaluations. They make explicit reference to each of these areas and use media concepts to evaluate how their productions have met the requirements of the brief.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.