



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
January 2012**

**Media Studies**

**MEST2**

**(Specification 2570)**

**Unit 2: Creating Media**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **Introduction**

This January a total of 429 candidates from 108 centres entered. Approximately 85% were resubmissions from last summer.

Brief 1 is still the most popular and most candidates show good levels of understanding when it comes to the audience and institutional issues raised by the brief. Brief 3 is increasing in popularity with some really creative and original work being submitted across all tasks.

## **Broadcast (Briefs 1 and 3)**

Trailers for Brief 1 are a popular choice with teen drama and horror being common genre choices for TV drama and film respectively. It was good to see some slightly more original choices in terms of content too though. Some moving image work still relies on a presentation of montage but stronger candidates use visual story telling techniques, construct appropriate narrative devices and show clear knowledge and understanding of the codes and conventions of the form as well as the selected genre. Candidates who are creative in the choice of camera shots and editing techniques can be rewarded and some candidates show real creativity in the use of establishing shots, close ups and those that use tripods and attempt to emulate professional camera work (shot reverse shot for example) tend to make more successful products.

Some candidates created the broadcasting option for brief 3 and a variety of approaches were adopted. Weaker candidates did simple interviews of musical artists in one shot and in one location. These showed limited engagement with style or form and did not offer much to reward in terms of knowledge, creativity or technical ability. Stronger candidates created multi location interviews, some interspersed 'live' footage with interviews, added talking head content and used other documentary techniques to create some very engaging promotional videos.

## **Print (Brief 1 and 3)**

Print work showed good levels of engagement and some candidates showed real creativity in the photography used to illustrate the work. Better quality work used images taken specifically for the project where framing, m-e-s, costume, make up etc. were all carefully considered. Some candidates still use 'snapshot' photography and some rely heavily on found images. Teachers are reminded that higher level work must be dominated by self generated images and candidates should be encouraged to replicate magazine conventions and specific house style accurately. Weaker work misses out on effective layout of columns, correct proportions in terms of font and image use etc. Accurate replication of the look of a feature article can achieve well. Work at the highest levels though will emulate house styles effectively and also show some creativity and flair whilst doing so – perhaps in the photography and/or in the design of the pages. Some candidates are producing work outside the remit of the brief. Magazine front pages are still being sent and where this is in addition to two feature articles this is fine. However, candidates should focus on productions outlined in the brief before creating additional pieces.

Candidates working in brief 3 submit a range of materials from adverts, posters, concert tickets and magazine work. When helping the students select print material it is worth trying to ensure that the work prepared for assessment has enough variety to allow candidates the opportunity to demonstrate creative ability and technical skills.

## **E-Media (Brief 1 and 3)**

The majority of e-media submissions are fully functional and demonstrate good levels of engagement with appropriate technology. Some choices regarding software can limit the students' ability to achieve and programmes such as PowerPoint can make it difficult for students to meet the codes and conventions of web design.

Some submissions are clearly influenced by the template design provided by software and web based web design sites. Higher achieving students use codes that reflect contemporary web design rather than the somewhat outdated designs, often based in small business sites, that some software/design facilities still use. Strong students recognise the visual nature of web sites and the form's need for audience interaction and/or the inclusion of multi media. Weaker students use web sites to present information, often using an overly-wordy approach and images are often very basic with limited visual interest. Higher level students are becoming increasingly ambitious regarding the technical possibilities of web sites with the inclusion of video, audio, animations and interactive elements becoming more common. At the very least web sites should be presented to work in a browser and have hyperlinks between pages.

## **Brief 2**

Only a small number of candidates submitted work completing the new brief - possibly because most submissions in January are re-submissions from the summer series.

The following may be of some use for students working on this brief for future submissions.

### **Brief 2: Print**

Regional newspapers often contain a range of marketing inserts ranging from flyers to multi- page booklets. Candidates can select a form that suits their content and the marketing function of the selected product.

### **Brief 2: E-Media**

As this is an e-media production candidates should make the body of e-mails that can be viewed in a web browser. They should consider utilising e-media features in the e-mails to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of how e-media marketing may use different techniques to traditional non electronic forms. These emails should have visual interest. Candidates can create links from the emails to a page in the newspaper's website and then lay this page out using appropriate codes and conventions. In addition, students may want to consider ways that their email campaign could be used to create a viral response by including features that could encourage the audience to want to pass the emails/information on. The work should demonstrate knowledge and understanding about the way modern media institutions use email to promote their products, the way audiences are targeted and the application of specific marketing techniques.

## **Research and Planning**

Some centres are still sending far too much research and planning material. Please ensure only 5-6 A4 pages of research and planning materials is sent to the moderator. This material will only be a sample of the research and planning undertaken by the candidate and the standard of work should reflect the mark awarded.

## **Evaluation**

Candidates are producing appropriate evaluations with most covering the assessment objectives within the word count limit. Stronger students stay focused on analysing their own productions through the analytical framework of media concepts. Some of the weaker candidates provide descriptions of the products with some focusing on the research and production processes. Candidates should be encouraged to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the productions in light of the brief's instructions.

## **Administration**

Most administration is completed efficiently with marks submitted accurately and all accompanying paperwork sent with submissions. The moderation team is grateful for this attention to detail. Occasionally some errors are made on the marks sheets where different marks are recorded on the Candidate Record Forms and the centre mark sheets.

Most work is submitted appropriately. Issues can arise where web or moving image work is sent as data files and full instructions are provided on the submission guidelines on the AQA web-site. Where web-sites are submitted on-line, please check the URL's accuracy before submitting the web address to the moderator. Print work should be printed for submission and it is a good idea to consider paper sizes and print quality in advance in order to present the students' work in the best possible light.

There is a lot of evidence within the submissions that students are being well supported and advised whilst working in this module and it is always a privilege to be able to see the students' work.

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

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

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