GCE Media Studies (H140/H540) Frequently Asked Questions

(Updated December 2012)

Links to navigate through FAQ:

Even though the following FAQ is as comprehensive as possible please refer to the specification on all occasions for any final clarifications

Essential Reading

The OCR A Level Media Studies Specification

The OCR A Level Media Studies Examiners' report – June 2012

The OCR A Level Media Studies Advice Site

The OCR Media Studies Community (a forum for teachers to share and exchange ideas)

OCR Media Studies for AS
Julian McDougall, Hodder Education, ISBN 978-0-340-95898-8

OCR Media Studies for A2
Julian McDougall, Hodder Education, ISBN 978-0-340-95871-1

The Media Teacher's Book
Julian McDougall and Nick Potamitis, Hodder Education, ISBN 978-1-444-11556-7

The OCR A Level Media Studies homepage

General Questions

Q. Are there any rules of combination across the specification?

A. No, the specification has been designed in such a way that candidates will encounter a number of different media on their course which ever options they choose.

Q. What does linearization mean for GCE Media Studies?

A. There will be no January assessment opportunities from 2014 onwards. This means that candidates that started in September 2012 with AS assessments in 2013 will have no January re-sit opportunity in January 2014 and will have to wait until June 2014 if they want to re-sit. It also means there will be no January 2014 re-sit opportunities for those students completing A2 assessments in 2013.

Q. Will what is judged as minimal, basic, proficient and excellent always be subjective?

A. It is subjective but the examples used at the INSET days for teachers and published on the OCR website, and the OCR Media Studies Advice Site are designed to give teachers confidence as to where the national standard ought to be for each area of coursework. Marking coursework is not an easy task and moderating it is just as hard, but we need to have a set of expectations in order for the process nationally to be fair and for results across all centres and candidates to be comparable.

Unit G321 Foundation Portfolio in Media Studies (Coursework - 25%)

What is required in the portfolio:

- A copy of the preliminary task
- Evidence of research and planning (20 marks) that feeds into and links directly to the production exercise
- A production exercise (choice of four briefs) (60 marks)
- A digital evaluation addressing the seven questions set in the specification (20 marks)

Each portfolio must be based on **one** of the four briefs in the specification.

The Briefs

Q.   How many briefs do candidates have to complete?

A.   One of the four briefs (Print, Video, Audio or Website) but a preliminary task from the chosen brief must also be completed and submitted for moderation.

Q.   Can I write my own briefs?

A.   No, the briefs must be taken from the OCR Media Studies specification.

Q.   How do I mark the preliminary task?

A.   The preliminary task **is not a marked task**. It is a skills based exercise designed to get candidates using and thinking about the techniques they will need in the main task. The finish in the preliminary task needn't be as high as in the main task. However, if the preliminary task is not undertaken **15 marks** must be taken off the total from the main task. Evidence of the preliminary task needs to be kept so it can be submitted with the rest of the portfolio to the moderator.

Video

Q. **What is the main task?**

A. the **titles and opening** of a new fiction film, to last a maximum of two minutes.

All video and audio material must be original, produced by the candidate(s), with the exception of music or audio effects from a copyright-free source. Both preliminary and main tasks may be done individually or as a group. Maximum four members to a group.

Please see the specification for more details

Q. **Do titles have to be included in the opening?**

A. Yes, as this is a KEY PART of the task. If titles aren't included candidates won't have completed the task set.

Q. **How does OCR want evidence of the main and preliminary task presented for moderation?**

A. On a DVD that is playable in a domestic DVD player. If work is accessible on a blog that is fine but it is still good practice to keep a DVD back up and send a copy of the DVD to the moderator in case their are any technical problems.

Q. **Is there any restriction over genre for the opening of the film?**

A. No.

Q. **Can we produce a trailer for the main task?**

A. No, the main task must be the **titles and opening** of a new fiction film, to last a maximum of two minutes.

Q. **Technically, what is the 180 degree rule in the context of this task?**

A. It is akin to drawing an imaginary line down the centre of the frame - with the two characters probably at either end of the frame - and keeping the camera on one side of the line - but able to move it up, down, left, right etc but not cross the line as that changes the audiences perspective on the shot. See our **180 degree rule 'how to' guide** for more information. All our **'how to'** guides are available on the OCR website and on the OCR Youtube channel.

Q. **What is match-on-action?**

A. Action in one shot, is continued into the next e.g. in this task an exterior shot of the character opening the door moving to an interior shot of them entering the room.

Q. **What is shot/reverse shot?**

A. In this case most people would do the shot/reverse shot with one character sitting down looking at the other character that is off screen, with the shot then switching to them looking back at the original character. It's how most conversations on TV and film are shown, often over-the shoulder of each character in turn.

Q. What is best practise for keeping track of, or authenticating candidates' work when they are out filming with no supervision?

A. There isn't one answer to this as it is what best suits the centre and candidates but keeping a log of who has done what immediately after each piece of filming would be strongly recommended. This can be done either in a blog entry or in a production diary/log. Candidates should have planned any out of centre work in advance and agreed this with teaching staff and carried out any requisite health and safety checks. You have to take candidates' word for it when they are off site and unsupervised but if they are logging the work immediately afterwards and bringing it to the next classroom lesson you should soon get a feel for which students are contributing more than others.

Q. Do candidates have to use copyright free music for their video tasks in the foundation portfolio?

A. Yes, as quoted from the specification "*All video and audio material must be original, produced by the candidate(s), with the exception of music or audio effects from a copyright-free source.*" See clarification 1 on our Get Ahead A Level Media Studies blog for more information.

Q. Is there a requirement to use dialogue for opening sequences?

A. No. There should be appropriate sound for whatever is created. If it really looks like we should be hearing dialogue and there is only music, that is an issue, but an abstract title sequence might well be wholly music-based. Also for consideration: atmospheric sound

Q. Are there any websites or links I can point my candidates towards for copyright free audio?

A. There are numerous websites that offer copyright free audio and music but you need to bear in mind that even though the music/audio is copyright free to use there can be a charge to download or purchase but you can buy libraries of music/audio that you could use in your centre for two or three years before feeling the need to update them again. Simply 'Google' 'copyright free audio' for more information.

Q. If we have to use our school as the location for the production how do we ensure candidates can make the most of mise-en-scene?

A. Candidates need to pay close attention to how they construct their mise-en-scene. It is always possible to disguise a set with careful use of props and camerawork. If candidates do have to film in school, they need to invest time in the planning of the shoot to make it look effective

Q. If no social group is represented in the title sequence, how will candidates evaluate it?

A. They might well not- but they would need to make it very clear why they have gone for a different approach and that they have understood the approach they have taken; although all seven questions should be addressed, it is quite possible some will have more detail than others.

Print

Q   What is the main task?

A   The front page, contents and double page spread of a new music magazine (if done as a group task, each member of the group to produce an individual edition of the magazine, following the same house style).

All images and text used must be original, produced by the candidate(s), minimum of FOUR images per candidate. Maximum four members to a group.

Please see the [specification](#) for more details

Q.   Does print work need to be submitted in hardcopy?

A.   Print work can be submitted to the moderator electronically as a PDF or JPEG file or in hard copy.

Q.   Can candidates use found images in print work?

A.   No, all work must be original.

Q.   How do we ensure our moderator knows candidate images are original?

A.   Make sure that all images for print work are clearly identified as their own by candidates, and that they show the process they have gone through, e.g. original untreated shot and final edited shot e.g. cropped, lighting, contrast adjusted.

Q.   Are we allowed to use Publisher for print coursework? Our moderator advised us other packages may be easier to use and allow our candidates to be more creative.

Q.   In general terms, Publisher is more limited in terms of what students can do with it in comparison to Adobe InDesign on PCs or QUARK on Macs. It can be more difficult to create effective layouts in Publisher. We would advise against using Publisher for A Level print tasks, however, some teachers at INSET training sessions have suggested that if you have sufficient technical knowledge of Publisher then with clever use you can get more out of the program than might be expected. The Adobe and QUARK software suites are similar to what candidates would use in the real world if they went onto work in this area after college or University.

Website

Q   What is the main task?

A   Produce a campaign website including sound and video for a campaign (eg political, health, charity, environmental). The website should include a logo, original photographs, (minimum four per candidate), written text, audio, video and easy navigation. If done as a group task, each member of the group to produce at least four pages for the site, following the same house style.

All material for both tasks to be produced by the candidate(s), with the exception of musical audio effects from a copyright-free source.

Please see the [specification](#) for more details

Q.   Does the main task need to include video and audio?

A.   Yes, we expect to see a multimedia website with working links, original photos, written text, audio and video.

Q.   Can candidates use templates to create the website?

A.   Web templates can be used – but with care. Centres need to bear in mind that web main tasks at AS and A2 need to look realistic and comparable to contemporary, real world, modern web sites if they are to achieve the highest level marks. Template packages may not offer the flexibility in layout or design that candidates would get from using a dedicated web product such as Dreamweaver. If you and your candidate(s) feel that with very careful research and planning that they will be able to produce a realistic website that meets all the relevant marking criteria (and is comparable in terms of codes and conventions to real world websites) then you can proceed with care using the web template of your choice.

OCR does not have technical knowledge of the many web templates on the market and cannot offer advice in this area.

Q.   Does the website have to be online or can it be supplied on disk?

A.   The website needs to be online and all links need to have been tested to ensure they work.

Audio

Q   What is the main task?

A   A five minute news bulletin (local radio) to include title music, presenter, specialist reporters, OBs, recorded interview, a vox pop and appropriate sound fx and structure.

All audio material must be original, produced by the candidate(s), with the exception of music or audio effects from a copyright-free source. Maximum four members to a group.

Please see the [specification](#) for more details.

Group Work

Q.   What is the maximum group size for G321?

A.   Four but remember if candidates work in groups they still need to present evidence to the moderator of their individual contributions to the moderator so that they can understand how marks have been allocated by the centre.

Q.   Can candidates work individually?

A.   Yes.

Q.   Can candidates swap groups between preliminary and main task?

A.   Yes, but it will be easier for centres to track work if they stay in the same groups.

Research and Planning

Q. Does research and planning have to be submitted as hard copy or electronic format?

A. Research and planning evidence may be presented in electronic format OR work may be handed in as scrapbook or folder. This applies to G321 at AS Level only. If candidates are progressing to A2 centres may consider starting to submit everything electronically at AS to get candidates used to the process.

Q. What evidence of process in research and planning would you suggest for video?

A. Storyboards/animatics, photos of costumes, locations, props, actors – see exemplar blogs on the OCR Media Studies Advice Site for examples.

Q. How much research should be done? Or to put it another way what type of research?

A. There should be some research into similar products and target audience and institution so that candidates can address the relevant evaluation question in the specification. Research should link to the final production – so if candidates are producing a thriller opening don't let them research romantic comedy openings.

Q. How do I create an animatic?

A. 1. draw storyboard frames- nice and bold, black pen if possible
2. take individual photos of each frame
3. upload the photos to the computer
4. import the photos into the edit programme
5. drop each image onto the timeline and cut to the required length
6. put music or other sound on the audio timeline
7. add titles or effects/transitions as required
8. export to quicktime and upload to youtube or vimeo
9. embed the video onto the blog or save it to a CD

![OCR logo - RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT]

Evaluation

Q. **What is the word limit?**

A. There is no word limit. The evaluation needs to address the seven key questions posed in the specification. Visual evidence is encouraged

Q. **Does the evaluation need to be submitted in electronic format?**

A. Yes, the evaluation needs to be submitted electronically in one (or a combination of) the specified formats in the specification.

Q. **If using blogging or PowerPoints does the evaluation have to be in continuous prose?**

A. No, definitely not. Candidates should be encouraged to see the evaluation as a creative task and the potential of the format chosen should be exploited through the use of images, audio, video and links to online resources. Marks from teachers should be supported by teacher comments and may be supported by other forms of evidence such as audio or video presentations.

Q. **How do candidates show excellent skill in their use of digital technology or ICT in their evaluation?**

A. To reach level 4 we would expect to see annotated screen grabs, embedded video, audio and links in addition to some analysis that communicates their answers to the seven questions in the specification. Different tasks could be set for each of the seven questions. See the June 2012 examiners' report for more detail.

Q. **Should evaluation questions all be answered at the end of the process or as they go through the process over time?**

A. The centre should guide candidates on this, but clearly preparing candidates for the evaluation questions/tasks can start from the outset. There are some centres which get candidates to make part of their evaluation task videos as they go along. The final seven responses should be put together for moderation at the end of the process, e.g. at the top of the group's blog.

Q. **Are candidates penalised if all their blog posts are over a short period of time?**

A. Not necessarily, but to be honest, it doesn't look good and doesn't look like the work was planned, as planning generally doesn't happen at the end of the process!

Blogs / Websites / Podcasts / PowerPoints / DVD extras

Q.   How do we submit blogs to OCR for moderation?

A.   Blogs must be available online for the duration of the moderation period. The URL (web address) must be supplied to the moderator. This can be added to the CW coversheet.

   If you have a number of candidates blogging please set up a **blog hub** page for the moderator. A **blog hub** page is a single blog page with hyperlinks to all candidates' blogs. When a blog hub page is used the moderator only needs to be supplied with the blog hub page URL address as they can access all the candidates work from this single page.

Q.   Should blogs contain individual or group entries?

A.   Can be either, but for a group blog, students should ensure it is very clear who is contributing to each exercise.

Q.   How do I set up a blog?

A.   You can find a simple pdf guide for blogger here available to download.

Q.   Do students each have to have their own blogger account?

A.   If students each have their own account and password:
   - no-one else can access it (+)
   - they inevitably forget it and the blog can become unusable(-)
   - teacher needs to collate all their blogs onto a hub
   If the teacher sets up an account with a shared password for all students to use:
   - simpler for teacher to co-ordinate and keep a check on work via a blog hub page (+)
   - some centres have had 250 sharing a password without any problems (+)
   - teacher can comment on the blog without needing access to student password (+)
   - saves loads of time with students who can't remember things (e.g. their own password) (+)
   - in theory a malicious student could wreck the blog for everyone (-)

Q.   If a video or audio podcast is submitted for the evaluation, is it possible to include interview and prompting by the teacher?

A.   Yes, this is a good idea to ensure they give more detailed answers and don't just read an essay. As well as the teacher prompting, if resources are scarce other peers or students could be used to question and prompt the presenter.

Q.   Is there a problem with teachers putting comments on students' blogs in a formative way?

A.   No that's fine (even if students don't like it!)

Q.   What are good non-Google related blog sites?

A.   See clarification 11 on the OCR Media Studies Get Ahead blog site for more information.

Q. **What are the best methods of presenting PowerPoint work?**

A. The following methods are examples that could be used:

- Each candidate to present individually to the class
- Groups to present to the class
- Groups to present to other groups
- Individuals to present to groups
- Individuals to present to teachers etc

The PowerPoint would be the evidence passed on to the moderator, along with the teacher's assessment and there is no reason for a moderator to question the assessment unless the written or practical element looks way out. In the mark-scheme it refers to 'understanding' for the evaluation and the ability to communicate, which is partially evidenced by the PowerPoint. The presentation of this PowerPoint by the presenter would either further endorse the mark for the teacher or make them add to or deduct from it, which they would then explain in their marking in much the same way as they currently do for research and planning.

So overall, the aim is to support a centre's marks provided their evidence is robust; the aim of the presentation by students is to give it a real context (they have to talk about and answer questions on their work) rather than just hand in a PowerPoint viewed only by teacher and moderator.

Q. **As the LEA will not allow access to blogs in the classroom, we are using PowerPoints. Do the presentations have to be filmed?**

A. Not necessarily, but it has worked well for those centres who have filmed them. See the answer above for more detail.

Submission of Work for Moderation

Formats
- Video work must be in DVD format and playable on standard domestic DVD players
- Audio work must be in CD format
- If print items are submitted in hardcopy they need to be no larger than A3. If electronic they need to be a PDF or JPEG.
- Web pages must be accessible online to the moderator for the duration of the moderation period and also copied as files and burnt to CD for the moderator. No hard copy printouts of online materials will be accepted.
- When submitting PowerPoints please remember to include any files for embedded audio and video as well otherwise these will not play.

Q. **What comments and level of detail are required when marking?**

A. There needs to be a balance between reference to the specification marking criteria and giving examples from work to back up decisions. Comments are not about selling the product to the moderator and should mention weaknesses as well as strengths. The commentaries on practical work from exemplar pieces may be helpful for this. Please make sure that your comments match your marks, e.g. if you are writing that a piece of work is proficient then it should receive a mark in the level 3 band – not level 4.

Units G322 Key Media Concepts (TV Drama) (Exam - 25%)

Q. **Can we get marks for individual questions for examined papers from OCR so we know which questions are eliciting stronger responses?**

A. Yes, if you request the papers back, but you will have to pay a fee for each paper. OCR is looking at expanding their Active Results service that provides breakdowns on each question but Media Studies will not be able to join this system until it is marked online.

Q **How long do candidates have to answer the questions? Is viewing time included in the 2 hour total?**

A. The viewing time is included in the 2 hour examination time. Students have 1 hour and 30 minutes to answer both questions once the extract has finished playing, which gives 45 minutes per question.

Q. **What is the topic for textual analysis?**

A. **From 2009-2012** the sequence will be taken from a contemporary British one-off or series or serial drama programme.
From 2013 assessments the sequence may be taken from a contemporary one-off drama or series or serial drama programme scheduled on British television stations including some sourced from other countries.

Q. **What have the exam extracts been so far?**

A. **June 2012:**
Coming Down the Mountain (Julie Anne Robinson, BBC, 2007)
In point: 00:00:19 seconds – opening of drama after fade out from black
Out point: 00:05:17 seconds – "I had to get some space."
Representation: **Ability/Disability**

January 2012:
Fingersmith (Aisling Walsh, BBC Drama, 2005)
In point: 1 hour 42 mins 00 secs - first lady holding dress up in front of mirror on second lady
Out point: 1 hour 47 mins 00 secs - after lady says "Tell me" for the first time
Representation: **Sexuality**

June 2011:
Merlin, Series 1, Episode 1
Extract location: Episode 1
In point: 20:54
Out point: 25:25
Representation: **Class and status**

January 2011:
Hustle, Series 1 Episode 4 (Written by Tony Jordan, dir. Minkie Spiro)
Extract location: Episode 4
In point: 19.50 Out point: 25.01
Representation: **Gender**

June 2010:
Primeval Series 2, Episode 3 (Directed by Jamie Payne, 2007, Impossible Pictures Limited)
Extract location: Episode 3
In point: 26 mins 31 seconds
Out point: 31 mins 35 seconds
Representation: **Gender**

January 2010:
Hotel Babylon, Series 1, Episode 5 (Alrick Riley, Iain B MacDonald and Keith Boak, 2006, BBC)
Extract location: Episode 5, Chapter 2
In point: 6 mins 22 seconds
Out point: 11 mins 52 seconds
Representation: **Ethnicity**

June 2009:
Doctor Who, Series 3, Volume 4 (Director: Graham Harper and Colin Teague, 2007, BBC)
Extract location: Episode 3, Chapter 8
In point: 29 mins 20 seconds
Out point: 34 mins 26 seconds
Representation: **Gender**

January 2009:
Monarch of the Glen, Series 7, Episode 2
(Directed by David Caffery, Edward Bennett, 2006, BBC Worldwide)
Extract location: Chapter 2 on DVD copy indicated above
In point: 41 mins 54 seconds
Out point: 46 mins 45 seconds
Representation: **Age**

Specimen Materials Extract:
The Chase, Episode 1, Series 1 (2006, BBC/Rollem Productions)
Extract location: First five minutes of episode 1.
Representation: **Gender**

Q. **Where can I get copies of past papers for mock exams?**

A. You can download all but those from the latest series from the main OCR GCE Media Studies website under the past papers tab.

You can download all the most recent past papers from our secure Interchange website. Log onto the site and navigate through the resources tab to find the past papers. If you don't have access to Interchange your exams officer probably does as it is the system they use to make all their entries with OCR and they should be able to get you a login or download the materials for you.

Q. **Where can I get hold of copies of the past DVD extracts for mock exams?**

A. Unfortunately you need to buy a copy of the relevant drama series on DVD from a DVD store as OCR only have copyright permission to distribute the clips for the examination and cannot re-distribute the clips after this due to copyright restrictions

Q. **What kind of preparation tasks should I give my students for section A of the exam?**

A. See the sample scheme of work and teacher support booklet for more information (these are available on the OCR Website). Also see James Baker's presentation on teaching film from the 2010 OCR Media Conference.

Q. **Any ideas how to approach the area of ethnicity within a multi-cultural classroom? Any ideas for teaching ability/disability, regional identity?**

A. Lots of TV drama demonstrates a good range of representation- a good resource is the English and Media Centre TV Drama pack. It is hard to find a TV drama that doesn't provide you with something! From 'Skins' to the soaps, from 'the Street' to the hospital dramas, it's worth keeping a stock or buying a few box sets.

Q. **Terminology – is it based primarily around technical codes?**

A. No, it's around codes AND representation. Think of terminology as language you wouldn't use if you were talking about the subject with your parents.

Q. **Do you have any other guidance on terminology for the moving image exam?**

A. See clarification 9 on the OCR Get Ahead Media Studies blog for more information.

Q. **Can we use soaps or not?**

A. Yes, they may not turn up in the exam, but in theory they could. It doesn't hurt to use them in your teaching of Section A.

Q. **Does 'use of examples' in the mark scheme refer to examples from the exam text or from examples from programmes studied in class?**

A. From the exam text.

Q. **Is the mark scheme totally separated e.g. could they get full marks for terminology yet only 2/20 for examples**

A. Yes

Q. **Why is there no markscheme for the exam in the specification?**

A. It is on the OCR website and has been for a long time; a copy of the specimen mark scheme can be found at the back of the specimen paper.

Q. **How can a student achieve 10 out of 10 for terminology without going OTT?**

A. Using technical terms appropriately and with relevance enables them to access the top band.

Q. **Our students are always asking 'how many terms do I need to get the 10 marks? We explain that they need to use terms across the four technical elements. They then ask how many of each? Is it better to use five terms correctly than use 20 and get a few wrong?**

A. There really is no fixed number, but if students use a couple of terms for each technical area they will be well on their way! Better to use them all correctly, but if they have a go they would not be penalised- marking is positive.

Q. **How would you link match on action, eyeline match, shot/reverse shot to issues of representation?**

A. Issues of power in a sequence would make these relevant; how we are positioned as viewers in relation to the characters; how they are positioned in relation to each other are all relevant as well. A good book on all this is Bordwell and Thompson's 'Film Art'.

Q. **We want to use 'Skins' in our teaching- is this ok?**

A. Yes, as long as your centre think the material is appropriate.

Q. **How much representation or narrative theory should we expect a student to apply to the analysis?**

A. Depends on what is meant by 'theory'. It is unlikely to be useful to include abstract theory. An understanding of issues around representation would be essential for the exam, but it is not really about application of abstract theory.

Section B Institutions and Audiences (this applies to G323 as well)

Q. **What kind of preparation tasks should I give my students for section B of the exam?**

A. See the sample scheme of work for section B and teacher support booklet for more information (these are available on the OCR Website).

Q. **Is it a good idea to set up a thesis before starting the question?**

A. No point - just get on with it!

Q. **As a case study is it viable to compare independent cinema house(s) vs multiplexes?**

A. Yes, but not as the only case study for the exam. Candidates should be prepared to understand and discuss the processes of production, distribution, marketing and exchange as they relate to contemporary media institutions, as well as the nature of audience consumption and the relationships between audiences and institutions - not just the final stages of exhibition.

Q. **Do all G322 section B answers need to include an indie v major contrast?**

A. No, but they should be contrasting in one way or another, otherwise there is a danger that candidates will be caught out by the question and find they have little to say, or worse still answer as if their single case study represents the only way their industry works.

Q. **Can we have some resources for section B?**

A. There is now so much material on the web it is hard to know where it stops. James Baker (Assistant Principal for this paper) has provided the following links:

[Changes in the nature of audience behaviour over the past 25 years](#)

[UK audience behaviour - research by the UK Flm Council](#)

[Patterns of film consumption in the UK](#)

[Excellent online guide to all aspects of film production, distribution and exhibition](#)

[Guide for aspiring filmmakers into aspects of distribution and exhibition](#)

[Use of IMAX in Hollywood feature production](#)

[Guide to film distribution from the FDA](#)

[BFI guide to film distribution and exhibition](#)

[Film Council distribution statistics](#)

[Great, analytical account of Hollywood marketing campaign for the Dark Knight](#)

Q. **What does 'significance of proliferation of hardware' mean in relation to film?**

A. It can refer to the changing methods of distribution and exhibition (e.g. digital projectors in cinema, people having mobile devices on which they can watch films, growth of 3D and IMAX) or even changes in production (high quality digital cameras).

Q. **Can students refer to more than one case study in their exam answer?**

A. Yes

Q. **Is language such as 'technological convergence' too hard for an exam paper? Can you consider using simpler vocabulary?**

A. It is legitimate in any subject for any term written in the specification content to turn up in the exam. We are careful with difficult non-Media language in the exam, but terms from the specification will come up.

Q. **Could a case study for magazines be two large rival firms?**

A. It could, but ensure you cover the seven bullet pointed areas in the specification in relation to them (Section B Audiences and Institutions).

Q. **Is it ok to compare Working Title with a genuine UK independent production company e.g. Vertigo films?**

A. Yes

Units G323 Key Media Concepts (Radio Drama) (Exam - 25%)

Q. **How long do candidates have to answer the questions? Is listening time included in the 2 hour total?**

A. The listening time is included in the 2 hour examination time. Students have 1 hour and 30 minutes to answer both questions once the extract has finished playing, which gives 45 minutes per question.

Q. **Can anybody enter this exam or is it just for visually impaired candidates?**

A. This exam is open for ALL candidates.

Q. **What is the topic for textual analysis?**

A. The sequence will be taken from a contemporary British one-off play or series or serial programme.

Q. **What have the exam audio extracts been so far?**

A. **June 2012:**
Legacy (Episode 2)
Broadcast on BBC Radio 7, 12.30am, Monday 30th August 2010.
Representation: **Gender**

January 2012:
Those That Can't: Democracy (Series 2, Episode 5)
Broadcast on BBC Radio Wales, 2.00pm, 29th August 2010.
Representation: **Regional Identity**

June 2011:
Every Detail But One
Broadcast on BBC Radio 7, 12.00am, Monday 24th August 2009
Representation: **Gender**

January 2011:
Dog Dazed Afternoon
Broadcast on BBC Radio 4, 2.15pm, Monday 24th August 2009
Representation: **Class and Status**

June 2010:
The Old Curiosity Shop
Broadcast on 9 January 2009, BBC 7, 10.00am
Representation: **Age**

January 2010:
Fear on Four: Playing God
Broadcast on 2 August 2008, BBC 7, 6.30pm
Representation: **Class and Status**

June 2009:
The Transfer (Director: Nadia Molinari)
Broadcast on 16 July 2007, BBC Radio 4, 2.15pm – 3.00pm
Representation: **Gender**

January 2009:
The Sensitive: The Hanged Man (Directed by David Jackson Young)
Broadcast on 28 November 2007, BBC Radio 4, 2.15pm – 3.00pm
Representation: **Age**

Specimen Materials Extract:
Westway
Broadcast on 19 July 2007, BBC Radio 7, 1.00pm
Representation: **Gender**

Q.   Where can I get copies of past papers for mock exams?

A.   You can download all but those from the latest series from the main OCR GCE Media Studies website under the past papers tab.

You can download all the most recent past papers from our secure Interchange website. Log onto the site and navigate through the resources tab to find the past papers. If you don't have access to Interchange your exams officer probably does as it is the system they use to make all their entries with OCR and they should be able to get you a login or download the materials for you.

Unit G324 Advanced Portfolio in Media Studies (Coursework – 25%)

Q.   What is required in the portfolio?
- Evidence of research and planning (20 marks) that links to and informs the final production
- A production exercise (choice of four briefs) (40 marks) and two ancillary tasks (10 + 10 marks)
- An evaluation addressing the four A2 evaluation questions set in the specification (20 marks)

Each portfolio must be based on **one** of the thirteen set briefs in the specification.

Q.   Does the portfolio have to be submitted in digital format?

A.   Yes, the portfolio should be submitted digitally in one or more of the formats mentioned in the specification (PowerPoint, Podcast, Blog, Website, DVD with Extras)

The Briefs

Q.   How many briefs do candidates have to complete?

A.   One of the thirteen set briefs and two ancillary tasks from the chosen brief.

Q.   Can I write my own briefs?

A.   No, the briefs must be taken from the OCR Media Studies specification.

Q.   How do I mark the ancillary task?

A.   Each ancillary task is marked out of 10 marks using the relevant main task criteria in the specification e.g. a poster ancillary task follows the print criteria. See Appendix C of the specification for more detail.

Q.   There do not seem to be any opportunities to look at institutional issues in the markscheme

A.   Crucial elements are:
     Planning: research into similar products and target audience
     Construction: producing material appropriate to the task set (showing institutional understanding)
     Evaluation: understanding of the combination of main and ancillary tasks

Constructions

Q. Are marks for construction distributed across all three products at A2?

A. The marks for construction are 40 marks for main task and 10 each for the two ancillary tasks.

Q. What is permissible for soundtrack use at A2?

A. Please see clarification 1 on the OCR Get Ahead Media Studies Blog and our guidance document for more information.

Brief 1 Music Promo

Q. At A2 is Windows Moviemaker sufficient for the music promo task?

A. To make a music promo in Windows Moviemaker would be challenging as the software lacks the advanced editing features necessary for an A2 standard music video. Most centres use the Adobe Premiere suite if using PCs or Final Cut if using Macs.

Q. How long should music videos be?

A. The length of the track is the usual convention, but if it is a particularly long track, they could fade early. Three minutes is the classic pop song.

Q. For the Digipak is there a template for students to produce all four panes or can they just complete four CD sized examples?

A. No template is provided by OCR. All you would need to do would be to identify which bit of the Digipak belongs where, e.g. front cover, front inside etc. See clarification 6 on the OCR Get Ahead Media Studies Blog and this post on the OCR Media Studies Get Ahead Blog for more information.

Q. Is there room for flexibility in A2 briefs, e.g. swapping 'Digipak' for CD cover as music video ancillary task?

A. No there's no flexibility to the briefs.

Q. How do we deal with copyright issues in relation to using music for advanced production?

A. For the music video, candidates need to show evidence they have sought permission to use the track - no more than that, e.g. a letter or fax to the artist/label concerned. Other non-original material may only be used in a limited way.

Brief 2 Trailers

Q. **Is a trailer for a thriller/horror too close to the opening of a thriller in AS? Will it affect marks?**

A. There are no rules of combination so you could do this but you should consider encouraging your candidates to broaden the range of genres they study.

Q. **Can students attempt a trailer for a documentary drama? They want to use a disaster theme - so can they use found images?**

A. Yes to a documentary, no limits on type of trailer or short film candidates make. They can make limited use of found material (e.g. 30 seconds in a five minute film) - especially where it would be impossible to film e.g. an explosion.

Brief 5 Soap Opera Trailer

Q. **What research should be included for the soap trailer task?**

A. Whatever you and your candidates feel is needed for the three elements of the task to enable them to produce effective work. In terms of moderation you need to submit evidence of research that backs up the assessment decisions you took when you marked the work.

Q. **If students are producing print products for coursework, are they still allowed to print a hard copy for assessment at AS and at A2?**

A. Yes, but a digital copy **needs** to be submitted at A2 as well.

Brief 8 Local Newspaper

Q. **What kind of poster are you expecting for the ancillary task for the local newspaper?**

A. See clarification 12 on the OCR Media Studies Get Ahead blog for more information.

Q. **What advice can you give for the local newspaper brief?**

A. Keep it real – real stories as well as appropriate layout.
Font sizes are a particular problem!
Images are often too small and ill considered in terms of framing and mise en scene.
Candidates should virtually dissect all the stylistic devices employed in local newspapers before trying to employ similar ones themselves.
Lots of centres concentrate on the written word (valuable of course) but forget about all the other technical criteria.

Q. Do candidates each have to produce their own edition of a local newspaper if working in a group?

A. Even though it doesn't explicitly state the following in the specification it would be advisable if candidates following the local newspaper brief in a group all did their own edition of the same newspaper e.g. a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday edition to keep inline with the group rules for print at AS level. Otherwise candidates who choose this option at A2 and work in a group on one edition only are potentially going to have less work to do to finish the task (in comparison to those who work individually on this task), which in turn will make it more difficult for you as a teacher to judge and mark individual contributions to the group effort.

Brief 10 Short Film

Q. What types of film are permissible for the short film task?

A. See clarification 10 on the OCR Media Studies Get Ahead blog for more information.

Group Work

Q. What is the maximum group size for G324?

A. Four but remember if working in a group candidates still need to be able to provide evidence of their own individual contributions to the moderator so that they can see how the centre have allocated their marks.

Q. Can candidates work individually?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the best way to mark / set up group work at A2?

A. A suggestion for A2 group marking from one teacher:
Set students one area to be in charge of and mark them on that- e.g. one person as editor, one person as cinematographer, one as art director. Remember you are marking each member of the group on their individual contribution to the final products.

Ancillary Tasks

Q. **Should candidates work as a group across all three tasks or can they work individually on the ancillary tasks?**

A. If for example, they are submitting one Digipak and one magazine advert, each candidate in the group needs to have contributed to both the Digipak and the magazine advert otherwise they would not be able to receive a mark for individual contribution on the ancillary product they haven't contributed to.

A number of centres whose candidates work in groups on the main task ask their candidates to produce their own individual ancillary tasks which avoids any confusion about who has contributed what with these smaller tasks.

Q. **Is the ancillary task for a website home page just that or do all the links have to work?**

A. A home page is all that is needed but internal links do need to work even if they go through to a blank page stating 'content xxx would be here'.
External links to existing websites (e.g. Youtube) should also work.

A JPEG or PDF image cannot be submitted as a home page. An ancillary task homepage can be supplied on disk if it is not available online (all main task web work has to be online and available to the moderator).

Research and Planning

Q. **Can we submit a storyboard on paper for A2?**

A. No everything must be digital. If you are not using blogs, either photos of the storyboard on a disk or an 'animatic' on a disk or embedded into a PowerPoint would be the answer.

Q. **What evidence of process in research and planning would you suggest for video?**

A. Storyboards/animatics, photos of costumes, locations, props, actors – see exemplar blogs on the OCR Media Studies Advice Site for examples.

Q. **How much research should be done? Or to put it another way what type of research?**

A. There should be some research into similar products and target audience and institution so that candidates can address the relevant evaluation question in the specification.

Q. **How do I create an animatic?**

A. 1. draw storyboard frames- nice and bold, black pen if possible
   2. take individual photos of each frame
   3. upload the photos to the computer
   4. import the photos into the edit programme
   5. drop each image onto the timeline and cut to the required length
   6. put music or other sound on the audio timeline
   7. add titles or effects/transitions as required
   8. export to quicktime and upload to youtube or vimeo
   9. embed the video onto the blog or save it to a CD

Evaluation

Q. What is the word limit?

A. There is no word limit. The evaluation needs to address the four key questions posed in the specification. Visual evidence is encouraged

Q. Does the evaluation need to be submitted in digital format?

A. Yes, the evaluation needs to be submitted digitally (as does the whole portfolio at A2) in one or more of the specified formats in the specification.

Q. If using blogging or PowerPoints does the evaluation have to be in continuous prose?

A. No, definitely not. Candidates should be encouraged to see the evaluation as a creative task and the potential of the format chosen should be exploited through the use of images, audio, video and links to online resources. Marks from teachers should be supported by teacher comments and may be supported by other forms of evidence such as audio or video presentations.

Q. How do candidates show excellent skill in their use of digital technology or ICT in their evaluation?

A. To reach level 4 we would expect to see annotated screen grabs, embedded video, audio and links in addition to some analysis that communicates their answers to the four questions in the specification. Different tasks could be set for each of the seven questions. See the June 2012 examiners' report for more detail.

Q. Should evaluation questions all be answered at the end of the process or as they go through the process over time?

A. The centre should guide candidates on this, but clearly preparing candidates for the evaluation questions/tasks can start from the outset. There are some centres which get candidates to make part of their evaluation task videos as they go along. The final four responses should be put together for moderation at the end of the process, e.g. at the top of the group's blog.

Q. Are candidates penalised if all their blog posts are over a short period of time?

A. Not necessarily, but to be honest, it doesn't look good and doesn't look like planning, which generally doesn't happen at the end of the process!

Blogs / Websites / Podcasts / PowerPoints / DVD extras

Q. How do we submit blogs to OCR for moderation?

A. Blogs must be available online for the duration of the moderation period. The URL (web address) must be supplied to the moderator. This can be added to the CW coversheet.

If you have a number of candidates blogging please set up a blog hub page for the moderator. A blog hub page is a single blog page with hyperlinks to all candidates' blogs. When a blog hub page is used the moderator only needs to be supplied with the blog hub page URL address and not the URL of every candidate blog.

Q. Should blogs contain individual or group entries?

A. Can be either, but for a group blog, students should tag their posts or make it clear who is contributing to each exercise.

Q. How do I set up a blog?

A. You can find a simple pdf guide for blogger here available to download.

Q. Do students each have to have their own blogger account?

A. If students each have their own account and password:
- no-one else can access it (+)
- they inevitably forget it and the blog can become unusable(-)
- teacher needs to collate all their blogs onto a hub

If the teacher sets up an account with a shared password for all students to use:
- simpler for teacher to co-ordinate and keep a check on work via a blog hub page (+)
- some centres have had 250 sharing a password without any problems (+)
- teacher can comment on the blog without needing access to student password (+)
- saves loads of time with students who can't remember things (e.g. their own password) (+)
- in theory a malicious student could wreck the blog for everyone (-)

Q. If a video or audio podcast is submitted for the evaluation, is it possible to include interview and prompting by the teacher?

A. Yes and this is a good idea to ensure they give more detailed answers and don't just read an essay. As well as the teacher prompting, if resources are scarce other peers or students could be used to question and prompt the presenter.

Q. Is there a problem with teachers putting comments on students' blogs in a formative way?

A. No that's fine (even if students don't like it!)

Q. What are good non-Google related blog sites?

A. See clarification 11 on the OCR Media Studies Get Ahead blog site for more information.

Q. What are the best methods of presenting PowerPoint work?

A. The following methods are examples that could be used:

- Each candidate to present individually to the class
- Groups to present to the class
- Groups to present to other groups
- Individuals to present to groups
- Individuals to present to teachers etc

The PowerPoint would be the evidence passed on to the moderator, along with the teacher's assessment and there is no reason for a moderator to question the assessment unless the written or practical element looks way out. In the mark-scheme it refers to 'understanding' for the evaluation and the ability to communicate, which is partially evidenced by the PowerPoint. The presentation of this PowerPoint by the presenter would either further endorse the mark for the teacher or make them add to or deduct from it, which they would then explain in their marking in much the same way as they currently do for research and planning.

So overall, the aim is to support a centre's marks provided their evidence is robust; the aim of the presentation by students is to give it a real context (they have to talk about and answer questions on their work) rather than just hand in a PowerPoint viewed only by teacher and moderator.

Q. As the LEA will not allow access to blogs in the classroom, we are using PowerPoint. Do the presentations have to be filmed?

A. Not necessarily, but it has worked well for those centres who have filmed them. See the answer above for more detail.

Submission of Work for Moderation

Formats
- Video work must be in DVD format and playable on standard domestic DVD players
- Audio work must be in CD format
- If print items are submitted in hardcopy they need to be no larger than A3. If electronic they need to be a PDF or JPEG.
- Web pages must be accessible online to the moderator for the duration of the moderation period and also copied as files and burnt to CD for the moderator. No hard copy printouts of online materials will be accepted.
- When submitting PowerPoints please remember to include any files for embedded audio and video as well otherwise these will not play.

Q. What comments and level of detail are required when marking?

A. There needs to be a balance between reference to the specification marking criteria and giving examples from work to back up decisions. Comments are not about selling the product to the moderator and should mention weaknesses as well as strengths. The commentaries on practical work from exemplar pieces may be helpful for this. Please make sure when writing comments that your comments match your marks, e.g. if you are writing a piece of work meets level 3 criteria and is proficient then it should receive a mark in the level 3 band – not level 4.

Q. **What are good ways to organise digital files at A2?**

A.   If on a CD or DVD Rom just make sure there is a folder for each candidate (labelled with name and candidate number) with everything set out clearly in each folder so the moderator can find what they are looking for quickly.

Unit G325 Critical Perspectives in Media (Examination – 25%)

The best sources of information for this examination are the OCR Specification, Julian McDougall's OCR Media Studies for A2 book from Hodder Education and the OCR GCE Media Studies Advice Site and the OCR Media Studies Community. Support materials are available for download from the main OCR A Level Media Studies webpage.

Q. **Can we get marks for individual questions for examined papers from OCR so we know which questions are eliciting stronger responses?**

A. Yes, if you request the papers back, but you will have to pay a fee for each paper. OCR is looking at expanding their Active Results service that provides breakdowns on each question but Media Studies will not be able to join this system until it is marked online.

Q. **Where can I get copies of past papers for mock exams?**

A. You can download all but those from the latest series from the main OCR GCE Media Studies website under the past papers tab.

You can download all the most recent past papers from our secure Interchange website. Log onto the site and navigate through the resources tab to find the past papers. If you don't have access to Interchange your exams officer probably does as it is the system they use to make all their entries with OCR and they should be able to get you a login or download the materials for you.

Q. **How can you only give 40 min per question at A2?**

A. The exam is 2 hours which allows for 2x30 minutes for questions 1(a) and 1(b) and one hour for the question chosen in section B.

Q. **Can we have some examples of A2 sample essays**

A. Exemplar answers with commentaries are available on the OCR website under the support materials heading.

Section A

Q.   Can you explain the link between coursework and exam at A2?

A.   Question 1(a) is about the student and their progression across their production work and a broad idea like 'pre-production' or 'technology' or 'creativity' is used to stimulate the response. Question 1(b) is about the product and requires close textual analysis in relation to one or two concepts like 'narrative' or 'genre' of their chosen production.

Q.   Can you suggest some talking points for writing about creativity?

A.   Mark Readman's presentation from the 2009 OCR Media Studies Conference is a really good starting point.

Q.   What theoretical perspectives should be covered for success for question 1(a) and question 1(b)?

A.   Candidates need to understand the concepts that are listed in the specification and be able to apply them. For broader perspectives like say postmodernism, it might be more a case of applying what they learn for question 2 to examples of their work as relevant.

Q.   How do students talk about progress over two projects?

A.   They need to have a framework covering the concepts to apply to their work. It would be essential to spend class time going back over their work towards the end of the course and applying new ideas to the analysis of it.

Q.   Can they refer exclusively to personal projects?

A.   I think they would find it difficult to answer without reference to their A level work but they would not be penalised for a good answer that looked solely at relevant work outside the course.

Q.   What is meant by media language?

A.   The way that meaning is made using the conventions of the particular medium and type of media product. A broader category allowing candidates to write about elements of semiotics, genre, narrative, design, structure, codes and conventions, time and space, aesthetics, spoken, written and visual language to name just a few examples. One specific example would be the use of continuity editing in a film sequence.

Q.   Is it a level playing field between topics on G325?

A.   Yes, there are expectations of depth and breadth for all topics.

Section B

Q. **What kind of preparation tasks should I give my students for section B of the exam?**

A. See the <u>sample scheme of work</u> and <u>teacher support booklet</u> for more information (these are available on the OCR Website). Also see Julian McDougal's <u>OCR Media Studies for A2</u> available from Hodder Education.

Q. **Are there any exemplar answers with commentaries available?**

A Yes, go to the support materials section on the <u>OCR GCE Media Studies website</u> and look for G325.

Q. **How many case studies should candidates revise?**

A. Can cover one theme if you like, but must be looked at across at least two media and therefore at least two texts.

Q. **How many texts should we study?**

A. At least two to cover two media areas but not too many or you risk confusing and overloading your candidates, but it is up to you.

Q. **Should we cover more than one topic?**

A. Up to centres but an advantage of covering more than one topic is that there is potential for productive crossover between a number of the topics.

Q. **For the A2 exam what needs memorising? film, director, dates?**
How accurate do candidates need to be with theorists, date of publication etc?

A. Accurate referencing will be rewarded. It is an important skill for HE and would be expected in any other subject with essay style answers.

Q. **Should examples include dates, director etc**

A. Yes

Q. **Should they compare web 1.0 and web 2.0 websites as examples?**

A. Would probably be hard to find 1.0, but to talk about the key differences would be sensible.

Q. **For question 2 can we focus on censorship? Do we have to explore piracy and control of conglomerates for media regulation?**

A. Knowledge of what the regulation practices of different media are is the requirement for this unit, coupled with debates about those regulation practices, so piracy may be relevant but is not at the core of it.

Q. **Is it correct to assume gender and ethnicity are specific groups for A2?**

A. Not really, but men, women, transgender people, asian british, sub-sahara africans, etc would be. Aim to be more specific in the case studies.

One delegate at an INSET teacher training event recommended 'headliners' for young people representing themselves as a case study.

Q. Is it ok to do two British case studies? e.g. youth in British film and tv?

A. Yes fine.

Q. Is it ok to refer to texts from other cultures?

A. Absolutely.

Q. Collective Identity topic: do students need to look at institutions within this?

A. Yes, where relevant. They might for example be looking at collective identity on MySpace, where it would be relevant to consider who owns it and what they want the site to do for their business and how this relates to the collective audience and its identity.

Q. Are there any theories you would recommend for representation of youth in Collective Identity topic?

A. Writers/critics to consider might include: Stanley Cohen, Angela McRobbie, David Buckingham and Christine Griffin