

GCE

Edexcel GCE

Media: Communication & Production
(8771)

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Examiners' Report

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Introduction

This report has been designed to give centres an insight into the moderation of the June 2006 series. This was the first year this qualification was offered and as such only the Advanced subsidiary units were assessed and are presented in this report.

This Applied GCE has been developed to allow candidates an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skill in an appropriate way.

The moderation of candidates work was undertaken, mainly, through centre visits. Moderators were, generally, given access to the whole range of candidate work and provided with an appropriate space in which to work. There was appropriate technology available to review all formats of media work. The majority of centres used the Unit Assessment record sheets to record decisions and make comments on their candidates work.

The range of work seen by moderators was generally of a high standard. There were some exceptional examples of investigations into media industries, research techniques and technology. However, there was generally a lack of understanding of audience, representation and job roles in the media industry. Many centres did not provide adequate opportunities for their candidates to investigate a media company or to identify and use a range of research techniques or identify relevant progression in skill levels. All of these issues are dealt with in the sections under each unit title.

There were some excellent examples of innovative methods of recording skills, undertaking research using relevant media techniques and finished media products.

The most contentious issue in this series appears to be the use of group work in Unit 3 Media Production Brief. Throughout the specification there are references to the candidate producing individual work for assessment. On page 37 in the introduction it states *"This unit will allow you to put into practice the skills you have developed in Unit 2"* and on page 40 *"For assessment you must hand in your pre-production, production and post-production work.."* In order to achieve well in this unit candidates must produce their own pre-production, production and post-production work not photo-copied group work. If candidates have been supporting each other in these processes, for example as a camera operator or sound recordist, then this should be clearly indicated in the paperwork. Candidates could gain marks for helping one of their colleagues produce their work. It is clear from the Assessment Criteria for Unit 3 that candidates need to produce evidence of their own understanding of pre-production, production and post-production.

However, there have been some excellent examples of relevant media products. The approach of some centres to the holistic delivery of the qualification has allowed some candidates the freedom to experiment and practice skills throughout the course.

Centres will have noted that the criterion A02 (d) in Unit 2 Skills for Media Production requires teachers to review the candidate's progress throughout the period of the course not just in this unit. This requires the teacher to assess this criterion at the end of the course rather than at the end of this unit.

Generally, the work seen by moderators has been of a good standard. There have been some excellent examples of innovative teaching methods being employed by centres. There have been good examples of teachers comments on the Unit Assessment Record validating the marks awarded to their candidates. The range of media products produced in Unit 3 has been varied and, in some cases, innovative and reflecting professional practice.

Unit 1: Industries, Texts and Audiences (6973)

This unit requires candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the macro-organisation of an area of the media industry. There was some confusion in centres about what constitutes an area of the media industry. It may be inappropriate to simply study Hollywood as an area as this might not provide sufficient material for candidates. Using the BBC does provide material from which candidates can demonstrate understanding and knowledge. Information on the BBC is readily available and the candidate can place this information in their own framework of understanding. The use of Hollywood may provide some glamorous insight into the world of film but information might be difficult to find. It may be relevant to use a media medium such as newspapers or magazines as information can be easily accessed and examples found easily. This media form could also provide a starting point for A01 (b) where candidates have to look at a media company (micro-organisation). Candidates must be guided clearly to an area of the media that the teacher has clear knowledge and understanding of not simply what might be the most glamorous. Equally, candidates need to be engaged by this work and so should have an opportunity to pick from a list and not simply given a topic. It may be relevant to provide a list and ask individuals or groups of candidates to research and come up with a report or presentation on that particular area of the media industry. These reports or presentations could be a good point of reference for all the candidates when trying to find material for A01 (b) or when deciding on a project for Unit 3.

Whatever was chosen for the media industry there appears to be only limited understanding of how this affects the industry's products.

There appears to be a lack of understanding of what constitutes the knowledge of a media company. The specification, on page 19, suggests that a case study of a local media company would provide the evidence for this criterion. There was evidence, from some centres, of developing links with local or national media companies. In some centres visiting professionals provided valuable insight into their media company. In one centre candidates had produced a DVD about a local media company. There was overall a lack of linking of what the company does, the job roles within the company, conditions of employment and possible career pathways. It may be possible to provide candidates with a pro-forma that allows them to record these on a visit or when a visiting practitioner comes into the centre. Where there had been successful engagement with a local company candidates had established potential job opportunities and careers. It may also be appropriate to link this criterion with a work experience package.

A04 (c) was generally answered well although some candidates presented only limited evidence of understanding of how the industry thinks about its audience. Generally, centres had linked this criterion with A01 (a) and used this to look at audience. There was a lack of understanding of representation issues. The use of group activities to analyse and discuss audience and representation would provide a valuable resource for the whole cohort. There were some good examples of alternative assessment methods being employed, such as presentations and illustrated reports.

Criterion A04 (d) was the least well answered section of Unit 1. Some candidates only responded to a text rather than the texts as indicated in the criterion. This resulted in a lack of depth of understanding of how texts can be understood and interpreted. In some cases extra evidence for this criterion was found in the research work undertaken for Unit 2. If this is the case teachers should take this into account when marking work for this criterion. They should also make a note on the Unit Assessment Record to alert the moderator.

Unit 2: Skills for Media Production (6974)

In general candidates responded well to this unit. They were able to identify a range of research methods and then employ them in the planning of a media product. Some centres used this as an opportunity to develop research for Unit 3 Media Production Brief. At the top of the mark band the research work was evaluative, wide ranging and analytical. At the bottom end there was an over reliance on class handouts and downloaded and un-annotated Internet material. Candidates should be encouraged to keep careful and well-collated records of their research.

Criterion A02 (c) required the candidate to show understanding of production equipment and technology. There needs to be a more rigorous mapping of candidate's achievement for this criterion. Teacher observations undertaken at various stages of this unit and Unit 3 would provide clear evidence of understanding and the level of support and guidance required. It was often difficult to validate the marks awarded for this criterion where there was no teacher comments provided.

Again this would have been useful for A02 (d) where the achievement of the candidate should be mapped across the course. It was difficult to make a judgement on accurate assessment when there are no teacher observations or records of the candidates developing skills. It would be useful to have a starting point for skill level by undertaking an initial skills audit. This had been successfully undertaken by a number of centres and provided a real opportunity for learners to engage with the skill development process.

Unit 3: Media Production Brief (6975)

It was good to see the range of media products produced by candidates. This ranged from sophisticated short commercials on global warming to posters and charts on waste material. It was clear that candidates had engaged with this brief and had been given an opportunity to demonstrate their developing skills in media production.

However, there was a marked lack of understanding of pre-production, production and post-production documentation. It is clear that many centres do not have an understanding of what paperwork is required for coverage of this criterion. The suggested paperwork should be: a proposal, treatment, storyboard or mood board, script, production schedule, budget and call sheets.

It is suggested that centres refer to the exemplar material for the A2 Unit 5 Media Production Project that will be available to centres in the autumn term. This DVD has examples of the paperwork required for unit 5 and could also be used for Unit 3 work.

In general candidates did provide a relevant media product that achieved its intention and demonstrated some imagination. Where candidates were given free reign to plan and produce their ideas it was clear that they had fully engaged with the product.

In some centres candidates had produced a group product with little evidence of the candidate's contribution to the process. The unit specification should have alerted centres to the need for each candidate to produce a media product in order to meet the assessment criteria. If a group approach had been undertaken each candidate must have contributed significantly to all areas of pre-production, production and post-production. A photo-copied group logbook is not sufficient evidence for A02 (a), A03 (b) and A03 (c).

The range of creativity seen in the media products moderated demonstrates the skills that many teachers have in motivating their candidates to realise their potential. Candidates should be given every opportunity to build on the skills developed in Unit 1 and Unit 2. Their understanding of codes, conventions and genre should inform their planning for a media product. The skills developed in Unit 2 should provide an opportunity to prove that they have skills in pre-production, production and post-production.

The weakest area of this unit was A04 (d) where many candidates failed to provide even a basic evaluation of their work or the product's fitness for purpose. Candidates should be encouraged to review their work and to ask others for their comments on their work and fitness for purpose of the product. All too often the evaluation was historical and not evaluative. Candidates must move away from what they did to how well it went and what they would do if they could tackle this again. A group critique of work with constructive comments from peers is a useful tool as is a showing of work to a focus group or small audience. Analysis of the results of this could provide valuable evidence for making changes to the product, resulting in a higher mark. Centres should consider providing alternative methods of recording evaluation such as a commentary track on a candidate's DVD programme or an on-going annotation of a print product.

Statistics

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Unit 1: Industries, Texts and Audiences (6973)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	48	41	35	29	23
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 2: Skills for Media Production (6974)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	48	41	35	29	23
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 3: Media Production Brief (6975)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	47	41	35	29	23
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Advanced Subsidiary award (8771)

Provisional statistics for the award (770 candidates)

	A	B	C	D	E
Cumulative %	8.1	23.2	50.6	72.4	85.2

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