



2011 Media Studies

Advanced Higher Dissertation

Finalised Marking Instructions

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Media Studies Advanced Higher

Media Investigation Unit Dissertation

Marking Instructions

The Dissertation forms the external assessment for the Advanced Higher unit, Media Investigation.

The Dissertation must be submitted to the SQA. 30 marks are attached to the Dissertation, remaining 70 marks are attached to the examination paper.

The Dissertation must be between 2500 and 3000 words in length, excluding quotations and references. Excessive length will be penalised.

The Dissertation is an extended response and must have an introduction, structured exposition, conclusions and references.

The subject-matter of the Dissertation must be concerned with a media studies/media issue – that is, it must relate to the media of mass communication (not to, for example, the public sphere in general or to interpersonal communication).

The candidate must clearly identify the issue to be investigated and the aspect of that issue which is to form the topic of the Dissertation, relating the overall issue to its context.

The candidate should select an appropriate method of investigation. The candidate must justify the choice of method convincingly. The marker may not agree with the choice, but should give credit for the validity of the evaluation and justification.

The candidate should evaluate the method(s) selected, point out the strengths and weaknesses. They should evaluate viewpoints, theories and research.

Source materials should be acknowledged and evaluated in terms of their relevance and validity. Many of these materials in the media sphere, especially those which come via the Internet, will have been put out by the media institutions themselves – candidates should demonstrate awareness of bias, partial truth, etc, and find ways of testing validity (such as by questionnaires, reference to other means of communication – eg journals, books).

The information taken from these acknowledged, verified sources must be appropriate to the aspect of the issue which was clarified in the introduction to the Dissertation. Sources must at all times be acknowledged and ideas never plagiarised.

The candidate must draw conclusions from the material gathered and justify these clearly in relation both to the material and to the aspect of the issue investigated.

All assertions and generalisations must be justified validly.

Sources should be acknowledged throughout the body of the Dissertation and listed in a final “bibliography” which is laid out in the conventional manner.

The opportunity exists to offer the full range of marks if the dissertation does one or more of the following:

- question and evaluate methods of media investigation, thus demonstrating a wide and thorough knowledge and understanding of such methods in order to select appropriately
- question and evaluate sources of information, thus demonstrating a wide and thorough knowledge and understanding of a variety of sources in order to cross-check validity
- draw original and justified conclusions, thus demonstrating an ability to think creatively
- acknowledge other points of view and take these into account, thus demonstrating a wide and thorough knowledge and understanding of the issue selected and
- express these findings and conclusions lucidly and convincingly, whether or not the marker agrees with the candidate’s opinions.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]