

GCE AS and A Level Subject Criteria for Media Studies



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The criteria

Introduction

AS and A level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding body creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and objectives

1. AS and A level specifications in media studies should encourage learners to:
 - enhance their enjoyment and appreciation of the media and its role in their daily lives;
 - develop critical understanding of the media through engagement with media products and concepts and through the creative application of practical skills;
 - explore production processes, technologies and other relevant contexts;
 - become independent in research skills and their application, in their practical work and in developing their own views and interpretations.

Subject content

2. AS and A level specifications in media studies should build on learners' informal learning, prior experience of media in key stages 1 to 3 and the knowledge, understanding and skills established at key stage 4. AS specifications should introduce learners to a range of media products, concepts and contexts, the study of which will inform their practical production work. A level specifications should extend this study in breadth and depth, and further develop learners' independence, critical understanding and skills in research and analysis.
3. At A2 learners should be able to synthesise the knowledge, understanding and skills gained at AS, demonstrating the ability to engage with increasingly complex and sophisticated ideas. They should also experience a wider range of critical perspectives, developing and demonstrating an understanding of how wider contexts such as social,

economic, cultural, historical, political factors shape the creation of meanings and responses.

Knowledge, understanding and skills

4. AS and A level specifications must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
 - how media forms, codes and conventions create meanings;
 - how the media represents, for example, events, issues, places, social/cultural groups;
 - contexts of media production and distribution;
 - media technologies;
 - how different audiences/users respond to and interact with media products and processes;
 - relevant critical debates about the media;
 - a minimum of three different media.
5. In addition at A level learners must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
 - how wider contexts shape the creation of meaning and responses;
 - a wider range of critical debates and perspectives.
6. AS and A level specifications must require learners to develop the ability to:
 - use media terminology appropriately;
 - undertake relevant research;
 - research, plan and construct media products and evaluate the products and the processes;
 - apply their knowledge and understanding of media concepts through analysis and interpretation of media products;
 - present ideas and arguments supported by evidence.

7. In addition at A level:

- engage with increasingly complex and sophisticated ideas and concepts;
- make connections between media concepts, products and contexts and critical debates that inform the study of them;
- use research in a focused way to support a specific outcome.

Assessment objectives

8. Knowledge, understanding and skills are closely linked. The specifications must require that all candidates meet the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills prescribed.
9. The assessment objectives are to be weighted in all specifications as indicated in the following table.

Assessment objectives		Weighting		
		AS level	A2 level	Overall
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates	30–40%	30–40%	30–40%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding when analysing media products and processes and evaluating their own practical work, to show how meanings and responses are created	30–40%	30–40%	30–40%
AO3	Demonstrate the ability to plan and construct media products using appropriate technical and creative skills	20–30%	20–30%	20–30%
AO4	Demonstrate the ability to undertake, apply and present appropriate research	10–15%	10–15%	10–15%

Scheme of assessment

Number of units

10. All A level specifications in media studies must be assessed through four units.

Internal assessment

11. All A level specifications in media studies must include internal assessment up to a maximum weighting of 40–50 per cent. The weighting for internal assessment must not exceed 50 per cent at either AS or A2 level.
12. Where internal assessment is included, specifications must make clear how reliability and fairness are secured, by setting out requirements that ensure the robustness of each stage of the internal assessment, i.e.:
 - the specific skills to be assessed;
 - setting of tasks;
 - extent of supervision in carrying out of tasks;
 - conditions under which assessment takes place;
 - the marking of the assessment;
 - the internal standardising procedures and associated moderation processes.

Synoptic assessment

13. Synoptic assessment in media studies must take account of the requirement that A level qualifications should enable candidates to develop a broader and deeper understanding of the links between the elements of knowledge and understanding set out in the specification as a whole.
14. Synoptic assessment will involve the explicit synthesis of insights gained from a close and detailed study of a range of media texts, institutions and technologies. It will require candidates to show evidence of the ways in which contextual factors and media concepts inform their own readings, and ensure that candidates demonstrate their skills of interpretation and evaluation to give articulate, well-argued responses.
15. The assessment at A2 must require candidates to draw together insights gained from their study of a range of media texts and experience of

practical production. Learners will be expected to show the ability to make connections between media concepts, products and contexts and the critical debates that inform the study of them.

Group production

16. All specifications in media studies must make clear how they will make arrangements to mark individual candidates as *contributors* to a group production and not as *sharers* of a final mark awarded for the overall quality of a final product.

AS performance descriptions for media studies

	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2	Assessment objective 3	Assessment objective 4
Assessment objectives	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates.	Apply knowledge and understanding when analysing media products and processes and evaluating their own practical work, to show how meanings and responses are created.	Demonstrate the ability to plan and construct media products using appropriate technical and creative skills.	Demonstrate the ability to undertake, apply and present appropriate research.
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate relevant knowledge and understanding of media concepts;</p> <p>b) sustain relevant arguments linked to media contexts and critical debates;</p> <p>c) structure and organise their writing;</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate a basic understanding of media forms, codes and conventions;</p> <p>b) explore, through analysis of media products and processes, how these aspects create meaning;</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) construct a media product using appropriate technical and creative skills;</p> <p>b) demonstrate controlled use of the selected technology.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate an understanding of research skills and appropriate methods;</p> <p>b) present relevant research findings or conclusions;</p> <p>c) produce a reflective evaluation of the process and its outcomes.</p>

	d) communicate content and meaning through expressive and accurate writing.	c) evaluate their own work with reference to these aspects and the shaping of audience response.		
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate some knowledge and understanding of media concepts;</p> <p>b) make reference to media contexts and critical debates;</p> <p>c) communicate meaning using straightforward language.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate understanding of media forms, codes or conventions;</p> <p>b) link media products and processes to the creation of meaning;</p> <p>c) evaluate their own work with reference to these aspects or the shaping of audience response.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) construct a media product using technical and creative skills;</p> <p>b) demonstrate the use of the selected technology.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate an understanding of research skills and methods;</p> <p>b) present research findings or conclusions;</p> <p>c) comment on the research process or its outcomes.</p>

A2 performance descriptions for media studies

	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2	Assessment objective 3	Assessment objective 4
Assessment objectives	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates	Apply knowledge and understanding when analysing media products and processes and evaluating their own practical work, to show how meanings and responses are created.	Demonstrate the ability to plan and construct media products using appropriate technical and creative skills.	Demonstrate the ability to undertake, apply and present appropriate research.
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate detailed knowledge and understanding of media concepts;</p> <p>b) create and sustain well-organised and coherent arguments linked to media contexts and critical debates;</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate an informed understanding of media forms, codes and conventions;</p> <p>b) explore, through detailed analysis of media products and processes, how these aspects create meaning;</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) research, plan and construct a media product selecting appropriate technical and creative skills;</p> <p>b) demonstrate controlled and creative use of the selected technology.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate an informed understanding of research skills selecting appropriate methods;</p> <p>b) present relevant and detailed research findings and conclusions;</p> <p>c) produce a critical and</p>

	<p>c) structure and organise their writing using an appropriate register;</p> <p>d) communicate content and meaning through expressive and accurate writing.</p>	<p>c) evaluate their own work with close reference to these aspects and the shaping of audience or user response.</p>		<p>reflective evaluation of the process and its outcomes.</p>
<p>E/U boundary performance descriptions</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate knowledge and understanding of media concepts;</p> <p>b) develop arguments linked to media contexts or critical debates;</p> <p>c) structure and organise their writing;</p> <p>d) communicate content and meaning using accurate,</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate an informed understanding of media forms, codes and conventions;</p> <p>b) explore, through detailed analysis of media products and processes, how these aspects create meaning;</p> <p>c) evaluate their own work with close reference to these</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) research, plan and construct a media product using technical and creative skills;</p> <p>b) demonstrate the creative use of the selected technology.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate understanding of research skills and methods;</p> <p>b) present relevant research findings and conclusions;</p> <p>c) produce a reflective evaluation of the process.</p>

	straightforward language.	aspects and the shaping of audience or user response.		
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