

GCE Subject Criteria for Applied Media: Communication and Production

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The criteria

Introduction

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

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

Aims and objectives

1. Subject criteria define the relationship between the AS (3-unit), the AS double award (6-unit), the A level (6-unit) and the A level double award (12-unit).
2. Any GCE specification that contains significant elements of the subject media: communication and production must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria. Awarding organisations must ensure that GCE specifications and external assessment approaches are clearly differentiated from other qualifications they offer in this and similar subject(s) at this level.
3. The titles of the qualifications are:
 - Advanced Subsidiary General Certificate of Education in Media: Communication and Production;
 - Advanced Subsidiary General Certificate of Education in Media: Communication and Production (double award);
 - Advanced General Certificate of Education in Media: Communication and Production;
 - Advanced General Certificate of Education in Media: Communication and Production (double award).
4. All specifications in Media: Communication and Production should encourage learners to develop broad understanding, knowledge and skills of media applied within a work-related, client-orientated context. The term 'vocational' is used to characterise learning approaches and activities that are work-related. In other words, reflecting the working practices of, and constraints on, professionals in media. Specifications should prepare learners for further study or training in media-related occupations.

5. All specifications in Media: Communication and Production should encourage learners to:
 - develop practical media skills, techniques and processes;
 - study the working methods used by professional media practitioners as both individual and team workers;
 - explore media practice in terms of products, services and audiences;
 - develop ways of working that emphasise practical independence and self-directed learning and improving practice over time;
 - explore how meaning is created and communicated through experimentation in a range of media.
6. In addition, AS and AS (double award) specifications should emphasise an understanding of the practical aspects of media production with reference to industry practices. AS and AS (double award) specifications in Media: Communication and Production must also offer a broad and balanced experience and the opportunity for learners to develop their skills and understanding in the areas of study listed in the 'Specification content' section.
7. A level and A level (double award) specifications should encourage a 'holistic' understanding of the media and provide opportunities for in-depth study of media skills, techniques and processes.
8. All specifications in Media: Communication and Production should support progression to courses that might be general or multidisciplinary throughout; start general and become more specialist; or be specialist throughout.

Specification content

9. All specifications must build on the knowledge, skills and understanding that may be acquired through level 2 qualifications in media studies and/or English or through equivalent experience.
10. Core content, which is common to all awarding organisation specifications, is grouped into three main areas of study:
 - the structure of and professional practice within the media industries (for example television, radio, film, publishing, print,

animation, facilities, interactive media, music, commercials and business to business);

- the skills, techniques and production methods needed to make a media product (for example audiovisual production, publishing, multimedia and interactive media);
 - the analysis and evaluation of media practices and products.
11. The areas of study are described in 'The structure of and professional practice within the media industries', 'The skills, techniques and production methods needed to make a media product' and 'Analysis and evaluation of media practices and products'. Area of study titles do not necessarily constitute assessment unit titles.
 12. AS and A level (double award) specifications must include considerable emphasis on the practical skills and techniques described in 'The skills, techniques and production methods needed to make a media product'. This may allow for specialisation within a particular discipline or technical area, or offer more general, multi-skilled opportunities.
 13. In order that learners gain a 'holistic' understanding of the media, it is essential that each area of study allows for progression from AS to A level. A level content will further develop skills and extend beyond AS in terms of depth, complexity and application of knowledge, skills and understanding of media: communication and production.
 14. At least two-thirds of each AS specification must consist of knowledge, skills and understanding specified in 'The structure of and professional practice within the media industries', 'The skills, techniques and production methods needed to make a media product' and 'Analysis and evaluation of media practices and products'. Awarding organisations must indicate additional areas of study related to media that build on the content set out in those sections in the remaining one-third of the AS specification.
 15. At least one-third of the content for the AS (double award) must consist of the knowledge, skills and understanding specified in 'The structure of and professional practice within the media industries', 'The skills, techniques and production methods needed to make a media product' and 'Analysis and evaluation of media practices and products'. Awarding organisations must include additional areas of study related to media that build on the content set out in those sections in the remaining two-thirds of the AS (double award) specification.

16. At least two-thirds of the A level content must consist of knowledge, skills and understanding specified in 'The structure of and professional practice within the media industries', 'The skills, techniques and production methods needed to make a media product' and 'Analysis and evaluation of media practices and products'; and have a greater emphasis on professional practice than that at AS. Awarding organisations must include additional areas of study related to media that build on the content set out in those sections in the remaining one-third of the A level content.
17. At least one-third of the content of each A level (double award) specification must consist of knowledge, skills and understanding specified in 'The structure of and professional practice within the media industries', 'The skills, techniques and production methods needed to make a media product' and 'Analysis and evaluation of media practices and products'. Awarding organisations must include additional areas of study related to media that build on the content set out in those sections in the remaining two-thirds of the A level content.

The structure of and professional practice within the media industries

18. Media

- 18.1 All specifications must provide opportunities for learners to understand the progression routes available in media and media-related industries.
- 18.2 AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to investigate the scope and operations of media industries (for example television, radio, film, publishing, print, animation, facilities, interactive media, commercials, music and business to business) and their products.
- 18.3 A level (6-unit) and A level double award (12-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to study media organisations and the regulatory controls affecting their operations.

19. Professional practice

- 19.1 AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to:
 - investigate a range of roles and working practices of professional media practitioners;

- make a realistic assessment of their own skills.
- 19.2 A level (6-unit) and A level double award (12-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to:
- investigate professional practice in more depth, including how constraints (commercial or funding arrangements, budgetary considerations, legal and other resource issues, and time pressures) or ethical issues can affect the development of projects;
 - develop awareness and understanding of their own practice in relation to professional working practices.

The skills, techniques and production methods needed to make a media product

20. The areas detailed below show a four-stage process of media production. All specifications must include these processes as part of the development and application of skills and techniques. AS specifications should focus on the development of skills and techniques in an experiential way. A level learners should learn from their experiences, monitoring and reviewing activities undertaken during AS to enhance and consolidate the development of their skills.

21. Developing ideas

21.1 AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to understand the concepts of developing ideas against a brief, using relevant information (for example understanding the brief, testing the feasibility of ideas and communicating with the client/commissioner).

21.2 A level (6-unit) and A level double award (12-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to use their previous experience and understanding of media and production to inform and develop ideas.

22. Analysing and researching a brief

22.1 AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to understand research techniques and methods of gathering, recording, organising and presenting information (for example using primary and secondary sources, and qualitative and quantitative data), and

how these would be used in the context of a work-related brief for an audience.

- 22.2 A level (six-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to:
- carry out detailed research and produce practical work linked to findings;
 - consider the implications of professional considerations to their own work.
- 22.3 A level double award (12-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to carry out detailed research into a broad and diverse range of others' work, as well as producing and analysing own work.

23. Realising media products using specialist technical skills

- 23.1 All specifications must provide opportunities for learners to:
- consider and apply appropriate presentation methods, and understand and apply the production planning process (pre-production, production and post-production);
 - develop an awareness of multi-skilling and how this is applied to their own skills development and professional practice;
 - develop technical skills in one or more of the following areas:
 - video production (for example operation of equipment, working as part of a team, and editing and presenting material);
 - sound production (for example operation of equipment, working as part of a team, and editing and presenting material);
 - publishing (for example writing for different audiences and contexts, producing images, sub-editing, layout and using appropriate IT packages);
 - multimedia production (for example producing storyboards and using multimedia and image manipulation applications).

- 23.2 AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to develop their skills in relation to media practices.
- 23.3 A level (6-unit) and A level double award (12-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to consider and engage in the wider contexts of professional practice.

24. Monitoring and reviewing processes

- 24.1 All specifications must provide opportunities for learners to:
- review products against the original brief, including criteria of aesthetic and technical quality, and personal and others' opinions, for example audience, client and peers (both subjective and objective);
 - show awareness and understanding of the development of interpersonal skills and team working during the production process.

Analysis and evaluation of media practices and products

25. All specifications must provide opportunities for learners to understand the codes and conventions of various media genres through the critical analysis and evaluation of media texts, practices and products (both their own and those produced by others).
26. AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to understand and demonstrate the techniques of analysis (including consideration of the symbolic and technical devices used to communicate with audiences), and how and why these are applied in practice.
27. A level (6-unit) and A level double award (12-unit) specifications must provide opportunities for learners to develop more sophistication in applying techniques of analysis to their own and others' work (including consideration of legal and ethical constraints on professional practice, and how and why these are applied).
28. Specifications must present content in a coherent and appropriate manner, fit for teaching, learning and assessment purposes.
29. All specifications must:

- include guidance for teachers on the provision of the vocational context set out for learners;
- set out for learners the purpose and vocational relevance of the content (knowledge, skills and understanding);
- set out for learners the skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need to demonstrate to achieve the assessment units;
- set out for learners the evidence that they will need to produce for the internally assessed units;
- set out for learners the marking criteria for the internally assessed units against which they will be assessed.

Assessment objectives

30. All specifications in Media: Communication and Production must require learners to demonstrate the assessment objectives in an vocationally related context.
31. The weightings for the assessment objectives over the whole qualification must be between the ranges set out below:

Assessment objective		Weighting (%)		
		AS	A2	A level / A level (double award)
AO1	Knowledge and understanding of the media industries Learners demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media industries and what they produce, and employment and working practices.	10–20	10–20	10–20
AO2	Demonstrating practical and technical skills and understanding Learners demonstrate practical skills and techniques in media production processes.	40–50	20–30	30–40
AO3	Creating media products Learners create media products by applying skills and techniques through the realisation and presentation of work in institutional contexts.	20–30	40–50	30–40
AO4	Analysis and evaluation Learners apply skills of critical analysis to show how meanings are created in media texts, and evaluate their own or others' practice and products to draw conclusions and	10–20	10–20	10–20

	make judgements about working practice.			
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Scheme of assessment

32. Assessment units must be assessed either internally or externally.
33. AS content and A level content must be assessed separately.
34. In each AS qualification, at least one assessment unit must be assessed externally.
35. In each AS (double award) qualification, at least two assessment units must be assessed externally.
36. In each A level qualification, at least two assessment units must be assessed externally, one of which must be in A level.
37. In each A level (double award) qualification, at least three assessment units must be assessed externally, one of which must be in A level.
38. All specifications must include external assessment that is set externally, timed and includes some part completed under 'controlled' conditions. The assessed outcome(s) should be marked by the awarding organisation or marked by the centre and moderated by the awarding organisation.
39. All external assessments must emphasise practical work and must include some form of appropriate written communication.¹ The duration of the external assessment will be determined by the nature of the assessment, which should be fit for purpose.
40. All A level and A level (double award) specifications must include synoptic assessment. Synoptic assessment will involve the learner bringing together and making connections between the areas of knowledge, skills and understanding learned throughout the programme, and applying this when responding to the set requirements.

¹ Any reference to 'writing' or 'written communication' should be interpreted as the production of text by any means, for example pen, word processor and so on.

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