

# **GCE Subject Level Guidance for Media Studies**

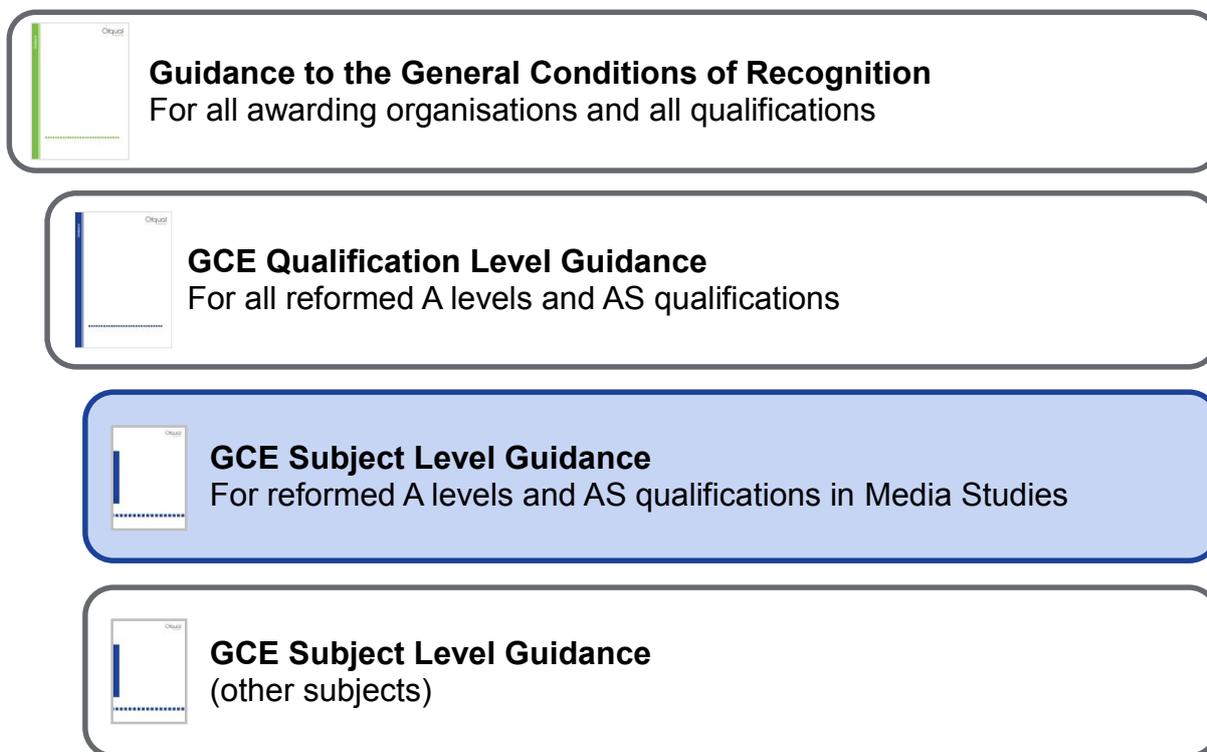
May 2016

# **Contents**

Introduction.....	2
Guidance set out in this document.....	3
Guidance in relation to assessments for GCE Qualifications in Media Studies .....	4
Guidance on the role of unassessed students and others .....	4
Guidance on the design of non-examination assessments.....	4
Guidance on assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Media Studies.....	7

## Introduction

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which outlines our guidance for awarding organisations offering GCE Qualifications.



This document sets out guidance which applies to the following qualifications:

- all GCE A levels in Media Studies awarded on or after 1 April 2019; and
- all standalone GCE AS qualifications in Media Studies awarded on or after 1 April 2018.

This guidance supports the *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Media Studies*.<sup>1</sup>

This document constitutes guidance for the purposes of section 153 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the '2009 Act'), Condition GCE(Media Studies)1 and Condition GCE(Media Studies)2.

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance, where relevant, in relation to each GCE Qualification in Media Studies

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-media-studies](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-media-studies)

that it makes available or proposes to make available. Condition GCE(Media Studies)1 and Condition GCE(Media Studies)2 impose the same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under those Conditions.

An awarding organisation should use the guidance in this document to help it understand how to comply with the *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Media Studies*.

## **Guidance set out in this document**

This document provides guidance on assessments and on assessment objectives, for GCE Qualifications in Media Studies.
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## Guidance in relation to assessments for GCE Qualifications in Media Studies

Condition GCE(Media Studies)2.3 allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to assessments for GCE Qualifications in Media Studies.

We set out our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCE(Media Studies)2.3 below.

### Guidance on the role of unassessed students and others

Paragraph 12 of the document published by the Secretary of State entitled 'Media studies GCE AS and A level subject content', document reference DFE-00031-2016 (the 'Content Document') requires Learners to complete:

... an individual media production in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation.

Footnote 12 on page 10 of the Content Document in respect of a GCE AS qualification in Media Studies, and footnote 13 on page 11 of the Content Document in respect of a GCE A level qualification in Media Studies both state that:

Unassessed students and others may act in, or appear in the media product. In addition, unassessed students and others may operate lighting, sound, recording and other equipment under the direction of the assessed candidate if required.

We expect an awarding organisation to be able to demonstrate in its assessment strategy for a GCE Qualification in Media Studies that it has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that where a Learner utilises unassessed students and others to complete their media production:

- the unassessed students and others work under the direction of the Learner, and
- the Learner is only credited for work that he or she has completed, or which has been completed under his or her direction.

### Guidance on the design of non-examination assessments

Ofqual is mindful of the risk of malpractice, and the risk to an awarding organisation's ability to ensure the maintenance of standards through the control of Component and

qualification outcomes, which may arise from the design of the media production task in a GCE Qualification in Media Studies.

This is particularly the case where an awarding organisation's brief for the task remains the same in successive years as this could lead to Learners' responses focusing on successful productions undertaken by Learners in previous years and an undue strain on grade boundaries in the Assessments by Examination as a means to maintain the standard of the qualification.

Ofqual is also mindful of the risks arising from the timing of the release of the media production task. In particular, the length of the period over which Learners may complete the task may serve to narrow the range of attainments demonstrated by Learners.

General Condition A6.2 requires an awarding organisation to take all reasonable steps to prevent an incident which it has identified could have an Adverse Effect, and to prevent any Adverse Effect that the incident could have should it occur. Where that Adverse Effect cannot be prevented, an awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to mitigate it as far as possible. As defined in General Condition J1.8, an Adverse Effect includes adverse effects to the standard of a qualification.

General Condition A8.1 states that an awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice in the development of its qualifications.

General Condition E4.2 states that in designing an assessment for a qualification, an awarding organisation must ensure that the assessment –

- is fit for purpose,
- allows each learner to generate evidence that can be Authenticated, and
- allows each specified level of attainment detailed in the specification to be reached by a Learner who has attained the required level of knowledge, skills and understanding.

Under General Condition G9.2, an awarding organisation must ensure that the same three requirements are met on delivery of an assessment.

In respect of the assessments that are not Assessments by Examination for a GCE Qualification in Media Studies which it makes available, or proposes to make available, we expect an awarding organisation to –

- (a) take all reasonable steps to prevent and, where prevention is not possible, to mitigate the likelihood of malpractice occurring,

- (b) ensure that the design of those assessments does not place unnecessary strain on the Assessments by Examination as a means to maintain the standard of the qualification,
- (c) take all reasonable steps to ensure that the timing of the release of the media production task does not unduly narrow the range of attainments demonstrated by Learners, and
- (d) demonstrate in its assessment strategy how it has sought to fulfil the three aims above.

## Guidance on assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Media Studies

Condition GCE(Media Studies)1.2 allows us to specify requirements and guidance relating to assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Media Studies.

We published our requirements in relation to assessment objectives in *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Media Studies*, and reproduce them in the table below.

	Objective	Weighting (A level)	Weighting (AS)
<b>AO1</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the theoretical framework of media</li> <li>■ contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.</li> </ul>	25-35%	25-35%
<b>AO2 (AS)</b>	Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories</li> <li>■ make judgements and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>	n/a	35-45%
<b>AO2 (A level)</b>	Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories</li> <li>■ evaluate academic theories</li> <li>■ make judgements and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>	35-45%	n/a
<b>AO3</b>	Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.	30%	30%

We set out below our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCE(Media Studies)1.2. This guidance explains how we expect awarding organisations to interpret these assessment objectives in terms of:

- the different 'strands' within each of the assessment objectives;
- the discrete 'elements' within each assessment objective and its strands that questions and tasks could target and/or seek to credit – our expectation is that each and every question/task should target or seek to credit at least one of these elements, and may target or seek to credit multiple elements across one or more assessment objectives;
- the coverage expectations, such as in relation to the different elements within each assessment objective and how those elements should be sampled over time; and
- the key areas of emphasis in each assessment objective and the particular meaning for the subject of any key terms and phrases used; defined terms are shown in bold text, followed by their definitions.

In line with the obligations set out in Condition GCE(Media Studies)1.2, we expect awarding organisations to be able to demonstrate how they have had regard to this guidance. For example, an awarding organisation could map how it has regard to the guidance as it:

- develops its sample assessment materials;
- delivers the qualification;
- develops and applies its approach to sampling the elements into which the assessment objectives are divided; and
- monitors the qualification to make sure it addresses all elements appropriately.

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:			25-35% (A level) 25-35% (AS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the theoretical framework of media</li> <li>■ contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.</li> </ul>			
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
<b>1 – Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.</b>	1a – Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments<sup>2</sup> (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ A reasonable balance between the strands, and between the elements within each strand.</li> <li>■ Awarding organisations should explain and justify the balance between strands and elements in their assessment strategies.</li> <li>■ No more than 10% of the total marks for the qualification should reward demonstrating knowledge in isolation.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>The theoretical framework of media</b> is an aspect of subject content as set out in paragraph 5 of the document published by the Secretary of State entitled ‘Media studies GCE AS and A level subject content’, document reference DFE-00031-2016 (the ‘Content Document’). It includes media language, representation, industries and audiences as set out in paragraphs 13 to 28 of the Content Document.</li> <li>■ <b>Contexts of Media</b> include social, cultural, economic, political or historical contexts.</li> <li>■ <b>Media products</b> is defined in footnote 1 on page 4 of the Content Document.</li> </ul>
	1b – Demonstrate understanding of the theoretical framework of media.		
<b>2 – Demonstrate knowledge and</b>	2a – Demonstrate knowledge of contexts of media and their influence		

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this guidance, a ‘set of assessments’ means the assessments to be taken by a particular Learner for a GCE Qualification in Media Studies. For clarity, the assessments taken by Learners may vary, depending on any possible routes through the qualification.

<sup>3</sup> Marks which ‘reward demonstrating knowledge in isolation’ means any mark awarded solely for recalling facts or other knowledge. It does not include marks awarded for selecting appropriate knowledge (for example, to evidence an argument), or for applying knowledge to a particular context.

<b>AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the theoretical framework of media</li> <li>■ contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.</li> </ul>		25-35% (A level) 25-35% (AS)	
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
<b>understanding of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.</b>	on media products and processes.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Media processes</b> include production, distribution, marketing, regulation, circulation and audience consumption.</li> </ul>
	2b – Demonstrate understanding of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.		

AO2 (AS): Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:		n/a (A level) 35-45% (AS)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories</li> <li>■ make judgements and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>			
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
<b>1 – Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories.</b>	This strand is a single element.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ A reasonable balance between the strands.</li> <li>■ Awarding organisations should explain and justify the balance between the strands in their assessment strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Analyse</b> means deconstructing information and/or issues to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning.</li> <li>■ <b>Media products, the theoretical framework of media, and contexts</b> are as defined in the guidance on assessment objective AO1.</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions.</b>	This strand is a single element		

AO2 (A level): Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:			35-45% (A level) n/a (AS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories</li> <li>■ evaluate academic theories</li> <li>■ make judgements and draw conclusions.</li> </ul>			
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
<b>1 – Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories</b>	This strand is a single element.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ A reasonable balance between the strands.</li> <li>■ Awarding organisations should explain and justify the balance between the strands in their assessment strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Analyse</b> means deconstructing information and/or issues to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning.</li> <li>■ <b>Media products, the theoretical framework of media, and contexts</b> are as defined in the guidance on assessment objective AO1.</li> </ul>
<b>2 – Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to evaluate academic theories.</b>	This strand is a single element.		
<b>3 – Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions.</b>	This strand is a single element.		

AO3: Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.		30% (A level) 30% (AS)	
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	This AO is a single element.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full coverage in every task that addresses it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Media products</b> in the context of this assessment objective is as defined in footnote 1 on page 4 of the Content Document, and footnote 6 on page 6 of the Content Document. In the context of this assessment objective there is no expectation that Learners will create whole media products (for example a complete newspaper). Awarding organisations should explain and justify their approach to the assessment of creation of media products in their assessment strategies.</li> <li><b>The theoretical framework of media</b> is as defined in the guidance on assessment objective AO1.</li> </ul>

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