

CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Media Studies (2021)

November 2020

ofqual

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Introduction

About this document

This document is part of a suite of documents which sets out the regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in 2021.

We have developed these requirements with the intention that GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) should fulfil the following purposes:

- to provide evidence of students' achievements against demanding and fulfilling content;
- to provide a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment; and
- to provide (if required) a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of all of their students.

Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the GCSE Subject Level Conditions for Media Studies. These conditions will come into effect at 09:30 on 5 November 2020 for all GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in Media Studies for Learners completing the qualification in 2021, except where the GQCov Framework applies.

- It also sets out our requirements in relation to:
- interpretation of the content document - an awarding organisation must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE (Media Studies)1.1(c);
- assessment objectives - awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE (Media Studies)1.2; and
- assessment - awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE (Media Studies) 2.3.

Appendix 1 reproduces the requirements in relation to [subject content for GCSE Media Studies](#), as published by the Department for Education. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE (Media Studies)1.1.

With respect to GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in Media Studies in 2021, awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our [General Conditions of Recognition](#), which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications; and
- our [GCSE Qualification Level Conditions](#); and
- all [relevant Regulatory Documents](#).

With respect to GCSE qualifications in Media Studies taken by Learners completing the qualification in 2022 and after, an awarding organisation must continue to comply with the [GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Media Studies](#).

Subject level conditions

GCSE Subject Level Conditions for Media Studies

Condition GCSE (Media Studies) 1: Compliance with content requirements

GCSE (Media Studies)1.1

In respect of each GCSE Qualification in Media Studies which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must -

- (a) comply with the requirements relating to that qualification set out in the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Media studies GCSE subject content](#)', document reference DFE-00032-2016,
- (b) have regard to any recommendations or guidelines relating to that qualification set out in that document, and
- (c) interpret that document in accordance with any requirements, and having regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

GCSE (Media Studies)1.2

In respect of each GCSE Qualification in Media Studies which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must comply with any requirements, and have regard to any guidance, relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for that qualification which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

Condition GCSE (Media Studies) 2: Assessment

GCSE (Media Studies)2.1

Condition GCSE4.1 does not apply to any GCSE Qualification in Media Studies which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

GCSE (Media Studies)2.2

In respect of the total marks available for a GCSE Qualification in Media Studies which it makes available, an awarding organisation must ensure that -

- (a) 70 per cent of those marks are made available through Assessments by Examination, and
- (b) 30 per cent of those marks are made available through assessments set by the awarding organisation that are not Assessments by Examination.

GCSE (Media Studies)2.3

An awarding organisation must ensure that in respect of each assessment for a GCSE Qualification in Media Studies which it makes available it complies with any requirements, and has regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

Subject content requirements

Requirements in relation to subject content for GCSE Qualifications in Media Studies

The subject content for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in Media Studies is set out in the Department for Education's [Media Studies GCSE subject content](#), document reference DFE-00032-2016 (the 'Content Document').

Condition GCSE (Media Studies) 1.1(c) requires awarding organisations to interpret the Content Document in line with any requirements, and having regard to any guidance, published by Ofqual.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition GCSE (Media Studies)1.1(c) below.

Media products

An awarding organisation must interpret paragraphs 11 and 18 of the Content Document as if the requirement for Learners to complete one individual media production can be met through the submission by the Learner of a mock-up or prototype rather than a finished product.

Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives - GCSE Qualifications in Media Studies

Condition GCSE (Media Studies)1.2 allows us to specify requirements relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for GCSE Qualifications in Media Studies.

The assessment objectives set out below constitute requirements for the purposes of Condition GCSE (Media Studies)1.2. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements in relation to all GCSE Qualifications in Media Studies they make available.

	Objective	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: the theoretical framework of media contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.	30%
AO2	Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media, including in relation to their contexts, to make judgements and draw conclusions.	40%
AO3	Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.	30%

Assessment requirements

Assessment requirements - GCSE Qualifications in Media Studies

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

We set out below our requirements for the purposes of Condition GCSE (Media Studies)2.3. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements in relation to all GCSE Qualifications in Media Studies they make available.

Non-examination Assessment

Condition GCSE (Media Studies) 2.2(b) states that an awarding organisation must ensure that, of the total marks available for a GCSE Qualification in Media Studies, 30 per cent of those marks are made available through assessments that are not Assessments by Examination.

An awarding organisation must ensure that all of that 30 per cent of marks are made available in respect of assessment objective AO3 (i.e. assessing AO3 in its entirety).

In respect of the assessments that are not Assessments by Examination, an awarding organisation must ensure that each Learner is required to complete a single task which -

- (a) requires that Learner to complete one individual media production, or a mock-up or prototype of such a production with supporting evidence as necessary, in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation, and
- (b) must be taken under conditions specified by the awarding organisations, including, in particular, conditions which ensure that the evidence generated by each Learner can be Authenticated.

Where a mock-up or prototype is provided, the supporting evidence provided may include -

- (a) original and non-original photographs, images, drawings or sketches with annotations to illustrate intentions,
- (b) storyboards,
- (c) a television screenplay,
- (d) a shooting script, or
- (e) a radio script and directions

An awarding organisation may set more than one brief, although the evidence generated by each Learner, as described above, must respond only to a single brief.

Marking of assessments

Evidence generated by a Learner in an assessment for a GCSE Qualification in Media Studies which is not an Assessment by Examination may be marked -

- (a) by the awarding organisation or a person connected to the awarding organisation,
- (b) by a Centre, or
- (c) through a combination of (a) and (b).

In any event, the awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction in its assessment strategy that -

- (a) it has taken all reasonable steps to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from its approach to marking the assessments (and to Moderation where appropriate), and
- (b) where such a risk is identified, it has taken all reasonable steps to prevent that Adverse Effect or, where it cannot be prevented, to mitigate that Adverse Effect.

Appendix 1 – Subject content (published by Department for Education)



Department
for Education

Media studies

GCSE subject content

February 2016

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The content for GCSE media studies

Introduction

1. GCSE subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding, and skills common to all GCSE specifications in a given subject. They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and objectives

2. GCSE specifications in media studies must offer a broad, coherent and rigorous course of study, which will prepare students to make informed decisions about further study and progression to AS and A level or employment.

3. GCSE specifications in media studies must enable students to:

- demonstrate skills of enquiry, critical thinking, decision-making and analysis
- acquire knowledge and understanding of a range of important media issues
- develop appreciation and critical understanding of the media and their role both historically and currently in society, culture and politics
- understand and apply specialist subject-specific terminology to analyse and compare media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed in order to make informed arguments, reach substantiated judgements and draw conclusions about media issues
- appreciate how theoretical understanding supports practice and practice supports theoretical understanding
- develop practical skills by providing opportunities for creative media production

Subject content

4. GCSE specifications in media studies must recognise the fundamental relationship between theory and practice. Students must be required to develop and apply their understanding of the media through both analysing and producing media products¹, in relation to the theoretical framework set out in paragraph 5.

5. GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework which informs all study of the

¹ The term 'media product' refers to media texts such as television programmes, newspapers, radio programmes etc., as well as to online, social and participatory media platforms.

media as set out below. The four areas of this theoretical framework, which are set out in detail in paragraphs 13-16, are:

- media language: how the media through their forms², codes and conventions communicate meanings
- representation: how the media portray events, issues, individuals and social groups
- media industries: how the media industries' processes of production, distribution and circulation affect media forms and platforms
- audiences: how media forms target, reach and address audiences, how audiences interpret and respond to them, and how members of audiences become producers themselves

6. GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to develop and apply knowledge and understanding of relevant theoretical approaches and theories specified in paragraphs 14, 15 and 16.

7. GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to study age appropriate examples of media products from all of the following media forms, using relevant aspects of the theoretical framework set out in paragraph 5:

- television
- film³
- radio
- newspapers
- magazines
- advertising and marketing
- online, social and participatory media
- video games
- music video

8. GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to study at least one audio/visual⁴, one print and one online media form in depth through contrasting media products and using all four areas of the theoretical framework. The media forms to be

² Forms of the media: see paragraph 7 for the media forms to be studied at GCSE.

³ Film is an inextricable part of the wider media landscape, which is intimately connected with other media, such as television, video games and online media. However, to avoid overlap with film studies GCSE, film should not be a primary object of study in this context. Students may study individual feature films, but this must only occur in the context of cross-media study, which explores the convergence of media platforms and technologies, or in the context of the study of media industries (see page 8). To avoid overlap with GCSE film studies, the media production (paragraphs 11 and 18) cannot be a film opening, film extract, complete short film or film trailer.

⁴ Audio/visual: refers both to audio-visual and audio media.

studied in depth, together with the associated media products, will be specified by the awarding organisation.

9. GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to study contrasting media products which together will:

- possess cultural, social and historical significance⁵
- reflect and illuminate the theoretical framework for the study of media outlined in paragraphs 5 and 13-16 and the theoretical perspectives associated with them
- provide rich and challenging opportunities for interpretation and analysis, enabling students to develop a detailed understanding of how the media communicate meanings

10. Together, the media products specified must ensure students study:

- a full range of products in terms of perceived quality, form and structure
- products from different historical periods
- products intended for different audiences
- products demonstrating emerging, future developments of the media
- products that they would not normally engage with

11. GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to complete one individual media production in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation. This production must require students to apply their knowledge and understanding of representation and media language from the theoretical framework in paragraph 5⁶.

Knowledge and understanding

12. GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how media products reflect the social, cultural, historical and political contexts in which they are produced.

13. GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to draw on the theoretical framework in paragraph 5 to develop knowledge and understanding of the content specified in paragraphs 13-16.

⁵ This significance will primarily be established with reference to the theoretical framework outlined in paragraphs 5 and 13-16 and may be reflected in critical acclaim and/or audience popularity.

⁶ To avoid overlap with GCSE film studies, this production cannot be a film opening, film extract, complete short film or film trailer.

Media language

- the various forms of media language used to create and communicate meanings in media products
- how choice (selection, combination and exclusion) of elements of media language influences meaning in media products, including to create narratives, to portray aspects of reality, to construct points of view, and to represent the world in ways that convey messages and values
- the relationship between technology and media products
- the codes and conventions of media language, how they develop and become established as 'styles' or genres (which are common across different media products) and how they may also vary over time
- intertextuality, including how inter-relationships between different media products can influence meaning

14. GCSE specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of theoretical approaches and theories of media language including:

- fundamental principles of semiotic analysis, including denotation and connotation
- theoretical perspectives on genre, including principles of repetition and variation; the dynamic nature of genre; hybridity and intertextuality
- theories of narrative, including those derived from Propp

Media representations

- the ways in which the media re-present (rather than simply present) the world, and construct versions of reality
- the choices media producers make about how to represent particular events, social groups and ideas
- the ways aspects of reality may be represented differently depending on the purposes of the producers
- the different functions and uses of stereotypes, including an understanding of how stereotypes become established, how they may vary over time, and how stereotypes enable audiences to interpret media quickly
- how and why particular social groups may be under-represented or misrepresented
- how representations (including self-representations) convey particular viewpoints, messages, values and beliefs, which may be reinforced across a wide range of media products
- the social, cultural and political significance of particular representations in terms of the themes or issues that they address
- how representations reflect the social, historical and cultural contexts in which they were produced

- the factors affecting audience interpretations of representations, including their own experiences and beliefs

15. GCSE specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of theoretical approaches and theories of media representations including:

- theoretical perspectives on representation, including processes of selection, construction and mediation
- theoretical perspectives on gender and representation, including feminist approaches

Media industries

- the nature of media production, including by large organisations, who own the products they produce, and by individuals and groups
- the impact of production processes, personnel and technologies on the final product, including similarities and differences between media products in terms of when and where they are produced
- the effect of ownership and control of media organisations, including conglomerate ownership, diversification and vertical integration
- the impact of the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different platforms and different national settings
- the importance of different funding models, including government funded, not-for-profit and commercial models
- how the media operate as commercial industries on a global scale and reach both large and specialised audiences
- the functions and types of regulation of the media
- the challenges for media regulation presented by 'new' digital technologies

Media audiences

- how and why media products are aimed at a range of audiences, from small, specialised audiences to large mass audiences
- the ways in which media organisations target audiences through marketing, including an understanding of the assumptions organisations make about their target audience(s)
- how media organisations categorise audiences
- the role of media technologies in reaching and identifying audiences, and in audience consumption and usage
- the ways in which audiences may interpret the same media products very differently and how these differences may reflect both social and individual differences
- the ways in which people's media practices are connected to their identity, including their sense of actual and desired self

- the social, cultural and political significance of media products, including the themes or issues they address, the fulfilment of needs and desires, and the functions they serve in everyday life and society
- how audiences may respond to and interpret media products and why these responses and interpretations may change over time

16. GCSE specifications must require students to develop knowledge and understanding of theoretical approaches and theories of media audiences including:

- theoretical perspectives on audiences, including active and passive audiences; audience response and audience interpretation
- Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory

Skills

17. In analysing the media, GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to develop the ability to:

- analyse and compare how media products construct and communicate meaning and generate intended interpretations and responses
- respond through discursive writing to show knowledge and understanding of media issues
- use specialist subject specific terminology appropriately

18. In independently⁷ creating a media production, GCSE specifications in media studies must require students to develop the ability to:

- apply knowledge and understanding of media language and representation from the theoretical framework set out in paragraph 5 to a media production from the list of forms in paragraph 7 (not including film)
- use media language to express and communicate meaning to an intended audience

⁷ 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.



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