



Qualifications and  
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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
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# GCSE subject criteria for media studies

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## Introduction

1. GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in media studies. They provide the framework within which an awarding body creates the detail of the specification.
2. Specifications must also meet the regulators' general requirements, including the common and GCSE criteria as defined in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications* (QCA/04/1293).
3. Subject criteria are intended to:
  - help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies
  - ensure that the rigour of GCSE is maintained
  - ensure that specifications build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established by the national curricula for England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and facilitate progression to A level media subjects
  - help higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders such as learners and parents/guardians know what has been studied and assessed.
4. Any GCSE specification that contains significant elements of media studies must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

## Aims and learning outcomes

5. GCSE specifications in media studies should encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study and gain an insight into related sectors. They should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.
6. GCSE specifications in media studies must enable learners to:
  - develop enquiry, critical thinking and decision-making skills through consideration of issues that are important, real and relevant to learners and to the world in which they live
  - develop their appreciation and critical understanding of the media and its role in their daily lives

- develop their practical skills through opportunities for personal engagement and creativity
- understand how to use the key media concepts to analyse media products and their various contexts.

## **Subject content**

7. The content of GCSE specifications in media studies must reflect the learning outcomes.
8. GCSE specifications in media studies must build on learners' informal learning and prior experience of media
9. GCSE specifications in media studies must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
  - how media forms, codes and conventions create meanings
  - representation in the media
  - contexts of media production, distribution and consumption
  - how different audiences/users respond to and interact with media products and processes
  - media products, concepts and contexts, to inform their practical production work
  - media technologies
  - a minimum of three different media (including at least one print and one audiovisual-based form).
10. GCSE specifications must require learners to develop the ability to:
  - analyse and respond to media texts/topics using key media concepts and terminology
  - research, plan and construct media products and evaluate those products and processes
  - present ideas and arguments supported by evidence.

## Assessment objectives

11. All specifications must require candidates to demonstrate their ability to:

Assessment objectives		% weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed	20–30
AO2	Analyse and respond to media texts/topics using media key concepts and appropriate terminology	20–30
AO3	Demonstrate research, planning and presentation skills	20–30
AO4	Construct and evaluate their own products using creative and technical skills	20–30

## Scheme of assessment

12. GCSE specifications in media studies must allocate a weighting of 40% to external assessment and a weighting of 60% to controlled assessment in the overall scheme of assessment.

13. Question papers must be targeted at the full range of GCSE grades.

## Grade descriptions

14. Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

15. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade	Description
A	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate detailed knowledge and thorough understanding of media products and concepts, and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed.</p> <p>They use analytical techniques, underpinning concepts and a wide-ranging critical vocabulary to evaluate and compare media representations. They demonstrate an ability to respond in a logical and structured way, with precise and accurate use of terminology, supporting ideas and arguments with evidence.</p> <p>They research and plan their production work effectively. They draw on relevant products, concepts and contexts. They use a range of presentational skills effectively, showing understanding of how audiences are identified and how production is tailored to audience needs and expectations.</p> <p>They construct their product(s) using a broad range of production skills appropriately and effectively. They confidently handle technology, including ICT, and use the techniques and conventions of the chosen medium and genre creatively.</p> <p>They evaluate their product(s), making critical connections between the experience of carrying out the production and the key concepts.</p>
C	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate sound knowledge and understanding of media products and concepts, and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed.</p> <p>They identify the relationship between representations offered by media texts and the appeal of these texts to the audiences that they address.</p> <p>They demonstrate the ability to respond logically, with accurate use of</p>

	<p>terminology, supporting ideas and arguments with evidence.</p> <p>They research and plan their production work. They use a selection of presentational skills well, showing a sense of identifying and targeting audiences, and indicating how this has informed the production process.</p> <p>They construct their product(s) using appropriate production skills. They handle technology, including ICT, and use some appropriate techniques and conventions of their chosen medium and genre. They evaluate their product making against straightforward production criteria.</p>
F	<p>Candidates recall and communicate limited knowledge and understanding of media products and concepts.</p> <p>They show a limited understanding of media forms and conventions, and can describe some aspects of media representation using some media language and conventions.</p> <p>They show a limited awareness of connections between the representations offered by media texts and their intended audience.</p> <p>They use minimal research and planning to inform their production work. They use few presentational forms with little sense of identifying and targeting audiences.</p> <p>They attempt to use practical processes, techniques and technologies, including ICT, to create a media product. They provide a simple review of the production.</p>