
GCSE MEDIA STUDIES

(8572)

Specification

For teaching from September 2017 onwards
For GCSE exams in 2019 onwards

Version 1.3 09 August 2019



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Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at [aqa.org.uk/8572](https://www.aqa.org.uk/8572)
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA for GCSE Media Studies

An exciting and diverse specification

We've worked with media teachers and subject experts to create a qualification that contains engaging and relevant topics and themes, and gives you the freedom to create lessons that will inspire and motivate all your students. We've created a clear structure to our new GCSE, supported by a detailed specification that provides clarity over what you need to deliver.

Media is a contemporary and interactive subject which encourages students to develop their creative, analytical, research, and communication skills, through exploring a range of media forms and perspectives.

Clear, well-structured exams, accessible for all

We realise that many students choose GCSE Media Studies for its relevance to their lives and for the opportunities it provides for exploring contemporary issues through the use of different media in creative and practical ways. That's why we've made our written assessment clear, well-structured and easy for students to understand. Students will enjoy the variety of question styles, which include multiple choice, short and extended answer.

We've created exciting non-exam assessment briefs that provide you with clear guidance and support to help your students to create media products which they can be truly proud of.

Clear progression to A-level, higher education and beyond

We've bridged the gap between GCSE, AS and A-level, giving your students the skills and experience to better prepare them for the demands of AS and A-level if they choose to progress with their study.

You can find out about all our Media Studies qualifications at aqa.org.uk/media-studies

1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

1.2.1 Teaching resources

Visit aqa.org.uk/8572 to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- sample schemes of work and lesson plans to help you plan your course with confidence
- student textbooks that have been checked by AQA
- progress tests with engaging on-screen delivery and instant feedback
- training courses to help you deliver AQA Media Studies qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

Preparing for exams

Visit [aqa.org.uk/8572](https://www.aqa.org.uk/8572) for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- sample papers and mark schemes for new courses
- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
- example student answers with examiner commentaries.

Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at [aqa.org.uk/era](https://www.aqa.org.uk/era)

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit [aqa.org.uk/results](https://www.aqa.org.uk/results)

Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk

Help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/8572](https://www.aqa.org.uk/8572)

If you'd like us to share news and information about this qualification, sign up for emails and updates at [aqa.org.uk/keepinformed-computer-science](https://www.aqa.org.uk/keepinformed-computer-science)

Alternatively, you can call or email our subject team direct.

E: mediastudies@aqa.org.uk

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2 Specification at a glance

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams and submit all their non-exam assessment at the end of the course.

2.1 Subject content

1. [Media language](#) (page 11)
2. [Media representations](#) (page 13)
3. [Media industries](#) (page 16)
4. [Media audiences](#) (page 18)

2.2 Assessments

Media One
<p>What's assessed</p> <p>Section A will focus on Media Language and Media Representations. Questions in this section can test any two of the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • magazines • advertising and marketing • newspapers • online, social and participatory media and video games. <p>Section B will focus on Media Industries and Media Audiences. Questions in this section can test any two of the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • radio • music video • newspapers • online, social and participatory media and video games • film (industries only).
<p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes • 84 marks • 35% of GCSE
<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of questions relating to an unseen source and Close Study Products. • An extended response question (20 marks).



Media Two
<p>What's assessed</p> <p>Section A will be based on a screening from an extract of one of the television Close Study Products and can test any area of the theoretical framework.</p> <p>Section B will be based on either newspapers or online, social and participatory media and video games and can test any area of the framework.</p>
<p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes • 84 marks • 35% of GCSE
<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short, medium and extended response questions assessing depth of knowledge and understanding of the course.



Non-exam assessment: creating a media product
<p>What's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. • Ability to create media products.
<p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A choice of one of five annually changing briefs, set by AQA. • 60 marks • 30% of GCSE • Assessed by teachers • Moderated by AQA.
<p>Tasks</p> <p>Students produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a statement of intent • a media product for an intended audience.

3 Subject content

GCSE Media Studies engages students in the in depth study of media products in relation to the four areas of the theoretical framework:

- media language
- media representation
- media industries
- media audiences.

Students are required to study media products from all of the following media forms:

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

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 GCSE Film Studies, 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. For the purposes of this specification, film will only be studied in the context of the study of media industries.

3.1 Close study products (CSPs)

In addition to the broad coverage of all nine media forms, students must engage in the in depth study of at least one audio-visual, one print and one online, social and participatory media form. Each in depth study will link the specified media form to all four areas of the theoretical framework.

AQA will publish a list of products that students must study on the secure area of the AQA website on 1 June preceding the start of the course. These are the Close Study Products (CSPs). The CSPs will be reviewed annually. The newspapers will be updated every year in order to ensure that the stories students are covering do not become too outdated. Other products will be refreshed periodically.

You must ensure that you download a new CSP booklet every year in June in order to ensure that your students are studying the correct products as questions in the exams will relate to these products.

AQA will provide information about how to access the CSPs in the CSP booklet that can be downloaded from the secure area of the AQA website.

The CSPs will address the requirement that students engage with products which:

- possess cultural, social and historical significance in terms of critical acclaim and/or audience popularity
- reflect and illuminate the theoretical framework for the study of media
- demonstrate contrasts in terms of perceived quality, form and structure
- provide rich and challenging opportunities for interpretation and analysis, enabling students to develop a detailed understanding of how the media communicate meanings
- are from different historical periods
- are intended for different audiences
- demonstrate emerging, future developments of the media
- are not necessarily the type of products which students would normally engage.

The focus of study is not the products themselves but, rather, the theoretical framework and contexts of media. Exam questions will focus on the theoretical framework and contexts of the media but students will be expected to answer with reference to or analysis of relevant CSPs. These products should be seen as a vehicle for the delivery of the specification, rather than products to be 'learned' in detail.

It is essential that students study all of the CSPs but it is advised that they are supplemented by further examples of age appropriate media products in order to develop a full knowledge and understanding of the contexts of the media and the theoretical framework.

Where a television programme is set as one of the CSPs, AQA will specify the episode that students should study in depth. Students should investigate the series as a whole in terms of genre and narrative but they are not expected to watch or study every episode. Please see the Close Study Products booklet for more information about what students need to be familiar with in terms of the television series.

For this course, online, social and participatory media and video games will be linked. There will be some independent online, social and participatory media products and some independent video games but sometimes these two media forms will be linked and video games will be studied alongside associated online, social and participatory media products. Please see the Close Study Products booklet for more information.

3.2 Contexts of the media

The subject content is detailed in relation to each area of the theoretical framework.

This specification requires students to closely analyse and compare media products in relation to relevant key social, cultural, historical and political contexts. Not every question in every exam series will require the analysis of the four contexts but students will need to be familiar with all of them in relation to a range of media products.

Knowledge and understanding should be developed through the practical analysis or creation of media products.

Media products should be considered in the light of the contexts in which they are produced and received.

3.3 Extended response and synopticity

This specification requires students to

- provide extended responses to some questions
- demonstrate their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and/or understanding from across their full course of study.

These questions will be highlighted on the front of the question papers.

Extended response questions will require students to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

3.4 Media language

Students should have knowledge and understanding of how the media, through their forms, codes and conventions, communicate meanings.

Students will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how media products reflect the social, cultural, historical and political contexts in which they are produced. Not every question in every exam series will require the analysis of the four contexts but students will need to be familiar with all of them in relation to a range of media products.

In the following table, the column headed Content includes the mandatory material which all students should study. The column headed Guidance Notes includes pointers and suggestions to help schools and colleges interpret and deliver the content where these are appropriate. These Guidance Notes will be supplemented by further support materials (the CSP booklet).

3.4.1 Forms of media language

Content	Guidance notes
Fundamental principles of semiotic analysis, including connotation and denotation.	Other terms and techniques may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • code • anchorage • sign • icon • symbol.
The various forms of media language used to create and communicate meanings in media products.	Linear models of communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sender • message • receiver.

3.4.2 Choice of media language

Content	Guidance notes
How choice (selection, combination and exclusion) of elements of media language influences meaning in media products 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.	<p>The 'rules' of media language: how signs are selected, deselected and assembled to conform to codes and make meanings.</p> <p>Register and modes of address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct and indirect address <p>The constructed nature of reality.</p>

3.4.3 Theories of narrative

Content	Guidance notes
Theories of narrative, including those derived from Propp (character types).	<p>Narrative development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• exposition• disruption• complication• climax• resolution. <p>Audience appeal of narrative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enigma• closure.

3.4.4 Technology and media products

Content	Guidance notes
The relationship between technology and media products.	<p>How developments in technology impact on content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• forces that drive technological change• the impact of new technology on the form, content and meaning of media products:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• image manipulation• high definition• computer-generated imagery (CGI)• mobile communication technology• user-generated content.

3.4.5 Codes and conventions

Content	Guidance notes
<p>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.</p>	<p>Varieties of code:</p> <p>Technical codes: moving image and photographic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shot types and camera movement • Composition and lighting • Editing • Audio: diegetic and non-diegetic sound, dialogue <p>Print codes: design, layout and typography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour • Juxtaposition and superimposition • House style, fonts and grids <p>Symbolic codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mise-en-scène: costume, lighting, location, actors, make-up and hair, props, set dressing <p>Verbal and non-verbal codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of language including word choice, formality, complexity • Dress, appearance and body movement <p>Paralanguage</p>
<p>Theoretical perspectives on genre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles of repetition and variation • the dynamic nature of genre • hybridity • intertextuality. <p>Intertextuality, including how inter-relationships between different media products can influence meaning.</p>	<p>The evolution and development of genres (including hybrid genres) in different media forms.</p> <p>Factors influencing the creation of genre products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial • cultural • audience demand.

3.5 Media representations

Students should have knowledge and understanding of how the media portray events, issues, individuals and social groups.

Students will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how media products reflect the social, cultural, historical and political contexts in which they are produced. Not every question in every exam series will require the analysis of the four contexts but students will need to be familiar with all of them in relation to a range of media products.

In the following table, the column headed Content includes the mandatory material which all students should study. The column headed Guidance Notes includes pointers and suggestions to help schools and colleges interpret and deliver the content where these are appropriate. These Guidance Notes will be supplemented by further support materials (the CSP booklet).

3.5.1 Re-presentation

Content	Guidance notes
<p>The ways in which the media re-present (rather than simply present) the world, and construct versions of reality.</p> <p>Theoretical perspectives on representation, including processes of selection, construction and mediation.</p> <p>The processes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• selection• construction• mediation.	<p>Realism: reasons why some representations seem more truthful or realistic than others.</p> <p>Critical exploration of views including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the media is a window on the world• the media is the message.

3.5.2 Theoretical perspectives on gender

Content	Guidance notes
<p>Theoretical perspectives on gender and representation and feminist approaches.</p>	<p>An exploration of the distinction between essentialist views (that males and females are different categories with essential features, behaviours and attributes that define them) and social constructionist views that the same features, behaviours and attributes are constructed by society (including the media) and not by nature.</p>

3.5.3 Choice of media producers

Content	Guidance note
<p>The choices media producers make about how to represent particular events, social groups and ideas.</p>	<p>Audience positioning.</p> <p>Selective representation, biased and prejudicial representation.</p>

3.5.4 Representation of reality

Content	Guidance notes
<p>The ways aspects of reality may be represented differently depending on the purposes of the producers.</p>	<p>Techniques of persuasive communication.</p> <p>Advertising, marketing, political bias, propaganda.</p>

3.5.5 Stereotypes

Content	Guidance notes
<p>The different functions and uses of stereotypes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How stereotypes become established. • How stereotypes may vary over time. • Positive and negative stereotypes. • How stereotypes enable audiences to interpret media quickly. 	<p>A range of different stereotypes should be discussed and exemplified in order that students understand the problems with and usefulness of stereotypes.</p>

3.5.6 Misrepresentation

Content	Guidance notes
<p>How and why particular social groups may be under represented or misrepresented.</p>	<p>Bias and partiality in representation.</p> <p>Relationship between media representations and the dominant value system of society.</p>

3.5.7 Viewpoints

Content	Guidance notes
<p>How representations (including self-representations) convey particular viewpoints, messages, values and beliefs, which may be reinforced across a wide range of media products.</p>	<p>Role of individuals as producers (as well as consumers) of media messages in which the self is represented.</p> <p>Contrast between dominant representations and contested representations of, for example, groups, issues and places.</p>

3.5.8 Social, cultural and political significance

Content	Guidance notes
<p>The social, cultural and political significance of particular representations in terms of the themes or issues that they address.</p>	<p>Agenda setting.</p> <p>News values.</p>

3.5.9 Reflection of contexts

Content	Guidance notes
<p>How representations reflect the social, historical and cultural contexts in which they were produced.</p>	<p>Relationship between representation and changing values and beliefs and culture specific values and beliefs.</p>

3.5.10 Audience interpretation

Content	Guidance notes
The factors affecting audience interpretations of representations including their own experiences and beliefs.	Audience positioning Decoding - the influence of social variables such as age, class, gender, ethnicity on the interpretation of media representations.

3.6 Media industries

Students should have knowledge and understanding of how the media industries' processes of production, distribution and circulation affect media forms and platforms.

Students will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how media products reflect the social, cultural, historical and political contexts in which they are produced. Not every question in every exam series will require the analysis of the four contexts but students will need to be familiar with all of them in relation to a range of media products.

In the following table, the column headed Content includes the mandatory material which all students should study. The column headed Guidance Notes includes pointers and suggestions to help schools and colleges interpret and deliver the content where these are appropriate. These Guidance Notes will be supplemented by further support materials (the CSP booklet).

3.6.1 The nature of media production

Content	Guidance notes
The nature of media production, including by large organisations, who own the products they produce, and by individuals and groups.	Patterns of ownership: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• mergers• demergers• takeovers• concentration.

3.6.2 Production processes

Content	Guidance notes
The impact of production processes, personnel and technologies on the final product. Similarities and differences between media products in terms of when and where they are produced. Working practices in media industries.	

3.6.3 Ownership

Content	Guidance notes
<p>The effect of ownership and control of media organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conglomerate ownership • diversification • vertical integration • horizontal integration. 	

3.6.4 Convergence

Content	Guidance notes
<p>The impact of the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different platforms and different national settings.</p>	<p>Cross media ownership.</p> <p>Convergence of content providers, network providers and platform providers.</p>

3.6.5 Funding models

Content	Guidance notes
<p>The importance of different funding models. Government funded, not-for-profit and commercial models.</p>	<p>Role of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • television licence • advertising, sponsorship, product placement, direct sales • independent and voluntary sector.

3.6.6 Commercial industries

Content	Guidance notes
<p>How the media operate as commercial industries on a global scale and reach both large and specialised audiences.</p>	<p>Globalisation.</p> <p>Cultural imperialism.</p> <p>International agreements (and disagreements) on regulation and freedom to trade media products.</p>

3.6.7 Regulation

Content	Guidance notes
The functions and types of regulation of the media.	Self regulation and government regulation. Disputes about freedom, censorship and control. Nature of regulatory bodies in UK: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Office of Communications (OFCOM)• the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)• the Video Standards Council (VSC)• the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC)• the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)• Pan European Game Information (PEGI).

3.6.8 Digital technologies

Content	Guidance notes
The challenges for media regulation presented by 'new' digital technologies.	Debates about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• online, social networking abuse and bullying• online anonymity• rights and responsibilities of ISPs and social networks• public interest versus rights of the individual.

3.7 Media audiences

Students should have knowledge and understanding of how the media forms target, reach and address audiences, how audiences interpret and respond to them, and how members of the audience become producers themselves.

Students will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how media products reflect the social, cultural, historical and political contexts in which they are produced. Not every question in every exam series will require the analysis of the four contexts but students will need to be familiar with all of them in relation to a range of media products.

In the following table, the column headed Content includes the mandatory material which all students should study. The column headed Guidance Notes includes pointers and suggestions to help schools and colleges interpret and deliver the content where these are appropriate. These Guidance Notes will be supplemented by further support materials (the CSP booklet).

3.7.1 Theoretical perspectives on audiences

Content	Guidance notes
<p>Theoretical perspectives on audiences including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active and passive audiences • audience response • audience interpretation. <p>Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory.</p>	<p>The role of audiences in the creation of meaning and the degree of effect of media messages upon audiences.</p>

3.7.2 Range of audiences

Content	Guidance notes
<p>How and why media products are aimed at a range of audiences, from small, specialised audiences to large mass audiences.</p>	<p>Requirement for commercial media producers to create audiences which can be sold to advertisers.</p>

3.7.3 Targeting

Content	Guidance notes
<p>The ways in which media organisations target audiences through marketing.</p> <p>Understanding of the assumptions organisations make about their target audience(s).</p>	<p>Role of genre conventions in the targeting of audiences.</p> <p>Techniques used in the marketing of media products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guerilla and viral marketing • trailers, tasters and teasers.

3.7.4 Categorisation

Content	Guidance notes
<p>How media organisations categorise audiences.</p>	<p>Segmentation and variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • geographic • demographic • psychographic.

3.7.5 Media technologies

Content	Guidance notes
The role of media technologies in reaching and identifying audiences, and in audience consumption and usage.	Use of online resources to collect audience data. Audience research institutions including the Broadcasters Audience Research Board (BARB), Radio Joint Audience Research Limited (RAJAR), Pamco, Nielsen. Research techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• quantitative/qualitative• primary/secondary.

3.7.6 Interpretations

Content	Guidance notes
The ways in which audiences may interpret the same media products very differently and how these differences may reflect both social and individual differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reception theories.• Active audiences.• Preferred and aberrant readings. Active audiences. Influence of social variables on audience perception.
How audiences may respond to and interpret media products. Why these responses and interpretations may change over time.	

3.7.7 Media practices

Content	Guidance notes
The ways in which people's media practices are connected to their identity, including their sense of actual and desired self.	Identity and audience membership. Fans and fandom. Talking about the media.

3.7.8 Social, cultural and political significance

Content	Guidance notes
<p>The social, cultural and political significance of media products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the themes or issues they address • the fulfilment of needs and desires • the functions they serve in society and everyday life. 	

3.7.9 Audience responses

Content	Guidance notes
<p>How audiences may respond to and interpret media products and why these responses and interpretations may change over time.</p>	<p>How changing cultural values with reference to, for example, gender roles, ethnic identities have influenced contemporary perceptions of historical products.</p>

3.8 Non-exam assessment (NEA)

The NEA element requires students to:

- apply their knowledge and understanding of media language and representations to create a media product using one of the following forms:
 - television
 - music video
 - radio
 - newspapers
 - magazines
 - advertising/marketing
 - online, social and participatory media
 - video games
- use media language in a single media form to express and communicate meaning to an intended audience.

3.8.1 The briefs

To complete the NEA, students must independently create a media product in response to a brief set by AQA. AQA will release five briefs on 1 March in the year preceding the exam via Secure Key Materials. These briefs will change **annually**. The briefs will be linked to the GCSE Media Studies CSPs. AQA will specify the media form and the intended audience for the media product. The media product that is devised and realised by the student must communicate meaning to a specified audience and must draw on what they know and understand about the theoretical framework of media language and representation.

Students will submit:

- a Statement of Intent on the form supplied with the NEA brief
- a media product.

The [Marking criteria](#) (page 23) detail what students will be expected to demonstrate and provide evidence of when completing the NEA task. Additional, task-specific indicative content will be issued with each of the briefs. Please refer to [Non-exam assessment administration](#) (page 31) for more information about the instructions for conducting the NEA.

3.8.1.1 The Statement of Intent

Students must complete a Statement of Intent that outlines their aims for their media product. This must be submitted to AQA with the media product.

This Statement of Intent should be a maximum of 300 words long and it should be submitted to the teacher no later than 1 April in the year of assessment. The template for the Statement of Intent will be supplied by AQA in the NEA Student Booklet along with the briefs.

3.8.1.2 Size and duration of products

Each brief will specify the required length, amount or duration of the media product that must be created.

3.8.1.3 Unassessed participants

Students must complete an individual media production. Students may, however, use unassessed participants to:

- appear in their media products
- operate equipment under the direction of the assessed student.

All unassessed participants involved in the products must be listed on the Candidate Record Form. Assessed students can only be credited for work they have undertaken themselves or has been completed under their direction. Students and teachers will be required to sign the Candidate Record Form to confirm that this is the case.

Credit can only be given for contributions made by unassessed participants under the clear direction of the assessed student. Details of what each of the unassessed participants contributed to the product and how the assessed student directed that contribution should be listed on the Candidate Record Form.

3.8.1.4 Time spent on NEA

There is no limit to the amount of time that students can spend on their NEA but we recommend they spend around 30 hours on the physical creation of their products. It should be noted that excessive time spent on this component in the classroom could be detrimental to the overall attainment of the students. Teachers should strike a balance between the completion of the NEA and preparation for the examined components. Additionally, demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework is key to success in the NEA so time spent teaching the framework will inform the NEA products.

3.8.1.5 Use of non-original material

With the exception of musical performances, students should not use any non-original material in their media products. All images, footage and text is to be created by the student. If a student does use any non-original images, footage or text, they should be aware that their marks will be limited

by the marking criteria (see [Guidance on applying the marking criteria](#) (page 23)). They must acknowledge any non-original material on the Candidate Record Form.

Students do not have to write and record their own musical performances, either to use as part of a soundtrack or in a music video. Musical tracks that they use should be acknowledged on the Candidate Record Form.

3.8.1.6 Websites and video games

For briefs where website or video game creation is required, students do not need to be able to code. Students can use website design apps, online templates and game design software. Students are responsible for the design of the website or game and the content (such as language, images, audio-visual material) must be created by the student. Students must acknowledge any software or templates which have been used on the appropriate Candidate Record Form.

3.8.2 Marking criteria

3.8.2.1 Guidance on applying the marking criteria

Level of response marking instructions are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's media product, review the product and annotate it and/or make notes on it to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the marking criteria.

Start at the lowest level of the marking criteria and use it as a ladder to see whether the product meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's product for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the product.

You can compare your student's product with the standardisation examples to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the product. If the product covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the product to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the product is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

No marks will be awarded for an answer containing nothing worthy of credit.

If a student only submits a Statement of Intent with no accompanying media product then this should be awarded a mark of zero.

If a student creates an audio-visual product that is longer than the stipulated duration then you should only mark the work that falls within the time limit.

If a student creates a print or online product that exceeds the stipulated length or amount then you should mark all of the pages and only give credit for the best pages up to the number of pages stipulated in the brief.

If a product is shorter than the stipulated size or duration then no penalty is to be applied as the work is likely to be self-penalising – particularly in relation to the [Production: Effectiveness in communicating meaning to an audience](#) (page 27) section.

If a student has used any non-original images, footage or text, or has failed to clearly demonstrate how they directed the activity of any unassessed participants in the media product then they should

not be awarded marks above Level 2 in the [Production: Effectiveness in communicating meaning to an audience](#) (page 27) section of the marking criteria.

3.8.2.2 Statement of intent

In this section students will be awarded marks for their response to the brief and their ability to communicate their knowledge and understanding of language and representation to the reader.

Level	Marks	Description
5	9–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outstanding, detailed statement that refers directly and effectively to the intended uses of media language and representations. • The intentions outlined in the statement are consistently appropriate to the brief and target the intended audience in a clear and direct way. • Excellent evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media through extensive and sustained use of relevant and accurate subject specific terminology.
4	7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed statement that demonstrates the intended uses of media language and representations. • The intentions outlined in the statement are almost always appropriate to the brief and target the intended audience. • Good evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media through frequent use of relevant and accurate subject specific terminology.
3	5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear statement that demonstrates some intended uses of media language and some intended aspects of representation. • The intentions outlined in the statement are generally appropriate to the brief and target the intended audience in a satisfactory way. • Satisfactory evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media through some use of relevant and accurate subject specific terminology.
2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statement makes occasional reference to intended uses of media language and/or occasional intended aspects of representation. • The intentions outlined in the statement are inconsistently appropriate to the brief and only sometimes target the intended audience. • Basic evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media through very little use of relevant and accurate subject specific terminology.

Level	Marks	Description
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A statement has been submitted. • The intentions outlined in the statement are unlikely to be appropriate to the brief and have minimal sense of the intended audience. • Minimal evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media in which any attempt to use subject specific terminology is likely to be inaccurate.
	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

3.8.2.3 Production: Media Language

In this section students will be rewarded for the degree of expertise they demonstrate in using media language within the chosen media form.

Level	Marks	Description
5	13–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by the consistently appropriate and effective selection and combination of elements to communicate very clear meanings throughout the product. • An excellent and compelling product that constructs very effective narratives and shows deliberate control of connotations and clearly and purposefully constructs points of view.
4	10–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by the frequently appropriate and effective selection and combination of elements to communicate clear meanings throughout the product. • A good product that constructs effective narratives and shows some deliberate control of connotations though this may not be throughout and constructs points of view.
3	7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by the generally appropriate but inconsistently effective selection and combination of straightforward elements to communicate generally clear meanings throughout the product. • A satisfactory product that constructs suitable narratives and shows occasional control of connotations but rarely constructs points of view.
2	4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by the occasionally appropriate selection and combination of simple elements to communicate basic meanings. • A basic product that constructs simple narratives and shows little awareness of connotations.

Level	Marks	Description
1	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by little appropriate selection and combination of very simple elements to communicate very limited meanings. A minimal product that shows little awareness of narrative.
	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

3.8.2.4 Production: Representation

In this section students will be rewarded for their ability to understand and create representations in the chosen media form.

Level	Marks	Description
5	13–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by the consistently effective use or subversion of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are highly appropriate to the audience, form and genre. Excellent use of media representations to communicate clear and highly appropriate meanings throughout.
4	10–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by the frequently effective use or subversion of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are appropriate to the audience, form and genre. Good use of media representations to communicate appropriate meanings throughout.
3	7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by the sometimes effective use or subversion of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are generally appropriate to the audience, form and genre though there are likely to be some inconsistencies. Satisfactory use of media representations to communicate generally appropriate meanings though this is unlikely to be throughout the product.
2	4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by the rarely effective use of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are only occasionally appropriate to the audience, form and genre. Basic use of media representations to communicate only occasionally appropriate meanings.

Level	Marks	Description
1	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by a lack of appropriate use of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are very rarely appropriate to the audience, form or genre. Minimal use of media representations to communicate very little discernible meaning.
	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

3.8.2.5 Production: Effectiveness in communicating meaning to an audience

In this section students will be rewarded for how well their media product communicates meanings and whether or not they have met the requirements stipulated in the brief. Teachers/assessors are to use their professional judgement rather than looking for evidence of testing the product on a live audience.

Level	Marks	Description
5	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An excellent product that would successfully engage the designated audience by employing a consistently effective and appropriate mode of address throughout. An excellent product that extensively uses highly relevant codes and conventions of the form and genre consistently. Meets all the requirements of the brief and completes all of the tasks fully.
4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good product that would interest the designated audience by employing a frequently effective and appropriate mode of address throughout. A good product that uses generally relevant codes and conventions of the form and genre. Meets almost all the requirements of the brief and almost all of the tasks are completed.
3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A satisfactory product that would be of some interest to the designated audience by employing a sometimes effective and appropriate mode of address throughout. A satisfactory product that uses codes and conventions of the form and genre inconsistently. Meets the main requirements of the brief and most of the tasks are completed but some of the details are missing.
2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A basic product that would only be of occasional interest to the designated audience by employing a mode of address that is only occasionally effective or appropriate. A basic product that uses codes and conventions of the form and genre inconsistently. Meets some of the requirements of the brief but only a few of the tasks have been completed and it may fall below the specified length/duration.

Level	Marks	Description
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimal product that would be unlikely to interest the designated audience and has little sense of mode of address. • A minimal product that only very rarely uses codes and conventions of the form and genre. • Meets very few of the requirements of the brief and it is likely to fall well below the specified length/duration. <p>For marks towards the top of this band this must be, at least, a recognisable media product.</p>
	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

4 Scheme of assessment

Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at aqa.org.uk/pastpapers

This specification is designed to be taken over two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

GCSE exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2019 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our GCSE exams in Media Studies include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- recall information
- draw together information from different areas of the specification
- apply their knowledge and understanding in practical and theoretical contexts
- 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.

4.1 Aims and learning outcomes

Courses based on this specification must encourage 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.

4.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE Media Studies specifications and all exam boards.

The exams and non-exam assessment will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

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

4.2.1 Assessment objective weightings for GCSE Media Studies

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)			Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	NEA	
AO1	20	10	0	30
AO2	15	25	0	40
AO3	0	0	30	30
Overall weighting of components	35	35	30	100

4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Paper 1	84	x1	84
Paper 2	84	x1	84
NEA	60	x1.2	72
Total scaled mark:			240

5 Non-exam assessment administration

The non-exam assessment (NEA) for this specification is to create a media product for an intended audience.

Visit aqa.org.uk/8572 for detailed information about all aspects of NEA administration.

The head of the school or college is responsible for making sure that NEA is conducted in line with our instructions and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) instructions.

5.1 Supervising and authenticating

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria:

- **students** must sign the *Candidate record form* (CRF) to confirm that the work submitted is their own
- all **teachers** who have marked a student's work must sign the declaration of authentication on the CRF (this is to confirm that the work is solely that of the student concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down by this specification)
- teachers must ensure that a CRF is attached to each student's work.

Students must have sufficient direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as their own. If a student receives additional assistance and this is acceptable within the guidelines for this specification, you should award a mark that represents the student's unaided achievement. Please make a note of the support the student received on the CRF and sign the authentication statement. If the statement is not signed, we cannot accept the student's work for assessment.

5.2 Avoiding malpractice

Advice to students

Please inform your students of the AQA regulations concerning malpractice. They must not:

- submit work that is not their own
- lend work to other students
- allow other students access to, or use of, their own independently sourced source material (they may lend their books to another student, but they must not plagiarise other students' research)
- include work copied directly from books, the internet or other sources without acknowledgement
- submit work that is word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement
- include inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

These actions constitute malpractice and a penalty will be given (for example, disqualification).

Advice to teachers

Students are free to revise and redraft a piece of work before submitting the final piece for assessment.

You can review draft work and provide **generic feedback** to ensure that the work is appropriately focused. In providing generic feedback you **can**:

- provide oral/written feedback
- explain, if necessary, the context of the task
- give general advice on how the task could be approached
- advise on resources that could be used
- remind students of the key areas that should be covered in their project.

In providing generic feedback you **cannot**:

- correct a student's work
- provide templates, model answers or writing frames
- provide specific guidance on how to solve the problem
- provide specific feedback to students on how to improve their projects to meet the requirements of the marking criteria.

If you identify malpractice **before** the student signs the declaration of authentication, you don't need to report it to us. Please deal with it in accordance with your school or college's internal procedures. We expect schools and colleges to treat such cases very seriously.

If you identify malpractice **after** the student has signed the declaration of authentication, the head of your school or college must submit full details of the case to us at the earliest opportunity. Please complete the form JCQ/M1, available from the JCQ website at jqc.org.uk

You must record details of any work which is not the student's own on the CRF or another appropriate place.

Consult your exams officer about these procedures.

5.3 Teacher standardisation

We'll provide support for using the marking criteria and developing appropriate tasks through teacher standardisation.

In the following situations teacher standardisation is essential. We'll send you an invitation to complete teacher standardisation if:

- moderation from the previous year indicates a serious misinterpretation of the requirements
- a significant adjustment was made to the marks in the previous year
- your school or college is new to this specification.

For further information about teacher standardisation visit aqa.org.uk/8572

For further support and advice please speak to your adviser. Email your subject team at mediastudies@aqc.org.uk for details of your adviser.

5.4 Internal standardisation

You must ensure that you have consistent marking standards for all students. One person must manage this process and they must sign the Centre declaration sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation may involve:

- all teachers marking sample pieces of work to identify differences in marking standards
- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved
- referring to reference and archive material such as previous work or examples from our teacher standardisation.

5.5 Commenting

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria, you must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the marking criteria in this specification.

Your comments will help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the marking criteria.

You must record your comments on the CRF.

5.6 Submitting marks

You must check that the correct marks are written on the CRF and that the total is correct.

The deadline for submitting the total mark for each student is given at aqa.org.uk/keydates

5.7 Factors affecting individual students

For advice and guidance about arrangements for any of your students, please email us as early as possible at eos@aqa.org.uk

Occasional absence: you should be able to accept the occasional absence of students by making sure they have the chance to make up what they have missed. You may organise an alternative supervised session for students who were absent at the time you originally arranged.

Lost work: if work is lost you must tell us how and when it was lost and who was responsible, using our special consideration online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

Extra help: where students need extra help which goes beyond normal learning support, please use the CRF to tell us so that this help can be taken into account during moderation.

Students who move schools: students who move from one school or college to another during the course sometimes need additional help to meet the requirements. How you deal with this depends on when the move takes place.

- If it happens early in the course, the new school or college should be responsible for the work.
- If it happens late in the course, it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work as a student who was 'educated elsewhere'.

5.8 Keeping students' work

Students' work must be kept under secure conditions from the time that it is marked, with CRFs attached. After the moderation period and the deadline for Enquiries about Results (or once any enquiry is resolved) you may return the work to students.

5.9 Moderation

You must send all your students' marks to us by the date given at [aqa.org.uk/deadlines](https://www.aqa.org.uk/deadlines). You will be asked to send a sample of your students' NEA evidence to your moderator.

You must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the assessment criteria in this specification. Your comments must help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the assessment criteria. You must:

- record your comments on the Candidate Record Form (CRF)
- check that the correct marks are written on the CRF and that the total is correct.

The moderator re-marks a sample of the evidence and compares this with the marks you have provided to check whether any changes are needed to bring the marking in line with our agreed standards. Any changes to marks will normally keep your rank order but, where major inconsistencies are found, we reserve the right to change the rank order.

School and college consortia

If you're in a consortium of schools or colleges with joint teaching arrangements (where students from different schools and colleges have been taught together but entered through the school or college at which they are on roll), you must let us know by:

- filling in the *Application for Centre Consortium Arrangements for centre-assessed work*, which is available from the JCQ website [jqc.org.uk](https://www.jcq.org.uk)
- appointing a consortium coordinator who can speak to us on behalf of all schools and colleges in the consortium. If there are different coordinators for different specifications, a copy of the form must be sent in for each specification.

We'll allocate the same moderator to all schools and colleges in the consortium and treat the students as a single group for moderation.

5.10 After moderation

We will return your students' work to you after the exams. You'll also receive a report when the results are issued, which will give feedback on the appropriateness of the tasks set, interpretation of the marking criteria and how students performed in general.

We'll give you the final marks when the results are issued.

To meet Ofqual requirements, as well as for awarding, archiving or standardising purposes, we may need to keep some of your students' work. We'll let you know if we need to do this.

6 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin

6.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code:

- further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications
- only one of them will be counted for the purpose of the *School and College Performance tables* – the DfE's rules on 'early entry' will determine which one.

Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA GCSE in Media Studies	8572	TBC

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCSE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCSEs
- Ofqual GCSE subject level conditions that apply to all GCSEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is 603/2105/2.

6.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There are no overlaps with any other AQA qualifications at this level.

6.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The qualification will be graded on a nine-point scale: 1 to 9 – where 9 is the best grade.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard grade for grade 1 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

6.4 Resits and shelf life

Students can resit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

6.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

6.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. Tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published at jcq.org.uk

Students with disabilities and special needs

We're required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested aren't changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader.

To arrange access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as family bereavement. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

For more information and advice visit aqa.org.uk/access or email accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk

6.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college hasn't previously offered our specifications, you need to register as an AQA centre. Find out how at [aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre](https://www.aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

6.8 Private candidates

This specification is not available to private candidates.

6.9 Age-appropriateness

Care and discretion should be exercised to ensure that media products and topics selected for study, and students' own production work are age appropriate. Although no topic, product or media category is explicitly excluded by this guideline, particular sensitivity is required in relation to the selection or exclusion of material which may be divisive, offensive or which may give rise to safeguarding issues.

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/8572

You can talk directly to the Media Studies subject team:

E: mediastudies@aqa.org.uk

T: 01483 556 301