GCE

Film Studies

Advanced GCE **A2 H467**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H067**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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F631 Film Text and Context

General Comments:

The quality of candidates' responses, the range of questions attempted and the range of films studied has grown considerably from the first sitting of this unit in summer 2013 and has again evolved from previous sessions from - which was very pleasing to see in ensuring that candidates are being offered films which are contemporary and from within the likely span of experience of the candidates. There was very considerable diversity of films studied as the basis for responses to the questions in Section A, demonstrating that centres and candidates are using the flexibility that the specification affords. As was mentioned in previous reports, this again shows a very pleasing engagement with the letter and the spirit of the specification. Texts used for discussion included *V for Vendetta, Children of Men, 2012, Fish Tank, No Country For Old Men, Inception, Looper, Animal Kingdom, This Is England, Moonrise Kingdom, Super 8, Skyfall, Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation, Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, Hanna, Spectre, Submarine, The Great Gatsby, There Will Be Blood, The Dark Knight, The Amazing Spiderman, The King's Speech, The Woman In Black, Don't Be Afraid Of The Dark, Nightcrawler, Brick, Kick Ass, Avengers Assemble, Her, Ex Machina, About Time, The Time Traveler's Wife, Never Let Me Go, Divergent*, *Twelve Years A Slave, Endless Love.*

This list shows again the considerable diversity of genres, and film-making styles which centres have embraced with this unit. This diversity – across the range of the whole cohort and centre level - has enabled candidates to answer the questions in Section A with conviction and knowledge, as will be discussed further below. While the diversity of films studied is to be applauded; due care should be exercised in determining what combinations of films are taken forward as the basis for examination responses. Some of the more effective combinations of films in this session included *Inception* and *Looper*; *Spectre* and *Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation; Fish Tank* and *My Brother The Devil* and *The Great Gatsby* and *There Will Be Blood*. Centres and candidates are advised to be clear about the rationale they employ for choosing the films they study. With the combinations named immediately above, there are clear areas in common between the chosen films – with some it is genre, with others it is character types and others it is setting and social context. This demonstrates that there are a variety of possible approaches to selecting films for study for this topic. This advice is repeated from previous reports from prior sessions.

In Section A, there was a general preference for Q2 over Q1. Regardless of choice here, when candidates firmly addressed the terms of the question and directly used evidence from the films they had studied, high quality work emerged. This is a point of examination housekeeping which centres and candidates should fully bear in mind as they prepare for future examination sessions. With regard to Section B, once again, the most popular topics were the rise of the blockbuster, format wars and multiplexes and developments in 21st Century cinema and film. However, it is very pleasing to report that both of the other two topics available - Early Cinema and The Impact of World War II on British cinema - have increased again their popularity that was evident from last year's examination session. The strengths and weaknesses of different approaches taken to the different questions and topics are discussed below.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

Question 1

The question addressed two of the seven Frameworks For Analysis described in the specification, namely messages and values and narrative. On the whole, the question was proficiently handled by candidates – the majority of candidates who responded to this question were able to identify what they considered to be the key messages and values of the films they had studied and they were able to support this with reference to aspects of their selected texts and in doing so discuss aspects pertaining to narrative: plot development, characterisation. One of the characteristics of better responses was the clear ability to communicate the messages and values of the films and then argue how aspects of the narrative enable the communication of these messages and values. What was of a more variable quality across the cohort was the ability to apply technical knowledge and understanding of the elements of film language to these chosen aspects. As has mentioned in previous reports and is evident in the mark schemes, the ability to offer precise textual evidence supported by accurate use of terminology is vital. Centres and candidates are urged to remember that this skill is key in determining level of success in the examination. Where candidates could discuss a range of technical terms, and sustain such an approach across their response, they were appropriately rewarded for this essential element of a film studies response.

An area for development with some candidates is the spread of their analysis across the films – seeking to focus on two or three key sequences within each film in the examination, and seeking to move away from descriptive writing and / or focussing on one part of the chosen films.

Question 2

The question addressed one of the seven Frameworks For Analysis described in the specification, namely representation. With this question, the critical factor in determining the success of candidates' responses rested upon the degree to which candidates could discuss representation in a conceptual sense. The representation of gender was a feature of many strong responses – exploring the degree to which stereotypes were ever adhered to and / or broken away from in the films studied. Exemplars of such responses will be available from OCR shortly after the publication of this report. Another interesting and valid approach was to discuss representations of character types – using Propp's stock character as the key theoretical reference point. This approach enabled candidates to discuss the nature of heroes, helpers, villains and the similarities and differences between these character types in the films they had studied.

As with question 1, there was a more variable quality across the cohort was the ability to apply technical knowledge and understanding of the elements of film language to these chosen aspects. Where candidates could discuss a range of technical terms, and sustain such an approach across their response, they were appropriately rewarded for this essential element of a film studies response.

Section B

Early Cinema (1895 – 1915)

For those centres whose candidates offered responses to this topic, Q3 proved to be a popular choice. It was pleasing to see the degree to which many candidates could open up a debate and engage with the quotation given. Many candidates had a pleasing level of knowledge which

enabled them to effectively challenge the statement in the quotation, providing a range of other examples of other 'founding fathers' of cinema. On a technological front, there was much useful discussion of the role played by Thomas Edison; and on with regard to film form, there was much useful discussion of the contributions by Melies and Porter, amongst others. The majority of candidates recognised that there were a variety of relevant factors and were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding with detailed and accurate use of historical information. Weaker answers were generally characterised by a lack of ability to go outside of the work of the Lumiere brothers – this may be due to lack of knowledge and / or lack of skill in handling exam questions of this type. In general terms, quotations are used in questions in this unit to provide a platform for debate, never as an instruction to guide candidates to a 'preferred response'. Opinions supported by relevant evidence are needed to be successful in this regard.

With regards to Q4, candidates were on the whole able to demonstrate a good, accurate command of relevant historical knowledge. Films such as *Life Of An American Fireman, The Great Train Robbery* and *A Trip To The Moon* were the cornerstones of many successful responses. The better responses were ones that used aspects of the films as objects for debate about the importance of technological change in the development of storytelling. Additionally, the use of location filming in films such *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* also played a useful role in building successful answers. This was pleasing to see and enabled candidates to marshal coherent responses to the question. A characteristic of less successful responses was to omit this type of debate and fall into a more descriptive account of aspects of the films, thus losing sight of how Section B differentiates from Section A.

The impact of World War II on British cinema (1939-45)

A generally pleasing feature of many responses to both questions was the accuracy of relevant historical knowledge and the ability of candidates to use this knowledge to make an argument which firmly addressed the terms of the question. From this, a very pleasing level of knowledge and understanding of the variety of sociological factors for the high level of cinema attendances emerged. Good responses were generally characterised by the ability to balance up films produced and released in the period together with discussions of cinemas places of safety and of information in an age before television news. It was very clear that the candidates who responded to these questions were well prepared to do so and that many had watched films from the period – a useful part of teaching and learning for this topic. However, some candidates described and offered elements of textual analysis of such films – where this was without connection to other factors pertaining to production, distribution and exhibition, such responses were of limited relevance to the question set. As was mentioned above, Section B requires different types of responses than Section A which is geared towards textual analysis.

The rise of the blockbuster, format wars and multiplexes (1972 -84)

As was the case in the previous session, this was one of the more popular topics in this section. With regard to Q7, many candidates were suitably well briefed on the history of the development of multiplex cinemas – both in the US and in the UK, which was pleasing to see. In addition to this historical knowledge, a full answer to the question necessitated a discussion of the benefits to film institutions – this could have focussed on any institutions involved in either production, distribution or exhibition. Many candidates could express a view in outline terms about some aspects of these, but more clarity and specificity was generally required to secure higher marks. Q8 was the more popular of the two in this section, and on the whole, elicited many strong responses. For the majority of candidates responding to this question, it was very clear that they had a firm grasp of key blockbuster films and how the success of one or more of these had affected subsequent Hollywood business practices. The success and release strategies of films such as *The Godfather* and *Jaws* were very useful platforms for building substantive responses.

The success of merchandising in building franchises such as *Star* Wars and how that facilitated the *Superman* series of films in the late 1970s / early 1980s was also highly beneficial.

Developments in 21ˢᵗ Century cinema and film (2000 – present)

As with the previous session, this proved to be a very popular topic area. On a factual level, the majority of responses were well informed about the publicly funded Digital Screen Network – number of screens and in general terms what those screen are used for. The rise of 'Thinema' – the broadcast of theatrical and operatic performances in cinema screens was well recognised and an issue which was, in the main, effectively addressed by many candidates. The better responses were ones that could be precise and particular – looking at the exhibition practices in cinemas local to the candidates and using this as an evidential basis to discuss to what extent audience choice has been broadened out. As with all of the questions for this unit, this question was looking to elicit a sense of debate from candidates, and the ability to enter into a debate supported by evidence was key in determining the level of success of responses.

With regard to Q10, there were a range of approaches taken. The most successful responses were characterised by the ability to engage with some specific examples – of platforms (Netflix / Amazon Video / iTunes) and / or specific products – (*Beasts Of No Nation; A Field In England)* and discuss the emerging re-formation of the film exhibition market. A feature of just about all responses was the impact of piracy – while this is relevant and pertinent to the question, teachers need to ensure that candidates understand there is a growing legal market for internet enabled for film exhibition. Consideration of own cultural practices, such as exercises to discover who uses such online platforms as those described above, and how they are used, would be beneficial in equipping candidates with some of the precise knowledge they will need for this topic.

Sociological / Economic / Technological contexts

The advice below is a re-iteration of the same advice as from the previous report; centres and candidates who have responded to this advice have improved the quality of the responses offered in this session.
The better answers across all of the Section B responses explicitly addressed one or more of these contexts, as candidates determined what was most relevant from their learning and adapted to answer the questions set.
Centres are advised to use these contexts to help frame tasks inside and outside of the classroom and, in so doing, candidates will then begin to generate material from their research to help them better contextualise issues and perhaps personalise their learning. Some practical ways that this aspiration can be put into practice are signposted in the scheme of work available on the OCR website.

General Advice to Centres

Section A – develop the candidates' technical knowledge and understanding alongside their understanding of the films and the seven Frameworks For Analysis. Technical prowess is integral to high performance in the exam. Also ensure that candidates are able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the films studied through being able to write about different aspects of those films. One tool in achieving this is through regular use of timed responses.

Section B – enable candidates to personalise and make concrete the work of the topics – regardless of which of the four topics they study. Candidates need to be able to construct arguments in the exam, and to enable them to do so fully, they need greater personal / local evidence to help over and above what may be learned from reading books and websites. Whilst

watching films or extracts from film from the periods being studied will help to consolidate candidates' knowledge and understanding, it needs to be remembered that such work is a dimension of study for this topic. Detailed textual analysis is not required for questions on this topic and the mark scheme offers no facility for rewarding textual analysis in this section.

Centres and candidates are advised to make use of the support materials (study guides and exemplar materials) which are published on the OCR website in order to learn from best practice and scaffold ways to improve.

F632 Foundation Portfolio in Film

Administration

The administration of this component by most centres was very good, with marks and work being submitted on time. Almost all centres completed coursework cover sheets thoroughly, with detailed comments outlining how and why the marks were allocated. A number of centres would still benefit from being more explicit in justifying why certain marks were awarded. The majority of centres submitted work as physical folders which were suitably presented; the centres which submitted work online would benefit from using a blog hub as this is good practice.
Centres were in the main very clear about how and why marks had been awarded and avoided using subjective comments or just statements copied and pasted straight from the assessment criteria. Comments should clearly indicate how the individual candidate's work meets the assessment criteria as this makes it clear as to how the centre have applied the criteria.

The video work was often submitted as individual discs which can make the moderation process more challenging as moderators are constantly switching between discs. It would be ideal if the complete work of a centre could be put onto a single disc. Please continue to make sure that video work is submitted in suitable formats.

Quality of marking

Application of the criteria was close to the agreed standard. Although a minority of centres tended to be over-generous, this was often with specific elements rather than the portfolio as a whole. Harsh marking was very rare. In terms of the textual analysis most centres are assessing candidates in the right levels, centres now appear confident in marking the planning. It was clear that if candidates had completed set tasks then this, alongside the actual quality of the work, allowed them to access the higher level marks. Moderators saw very little basic planning being rewarded than has been seen in previous sessions.

The continued variety of creative artefacts produced was pleasing and the majority of centres were accurately rewarding the highest quality work. Those centres producing the script and key frames still need to make sure that candidates demonstrate consistently high levels of appropriate production skills to justify awarding level 4 marks. This includes the ability to frame and focus still images as well as using appropriate landscape formatting. The video work produced was mixed but was often accurately awarded the correct level.
Evaluations varied in approach with the majority of candidates submitting an essay-style write-up of their work and progress. Centres need to make sure that candidates address all the set questions.

Candidates' work

Given that this is the fourth year for the specification, moderators were pleased that there is still a diversity of work produced particularly in the choice of films used in the textual analysis work. The diverse choice of films being selected is in keeping with the spirit of the specification. Candidates would all benefit from clear guidance being given on the correct ways to format planning and the importance of this being carried out prior to the production of the creative artefact as opposed to after the production.

Textual analysis

Candidates chose a wide range of films to analyse; these were often carefully chosen and facilitated the textual analysis. The most successful work demonstrated a clear sense of engagement with the texts and made insightful links between the micro-technical elements and the contextual macro elements. This was supported by the use of screen grabs to help illustrate the point being made and this visual stimulus proved to be useful in allowing candidates to make direct links between the two films.

The candidates whose textual analysis focused on small extracts from the whole film were able to gain appropriate marks for terminology due to the close analysis of micro-technical elements. As with the close focus on an extract, the candidates who used a single framework of analysis tended to produce more coherent and focused pieces of writing. This approach should be encouraged.

A number of candidates had tried to shoehorn in specific film theory, often rather clumsily. It is better if candidates are aware of the broader concepts of film theory and apply this to their film choices as opposed to trying to fit in theory.

It was clear that where centres and candidates had considered the whole portfolio from the start, the choice of films for the textual analysis provided a clear and constant thread which linked all the elements together and allowed a cohesive portfolio of work to be produced. Both centres and candidates should be aware of the need for one film to be non-Hollywood and make this choice very clear.

Planning

The range and quality of planning was varied with some candidates producing lots of focused and detailed material whilst others had obviously produced much more limited planning material. The better work made explicit links to the impact of the textual analysis and how the candidate's work had been influenced by the films analysed. Candidates producing a location report often seemed to ignore them when making the creative artefact or chose to include badly focused and framed images. It is vital that candidates realise the importance of planning and the need for it to be presented in a suitable format. A number of candidate who produced hand drawn storyboards did not always use appropriate figure shape to illustrate blocking within the frame, stick figures do not constitute good planning.

Creative artefact

There was a fairly even split between centres submitting filmed sequences and script and key frames. The quality of work produced in both areas was mixed.

The better filmed sequences had benefitted from clear planning and an understanding of technical conventions linked to the textual analysis. Where this was evident, candidates had produced excellent work that was both sophisticated and demonstrated excellent application of production skills. The film sequences that were less successful did not demonstrate the same technical excellence and in some cases did not frame shots properly or manage to hold a shot steady. If centres choose to offer the filmed sequence they would benefit from highlighting the need for basic technical competence.

As with the filmed sequences, there was excellent work produced in the script and key frame approach. Again, as with the filmed sequence, candidates who used the appropriate formatting for the script tended to produce work of a higher standard. These candidates also managed to relate their key frames clearly to the prior planning. In a number of cases the marks awarded for

the key frames tended to be over-generous especially where frames were repeated or suffered due to poor composition and lighting. An area for improvement in both the filmed and non-filmed work is the use of mise-en-scene which can let down otherwise well planned and constructed creative artefacts.

Evaluation

The evaluations are an element that benefit from a clear focus. It is important that candidates do more than just describe what they have done without much sense of evaluating its success or otherwise. A significant number of candidates now include screen grabs of their own work and compare this directly to the work from the textual analysis, this approach should be actively encouraged. The better candidates were able to make clear and insightful points about how all elements of their portfolio linked together.

All submitted evaluations were written and often presented as a continuous piece of writing. The specification does not state the format that the evaluation should be presented in so it may be beneficial for centres to consider the way this is presented in future sessions. Evaluations could be presented as an audio commentary, a video presentation or through a mix of approaches. Centres would benefit from considering how the evaluation is delivered and structured in order to access the full range of levels. It is vital that all candidates answer all four questions in order to access the full range of marks.

Centres are reminded that all the elements are meant to interlink and inform each part of the process. It is also expected that differentiation takes place within centres particularly in the marking of the individual elements.

F633 Global Cinema and Critical Perspectives

General Comments:

As the third sitting of the A2 paper for this specification it was pleasing to see improvements in candidates' responses from the previous session. There were also examples of excellent practice by some centres and clear engagement with the spirit of the specification.

A range of texts, case studies and approaches were undertaken. Many of these were similar to last year and for Section A a variety of texts from differing contexts included *La Haine, A Prophet, City of God, Tsotsi, Elite Squad, The Tin Drum, Goodbye Lenin, Metropolis, Hidden, The Motorcycle Diaries, Battle Royale, À bout de soufflé* and *Pan's Labyrinth*. In Section B, all sections were covered but Authorship was again the most popular, with fewer candidates attempting the topic area of Film and Audience Experience.

Overall the quality of responses for Section A was again higher than those for Section B. Centres are reminded to take note of the case study approach to the topics in a contemporary framework. Many weaker candidates focused too heavily on theory without application and/or outdated texts which made it difficult to address fully the question set. Centres are reminded that in order to develop students' skills from AS, they should be engaging with wider contextual issues in Section A and debating contemporary issues underpinned by critical approaches in Section B.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

The question focused on the macro framework of style and the role this played in conveying messages and values. Successful candidates were able to discuss their chosen texts with clear reference to how stylistic techniques (such as use of the camera, use of mise-en-scene) have been employed. Where candidates had clearly engaged with a range of contextual issues, social, political and historical, they were able to confidently make links between these and stylistic techniques and often achieved marks in level 4. Developing their skills from AS, successful candidates were also able to support their points with detailed micro evidence to gain high marks for evidence and terminology. The majority of candidates really engaged with the question and were able to discuss with confidence the contribution the use of stylistic techniques to understanding the messages and value of their chosen films.

Weaker responses often did not sufficiently address the set question and/or support points with examples and evidence. Several candidates made no reference to wider contexts or discussed context to the detriment of engaging with the films themselves. The weakest responses were often characterised by the failure to understand and appropriately identify messages and values in their texts.

Centres are reminded that they do not need to focus on more than two key texts for Section A, but these must be studied in their entirety and explored with reference to their wider historical, social and political contexts.

Centres are also reminded, as stated in the specification, that the texts chosen for study should be from two different countries or the same country, but different periods of time.

Whilst this was not an issue in this session, this advice is repeated from the previous report for the sake of clarity and consistency.

Section B

Question 2

Candidates who responded to this question were generally very able to supply a range of examples of regulation structures in a range of countries, which was very pleasing to see. Strong responses were often characterised by the ability to integrate media effects theory meaningfully (discussions of the hypodermic needle theory and social learning theory were generally appropriately handled) as theoretical underpinnings to film regulation structures in a variety of countries. Some responses demonstrated the capacity to debate to what extent regulators do seek to protect audiences and to what extent regulators serve other interest groups – such as the film institutions who effectively pay for the regulatory systems in the UK and the USA.

A range of countries were made reference to including the UK, US, China, North Korea, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Weaker candidates failed to engage with the question and discussed regulation in much broader terms and gave outdated examples which had limited relevance to contemporary issues. Centres are reminded to be careful with the use of outdated case studies such and the Jamie Bulger case, which has limited relevance to the question set, and highly disputable evidence about the impact of films in the case – the lack of substance to assertions that the perpetrators had seen films such as *Child's Play 3* was mentioned by the judge in the original trial in the summing up. Extreme caution is advised in using this as a case study for teaching about film regulation.

Question 3

This focused on how regulation can have causal effects on production and exhibition. There were some excellent responses which engaged well with the question and assessed how regulatory structure had knock-on effects for the nature of films produced – the strictures of the American PG-13 and its impact on the representation of violence in films such as *The Dark Knight* – is a notable example. For the exhibition dimension, there were some useful discussions of the case of *The Interview,* however, the exhibition dimension of the question was not generally well-handled, lacking focus and precision. All topics will require solid case studies and teaching and learning approaches which enable candidates to make connections between events. Other ways of approaching the exhibition part of the question could have been to explore the use of social protest – both on local and national levels which can prevent films from playing in cinemas and on a wider scale. For example, in Wolverhampton in 2015 there was sit-in protest against the screening of *Nanak Shah Fakir*, which subsequently led to the film being withdrawn worldwide. Such examples raise questions about the role of pressure groups and protestors in *de facto* film regulation. In an era where 'crowdsourcing' of ideas has gained some currency, it is also appropriate to look at bottom-up approaches to film regulation also.

Candidates used a variety of contemporary examples of both texts and practices which were relevant to the question. Weaker responses were more common sense and opinion- based with perhaps out-dated examples and little relevance to the issue of technology. Once again, it is good practice for candidates to engage with regulatory practices outside of the UK. The US, China, Iran, Australia and South Korea were all good examples of countries with regulatory practice which contrasts with the UK and to which the better candidates made reference.

Question 4

Successful responses were often characterised by the ability to supply a range of examples of films and filmmakers and debate the extent to which the presence of stars were necessary to make the film successful. The films of Alejandro González Iñárritu provided a good basis for discussion, exploring the degree to which the success of films such as *Babel* and *Birdman* required 'star power'. The films of Wes Anderson provided a useful point for discussion into the star power of the 'auteur'. Some also considered what is meant by the term 'success' and argued that international success can be in the form of awards and film festivals, is not just financial.

Question 5

This was one of the most popular questions in Section B and many candidates attempted this with varying success. The importance of the director as author in contemporary cinema was the focus of the question. The better responses were able to offer a solid theoretical underpinning to discussion and use this to discuss a range of contemporary directors – such as Tim Burton, Wes Anderson and Spike Lee amongst others. Weaker responses were often characterised by a lack of a contemporary focus – responses which mostly focussed on the films of Kubrick and Hitchcock clearly struggled to offer a contemporary thrust.   Other aspects of good responses involved discussions of star power and the role of stars such as Brad Pitt in enabling films to get produced and released. Approaches such as this helped to give responses a wider critical dimension and is to be commended. Centres are reminded that there are a number of bullet points in the specification for this section and that the role of the director as auteur is merely one of these – and training candidates to respond on previous questions by no means guarantees being prepared for the next exam. This is partly a reiteration of previous advice for this topic. Centres are reminded that Section B is about engaging in contemporary debates and using relevant examples from films to support the arguments which candidates make.

Film and Audience Experience

Question 6

Only a relatively small number of candidates responded to this question. Responses were generally able to discuss how filmmakers have the capacity to influence spectator response through the stylistic approach, for example. A mostly overlooked area here was for candidates to consider how the subjectivity of the individual spectator can and will play a role in determining response.

Question 7

Again, there relatively few responses to this question. Candidates were able to recognise the capacity for IMAX, 3D, 4D to improve the quality of the viewing experience at the cinema. Likewise, there was some recognition for the different type of experience offered by handheld mobile devices (phones / tablets / portable game consoles).

General Advice to Centres:

Section A **-** Ensure that candidates are fully prepared to discuss the wider contexts which influence the message and values in the films studied. Historical, social and political issues in the country at the time of production are fundamental to candidates' understanding of the texts and how they operate.

Ensure that candidates understand the key messages of their films and are able to link these to wider context and the macro areas.

In class, candidates should cover all macro areas so they are able to link messages and values to each of the potential question areas.

Comparison is key, and film texts should be selected with this in mind.

Section B - Exploring the key issues detailed in the bullet points of the specification for each area and ensuring that candidates have relevant, detailed and up to date knowledge is essential.

Critical approaches must be applied to contemporary examples and not just regurgitated. Long paragraphs of theory are difficult to credit as the relevance to the question together with application is not clear.

F634 Creative Investigation in Film

General Comments

The research project component continues to produce a wide and interesting range of topics. Candidates have clearly been guided to pursue their own areas of interest or to develop an area they have covered elsewhere in the course; auteur theory, for example. A higher proportion of candidates produced the non-filmed task. Marking was predominantly in line with the national standard set for this unit; this was an improvement on last year's session. There were fewer examples of centres over marking, especially for the Creative realisations.

Administration

In most cases the portfolios were well presented and arrived on time. The MS1 sheets and CCS160s were included with the sample. All candidates required for the sample were sent to the moderators. Some centres included the authentication sheets which do not need to be sent to the moderator but should be kept in the centre for presentation if required. It is important, however, that these documents are completed and kept in the centre so that authenticity of work can be verified. One MS1 sheet was included but had not been completed. It is essential that all relevant paperwork is completed as per the instructions outlined by OCR. Candidates mostly presented their work on paper and there were fewer examples of centres using an online source such as a blog or website. When used well, blog hubs can be an effective way of presenting candidates' work. All research projects were submitted in a written/essay format and all planning materials were also on paper. The filmed tasks were submitted on DVD and in all cases these were problem-free. There were some excellent examples of portfolios where candidates had clearly taken great care and time over the presentation of their work; each section was clearly identified and, in some cases, a contents page was included at the front. This approach is to be commended. The comments on the cover sheets were especially helpful in this year's session with many centres offering clear and detailed justifications for the marks submitted. Comments referred to both the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates' work with focused reference to the work submitted. Most centres used the interactive forms and this is to be encouraged as some handwritten comments were difficult to read. It was clear from the annotations on the portfolios and cover sheets, that internal standardisation had taken place in a number of centres.

Research

As with last year's session there was an impressive body of work produced by candidates in the higher mark bands and the moderators very much enjoyed reading them. The most successful research tasks were those that embedded their secondary source material seamlessly into their findings, using them to influence their own analysis of the primary texts. There were some excellent examples of candidates placing their primary texts within an historical, social and economic context and within the developments of cinema. Candidates continue to demonstrate personal engagement, and enjoyment of the topics they have chosen to investigate.
Some of the research topics investigated in this year's session included: the changing portrayal of mental illness in film; Hayao Miyazaki as auteur; John Hughes as auteur; the changing representation of zombies in film; Kubrick's stylistic choices; women and spectatorship in period drama.

As in last year's session there were still too many research topics that were primary-source heavy. Some candidates focused on one or two films or chose a research area that was too narrow and therefore did not enable them to explore a range of secondary sources; as a result

the investigations were too similar to the textual analysis essays produced at AS. Research findings also lacked clear investigation and application of secondary sources. The views of contemporary critics and theorists are perfectly acceptable as secondary sources and can provide interesting areas for discussion. Some candidates made excellent use of contemporary material to support their investigations. Centres are advised to discuss the research topics with their candidates and ensure they are able to source plenty of existing material on the topic before they start. In this year's session, candidates who chose to investigate a series of research questions tended to produce more successful responses than those who chose a single question; however both approaches are acceptable. Some candidates presented their work under a series of headings and this produced focused and engaging results.

Please remind candidates that they need to produce a description of key texts as this is still missing from many portfolios despite being mentioned in the reports to centres and the Principal Moderator's report on previous occasions.

Planning

Candidates continue to produce a range of detailed and focused planning materials. There was an impressive level of detail in the planning submitted by some candidates. The best examples of planning were those where the candidate's intentions were clear and the planning materials were purposeful. As in last year's session, candidates made effective use of templates for their recces and risk assessments and the level of detail on these documents has improved. Candidates are continuing to refer to well-known actors in their casting considerations but, as outlined in last year's report, they should also refer to the actual actors they are going to use; this then feeds into their planning and organisation for filming. If producing the non-filmed option candidates should produce a draft script for their planning which is then turned into a correctly formatted screenplay for their creative realisation. Although this has been mentioned in previous Principal Moderator's reports and in the individual reports to centres, there are still a worrying number of centres that are not producing a separate screenplay for the non-filmed task. Centres may be misinterpreting the specification. The list of planning materials outlined in the specification includes: 'a written script for the non-filmed sequence'. For the creative realisation component the specification states that candidates 'will produce a screenplay (or extracts from a series of screenplays) for a film sequence'. The script and screenplay should therefore be two separate items. The script is assessed as part of the planning materials and the screenplay is assessed as part of the creative realisation. To differentiate between the two encourages candidates to produce a draft script - this could be dialogue only - for their planning materials, and a finished screenplay for the creative realisation. For the final screenplay candidates should produce a correctly formatted document with scene headings, dialogue and action.

Creative Realisation

There were some excellent short films and examples of key frames in this session. Candidates demonstrated a clear passion for their subject matter and an understanding of the stylistic techniques of their chosen films and filmmakers; these were successfully translated into their creative artefacts. There was a very well executed short film based on the narrative style of Stanley Kubrick and an imaginative Avant Garde sequence both of which were assured in their use of the micro technical elements. It was particularly pleasing to see the attention to detail with mise en scene in this year's submissions, with fewer candidates simply using their school or college as settings. One candidate, for example, successfully re-created the 1980s for their John Hughes inspired sequence, with careful consideration of costume and props. There were some examples of beautiful camerawork and framing and a clear understanding of the effect on the audience. One candidate handled the zombie genre well without resorting to derivative tropes. The non-filmed task also produced some impressive work. Candidates demonstrated thoughtful handling of dialogue and there were some detailed actions on the screenplays. The best key frames were those that most resembled a filmed sequence and it was therefore easy to

see how the screenplay had been realised cinematically. The use of Photoshop to create lighting and special effects continues to work well and is to be encouraged. Some candidates created the whole of their screenplay in key frames as part of the planning, selecting the best 20 for their finished product; this approach worked extremely well as it enabled candidates to clearly consider how the whole sequence worked cinematically. There were still key frames that were out of focus, too small to see or poorly printed. Candidates also continue to produce key frames that are in portrait, and not landscape format. This has been mentioned in all previous Principal Moderator's reports. Candidates should produce key frames that replicate stills from a filmed sequence; it must be clear from the key frames what the film would look like if it was a moving image product. Portrait photographs do not reflect cinematic framing and should not be included. One set of photographs had landscape shaped frames superimposed to show intended framing; it would be far better to produce images that are already cropped. A number of key frames were also presented out of proportion, having been stretched to fit on a document. This again made it difficult for moderators to see the images clearly. Many candidates provided detailed comments to accompany their key frames that explained their intentions. These were very helpful in gaining an understanding of the reasons behind their creative choices. However, in some cases these reasons weren't successfully realised in the key frames. When assessing the key frames centres should take into consideration the quality of the finished products as well as the written justifications; if the key frames do not meet the aims they should be marked accordingly.

Evaluation

There was a marked improvement in the evaluations this year. Candidates were able to reflect purposefully on their finished product and relate it clearly to their research project. Candidates were particularly adept at linking their artefact to their aims. Many candidates included screen grabs from both their research films and their own work. This practice is to be encouraged as it helps to demonstrate how their research has influenced their creative artefact; it also enables candidates to illustrate the micro technical elements they have used.

Overall it is evident that centres are encouraging their candidates to work independently and to explore their own interests.   There is also a clear sense that many of the candidates have a genuine love of films and filmmaking.

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