



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCSE Media Studies (J526) Frequently Asked Questions **(Updated December 2014)**

Links to navigate through FAQ:

[GQ Reform Update \(December 2014\)](#)

[What are the main changes to the new Linear specification?](#)

[Past Papers and Mark Schemes](#)

[Introduction](#)

[B321 Individual Portfolio in Media Studies \(Controlled Assessment, 30%\)](#)

[B322 Textual Analysis and Media Topic \(Moving Image\) \(Exam, 40%\)](#)

[B323 Textual Analysis and Media Topic \(Print\) \(Exam, 40%\)](#)

[B324 Production Portfolio in Media Studies \(Controlled Assessment, 30%\)](#)

[Entries, Re-sits, Terminal Rules, General Questions](#)

[Controlled Conditions](#)

[Number of Media Areas Studied](#)

*Updates in December 2014 edition

- Added text on GQ Reform
- Added text on past papers and mark schemes
- Hyperlinks tested and updated where necessary
- Extracts updated for B322 and B323 up to June 2014

GQ Reform Update (December 2014)

- We expect GCSE Media Studies to be reformed in the third phase of general qualification reform.
- A reformed GCSE Media Studies specification graded 9-1 (in line with other reformed GCSEs) should be available for first teaching in September 2017 under current proposed timelines.
- We are unable to give any further detail on the structure or content of the reformed qualification as of yet (December 2014) as all Awarding Organisation are still awaiting guidance from Ofqual and DFE on this phase of reform.
- Last award of the current specification is scheduled for June 2018.
- Centres can continue as normal with the current GCSE course with the last cohorts starting a full two year course in September 2016.
- Cohorts starting in September 2017 would study the reformed specification.
- Please follow our Twitter feed for the latest updates [@OCR Media Film](#)

What are the main changes to the new Linear specification?

- There is no longer a January examination series. All assessments now take place in the summer series.
- The content of the specification is largely the same but layout has been re-arranged to aid readability.
- In Unit B321 exemplar tasks within topics have been updated to reflect good practice seen in centres, however all the topic titles remain unchanged.
- Assessment criteria have also been amended in Unit B321 to take greater account of the key media concept of representation.
- In Units B322/3 examination topics remain unchanged. There is no longer a January exam option. Guidance on the examination has been slightly updated in the appendixes for these units.
- In Unit B324 all briefs remain the same. Websites and online materials must be submitted for moderation **on disk only** (no live URLs) and checked to make sure that all links work.

Past Papers and Mark Schemes

- All past papers and mark schemes from the most recent examination series can be found on our secure [Interchange website](#) (In the Resources/Past Papers menu). We keep the most recent papers on here as centres have asked us to keep these secure so candidates cannot view them before mock exams. If you don't have access to [Interchange](#) your exams officer should be able to help you.
- All past papers and mark schemes that are more than one series old can be found on the [GCSE Media Studies homepage](#) under past papers or mark schemes.

Even though the following FAQ is as comprehensive as possible, please refer to the specification on all occasions for any final clarifications

Essential Reading

[The OCR GCSE Media Studies Specification](#)

[The OCR GCSE Media Studies Examiners' reports](#)

[The OCR GCSE Media Studies Teachers' Handbook](#)

[The OCR GCSE Media Studies Controlled Assessment Guide](#)

[OCR Media Studies for GCSE](#)

[Eileen Lewis, Michael Rodgers, Rebecca Morris, James Goddard, Hodder Education, ISBN 978-0-340-98341-6](#)

[The Media Teacher's Book](#)

[Julian McDougall and Nick Potamitis, Hodder Education, ISBN 978-1-444-11556-7](#)

[The OCR GCSE Media Studies homepage](#)

[The OCR CPD Hub](#)

(A new site where we will be advertising training days and posting resources in the future)

General Questions

How many media areas do candidates have to study across the whole specification?

Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of **a minimum of three different media areas**, including **one print** and **one audio-visual** based medium across the specification.

What does OCR count as different media areas?

For assessment purposes the following would all be counted as distinct media:

- Film
- TV
- Music Video
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Posters
- DVD/CD covers
- Web/Online
- Audio (e.g. Radio)

Unit B321 Individual Media Studies Portfolio (Controlled Assessment - 30%)

What is required in the portfolio:

- An analytical assignment (60 marks)
- A production exercise (40 marks)
- An evaluative commentary (20 marks)

Each portfolio must be based around **one** of the ten topic areas in the specification. **Two different media** must be covered in the portfolio.

Formats for the portfolio:

- **How can the assignments be presented?**
 - Word processed (this can include screen grabs and annotations) (800-1500 words)
 - Slide presentation (e.g. PowerPoint – printed out for moderation)
 - Podcast (around 5 minutes recording time)
- **What formats can the portfolio work be submitted in?**

Portfolios can be submitted as:

 - **Printed hard copy**

Portfolios should be supplied in hard copy. If there is any digital work e.g. links or video then the work needs to be submitted in one of the electronic formats detailed below so the moderators can access and view the links/video etc.
 - **Documents**

Adobe PDF documents (preferred option)
MS Word files (.doc not .docx)
OpenOffice documents
 - **Images**

JPG – JPG files can be used for any images
Adobe PDF
 - **Audio**

Audio should be playable on a domestic CD player or made available in mp3 format
 - **Video**

Video should be playable on a domestic DVD player or if supplied on a CD/DVD-Rom it should be in a standard video file such as *.mpg or *.mov.
 - **Slide Presentations** (see above)
 - **Websites** should be saved to CD-Rom or DVD-Rom and all the links checked on the CD/DVD copy before dispatching to the moderator. The home page should be easily identifiable for the moderator.

Any software in formats other than those listed above or on page 59 of the [specification](#) needs to be converted before it is sent to a moderator.

For example, any QuarkXPress, Adobe InDesign or Microsoft Publisher documents should be converted to an Adobe PDF document before they are submitted to the moderator.

Digital files submitted to the moderator should be saved on a CD-Rom or DVD-Rom.

Memory sticks are not acceptable due to possible virus contamination and instability of

the format. Work submitted on memory sticks will not be moderated. All electronic work should be checked to make sure it runs correctly before being sent for moderation.

One CD-Rom or DVD-Rom per centre should suffice.

Work on the CD or DVD should be saved so that candidates can be clearly identified e.g. a folder for each candidate on the CD or DVD with their full name and candidate number.

General Questions

Can I use a task from the old 1918 specification for B321?

Some tasks from the 1918 specification can be adapted for the new specification, see the [June 2010 and June 2011 examiners' report](#) for details on which tasks could be adapted.

Please note examiners' reports from all series are available on the [GCSE Media Studies homepage](#).

Can teachers change/amend topics or tasks for Unit B321?

In Unit B321 the topic used must be one of the ten listed in the specification. These cannot be amended. The tasks and texts listed under the topics are exemplars and centres are encouraged to amend these to suit their resources and needs.

Can blogging be used?

No, blogging isn't one of the accepted formats for presentation of work at GCSE due to controlled conditions and the security of candidate work needed ([see notice to centres](#)).

How should the portfolio be presented?

Work on CD or DVD should be saved so that candidates can be clearly identified e.g. a folder for each candidate on a CD or DVD with their full name and candidate number.

Within each candidate's folder there should be subsequent folders for their assignment, production exercise and evaluation, in that order.

Hard copy should be clearly labelled and split into sections for the analytical assignment, production exercise and evaluation.

Any extra research and planning evidence that helped inform your assessment decisions should also be submitted to the moderator in an appendix.

Why should I annotate the work?

As explained in the [June 2010 and 2011 examiners' report](#) for this specification, centres that fail to annotate candidates' work or fill in the Teacher summative comment on the controlled assessment cover sheets risk disadvantaging their candidates, as the absence of annotation or comment make it more difficult for moderators to see how marks have been arrived at and to agree with the centre's assessment.

Does it matter what Certificate any films used within the course may have?

Answer taken from our [Controlled Assessment Guide](#) (p26).

In theory certification within an educational context does not apply, since it is not technically a public exhibition, BUT in the present climate of protection for "children" (anyone up to the age of 18), it would be unwise to ignore the expectations and wishes of parents, senior staff, governors, Ofsted inspectors etc. The simplest route to take is to insist that all material has a maximum Certificate of 15; it is always possible to interpret the 'rule' later if, for instance, someone wanted to look at the opening scenes from The

Godfather. It is always best practice to keep parents informed and seek parental consent if there is any potential controversy.

Assignment Questions

Film Genres – can candidates study action adventure and choose the action adventure option for the textual analysis exam?

There is no restriction in the specification stopping centres from studying the action adventure genre for the assignment and taking the action adventure film option for the textual analysis examination. However, centres should consider that this will lead to their candidates having a narrower range of study and experiences on their GCSE Media Studies course.

Film Genres – can the two texts be from different genres?

Yes.

How many texts do our candidates need to study?

Candidates need to study **two** or more real media texts. These texts should demonstrate contrasting representations of the same social group(s), place(s) or event(s).

What areas of representation can be studied?

Areas of representation could include ([see page 10 of specification](#)):

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Sexuality
- Class and status
- Regional or national identity
- Physical ability/disability.

Advertising topic –Can the representation being studied be a representation of a product over time?

Yes, provided that it is linked to one of the areas of representation suggested above.

However, there is the danger some candidates may focus only on the product rather than issues of representation. **If producing a written assignment does the assignment need to be hand written or does it need to be word processed?**

Word processed.

Can candidates look at more than one area of representation in their assignment?

Candidates can write about two areas of representation in their assignment instead of one (as long as it still under one topic area e.g. Film Genres). However, Centres need to make sure that their candidates don't fall into the trap of generalising too much if following this approach.

Production Exercise Questions

Can found images be used in the individual portfolio?

See the [June 2010 and June 2011 examiner's report](#). Production exercises that use original photography are likely to be more lively and creative. Although it is not stated in the specification that original photography must be used, candidates who do employ it will be better placed to attain the Level 4 criterion of '*a sense of creativity and stimulation employed in targeting a specific audience*'.

Does the production exercise have to be based around the area of representation examined in the assignment?

No, but it clearly makes sense to use the area of representation already studied as a springboard. See the exemplar tasks on pages 9-11 of the [specification](#) for examples.

What media area is a storyboard counted as?

If it is a storyboard for a TV documentary then it is TV. If it is a storyboard for the introduction to a film then it is Film.

What kind of evidence of audience research is needed for the Production Exercise (B321)?

For Unit B321 all we'd expect to see submitted is the analytical assignment, the actual production exercise and the planning and evaluative commentary (with any extra research and planning in an appendix). For example, if the production exercise had been a CD cover we'd expect the candidate in their commentary to cover audience by explaining who they were targeting and how the cover appealed to this audience (perhaps with comparison to some real media texts they'd looked at) and how they had made decisions about their cover with their audience in mind. An appendix can include any other audience research they've completed e.g. feedback on draft covers, rejected designs, primary or secondary audience research etc. If using questionnaires candidates should only provide a summary of their questionnaire results, with a copy of the questions used. Not every completed questionnaire is required as evidence.

Planning and Evaluative Commentary Questions

Is the evaluative commentary for the whole portfolio or just the production exercise?

The evaluative commentary applies only to the production exercise.

Can centres submit a video of candidates presenting their Slide Presentation?

Yes, although this is not required, it is good practice to present on video as it provides extra evidence that backs up your assessment decisions. Let your candidates practise the presentation first before putting them in front of the camera. Also get them to introduce themselves (name and candidate number) so the moderator knows who is talking. If filming a presentation, high quality film isn't necessary for GCSE. A web cam (as long as sound is good enough) would be acceptable. Any video should be presented in one of the formats discussed already.

Unit B322 Textual Analysis and Media Topic (Moving Image) (Examination 40%)

How long do candidates have to answer the questions? Is viewing time included in the 1 hour 45 minutes total?

The viewing time is included in the 1 hour 45 minute examination time. Candidates have 1 hour and 15 minutes to answer all the questions once the extracts have finished.

What is the topic for textual analysis?

Action Adventure Films.

What have the exam extracts been so far?

June 2014

Spy Kids (Director: R Rodriguez)

In point: 1 minute 48 seconds – 'Once upon a time there was a man and a woman'

Out point: 6 minutes 24 seconds – The couple land on a boat with a 'just married' sign.

June 2013

Hot Fuzz (Director: Edgar Wright, 2007)

In point: 1 hour 27 minutes 55 seconds – Man rides down the high street on a horse.

Out point: 1 hour 32 minutes 2 seconds – After man says "Hag!"

Jan 2013

Hancock (Director: Peter Berg, 2008)

In point: 37 minutes 48 seconds – Man says "I'm Hancock and I drank and stuff".

Out point: 41 minutes and 52 seconds – After "Get me the hell out of here!"

June 2012

The Hurt Locker (Director: Kathryn Bigelow, 2009, Lions Gate)

In point: 27 minutes 52 seconds - Two men in the bathroom: 'I need to talk to you about something'

Out point: 32 minutes 37 seconds - Ends with the track across the row of bombs in the car boot.

January 2011

Grosse Pointe Blank (Director: George Armitage, 1997, Hollywood Pictures)

In point: 1 hour 34 mins 7 secs - Woman and man enter kitchen and look shocked

Out point: 1 hour 38 mins 25 secs - Father pats daughter's back in the bath – fade out music

June 2011 exam extract:

Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life (Widescreen Collectors Version) Paramount Home Entertainment UK

In point: 8 mins 40 seconds - Lara's Greek accomplice is standing in the underwater cave by a statue of a horse

Out point: 12 mins 42 seconds - The antagonist is running from the collapsing cave as a pillar crashes on top/next to him.

January 2011 exam extract:

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World (Director: Peter Weir, 2003, 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment)

In point: 5 minutes 36 seconds of the DVD version of Master and Commander.

On the line 'Two points off the starboard bow, in the fog bank'

Out point: 9 minutes 58 seconds 'And for God's sake don't drop anything' – extract finishes after the two men are blown to the floor.

June 2010 exam extract:

The Bourne Identity (Director: Doug Liman, 2002, Universal Studios)

In point: 38 minutes 28 seconds into the DVD version of The Bourne Identity. Jason and Marie are exploring his flat in Paris. 'Any Clues?'

Out point: 42 minutes 59 seconds. An assassin has burst through the window and fights Jason, while Marie looks on frightened. The assassin pulls out a knife. 'Jason!'

January 2010 exam extract:

Serenity (Directed by Joss Whedon, 2005, Universal Studios)

In point: 1 hour 26 min 21 seconds of the DVD version of Serenity.

On the line 'Wash, baby' as a spear/metal rod bursts through the ship's window.

Out point: 1 hour 29 min 31 seconds

Mal (the captain) finds blood and bends down to look.

Specimen Materials Extract:

King Arthur (Directed by Antoine Fuqua, 2004, Touchstone Pictures)

No exact timings but the extract begins at the set-piece battle scene on the ice lake, just before the battle whilst the two sides posture. It then runs through for five minutes until the end of the battle when all the ice has broken and the antagonist looks down and sees his comrades floating under the ice.

Where can I get copies of past papers for mock exams?

You can download all but those from the latest series from the main [OCR GCSE Media Studies website](#) under the past papers tab.

You can download all the most recent past papers from our secure [Interchange website](#). Log onto the site and navigate through the resources tab to find the past papers. If you don't have access to Interchange, your exams officer probably does, as it is the system they use to make all their entries with OCR and they should be able to get you a login or download the materials for you.

Where can I get hold of copies of the past DVD extracts for mock exams?

Unfortunately you need to buy a copy of the relevant movie on DVD from a DVD store as OCR only have copyright permission to distribute the clips for the examination and cannot re-distribute the clips after this due to copyright restrictions

What kind of preparation tasks should I give my candidates for Section A of the exam?

See the [sample scheme of work](#) and [teachers' handbook](#) for more information (these are available on the OCR Website).

What kind of preparation tasks should I give my candidates for Section B of the exam?

See the [sample scheme of work](#) for section B and [teachers' handbook](#) for more information (these are available on the OCR Website). Detailed advice and guidance is also available in the Hodder Education course companion textbook [OCR Media Studies for GCSE](#).

How do I ensure my candidates can analyse representation and stereotyping in an unseen extract?

Candidates need a toolkit for spotting stereotypes and anti-stereotypes that will work with most texts, so their starting point should be social attributes that are always present and usually visible, such as gender, race or ethnicity, age, and ability/disability. They will need to spot at least one stereotype or anti-stereotype in any extract. See the [Representation Toolkit](#) resource loaded on the OCR Social Community.

Action adventure extracts will often feature heroes, so they should be practised at linking these social attributes to included and excluded groups for heroes.

More confident candidates should be encouraged to analyse the values celebrated in the extract as a useful avenue for more sophisticated analysis.

For Section B of the exam can our candidates study American comedies?

Yes, candidates can study any comedy so long as it has been broadcast on a British television or radio station (for example on television these include BBC1, BBC2, ITV, C4, C5, Freeview, all channels available on cable and Sky TV and any on-demand channels that are available in UK homes). So for example, comedies broadcast on 'Dave', 'Watch', and 'Comedy Central' and 'E4' are acceptable.

What exactly is meant by the 'how' and 'why' parts of question 4(a) on scheduling?

The minimum a candidate should be able to state for the 'how' part of their exam answer is the day, the time and the channel that a programme is scheduled. Some context for this (e.g. what programmes it is scheduled between) might be useful.

The 'why' part of the answer should explain why that institution chose that programme and chose to schedule it in that slot.

Should we study 2 or 4 texts for question 4?

Candidates need texts from contrasting institutions for question 4(a) that offer contrasting pleasures for question 4(b). They also get confused about which question they are answering when they are tired at the end of the exam. For these two reasons you should consider picking two texts just for how well they fit their institutions and how cleverly they are scheduled, and two other texts just for their contrasting pleasures (different narrative forms are good for this).

There is evidence that studying comedies the candidates don't enjoy hinders their answers to question 4(b), so you might consider giving candidates a freer choice for this part of the course – only possible, really, if you study 4 texts instead of 2.

For question 4(a) how can candidates find contrasting examples to compare in terms of scheduling?

One possible method would be to study why a comedy is broadcast at a certain time and day of the week etc. on a public service channel e.g. BBC1 or BBC2 and contrast this to a comedy broadcast on a commercial channel.

Are there any exemplar answers available from the exam?

Yes exemplar answers with commentaries from the Principal Examiner can be found on the support materials section of the [GCSE Media Studies homepage on the OCR website](#).

Unit B323 Textual Analysis and Media Topic (Print) (Examination 40%)

How long do candidates have to answer the questions? Is time to examine the print extract included in the 1 hour 45 minutes?

Time for examining the print extract is included in the 1 hour 45 minute examination time. Candidates have 1 hour and 15 minutes to answer all the questions once the extract has been examined.

What is the topic for textual analysis?

For print, the topic is lifestyle magazines

What type of magazine do you define as a 'lifestyle' magazine?

Start by looking in the 'lifestyles' section in shops – 'lifestyle magazine' is a term defined by its use – but not just the 'women's' section.

Hybridity is an important feature of a lifestyle magazine. So a yachting magazine that just concentrated on sails would not be set in an exam, but a yachting magazine that covered yachting fashion, yachting health, yachting cooking, top 10 ports, and so on, might be.

The magazine might be aimed at a variety of audiences: mass or niche audiences, any age group, men or woman or both or trans-sexual, gay or straight audiences, ethnic majority or ethnic minority audiences, at national or regional level.

Where can I get copies of past papers for mock exams?

You can download all but those from the latest series from the main [OCR GCSE Media Studies website](#) under the past papers tab.

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Where can I get hold of copies of the print extracts for mock exams?

Unfortunately you may need to buy a back issue of the relevant magazine from the publisher. OCR isn't always able to obtain copyright permissions to re-distribute the magazine extracts via our website or publications after the examination.

What have the exam extracts been so far?

June 2014, Tatler

(August 2012), front page, the two contents pages and the contributors page.

June 2013, Pride

(September 2011), front page, the two contents pages and the publisher's letter page.

Jan 2013, GQ

(November 2011), front page, the two contents pages and first page of editor's letter.

June 2012, Bliss

(May 2010), Front page, contents page and two readers' letter pages.

*January 2012, Asiana
(Spring 2010), Front page, editor's letter page and 2 contents pages.*

*June 2011, Essentials
(September 2009), Front page, 2 contents pages and editor's letter page.*

January 2011, No paper set

*June 2010, Easy Living
(August 2008), Front page, 2 contents pages and editor's letter page.*

*January 2010, Arena
(August 2008), Front page, contents page and editor's letter page.*

*Specimen Materials, Red Magazine
(January 2008), Front page, editor's letter page and two contents pages.*

What kind of preparation tasks should I give my candidates for Section A of the exam?

See the [sample scheme of work](#) and [teachers' handbook](#) for more information (these are available on the OCR Website).

What kind of preparation tasks should I give my candidates for Section B of the exam?

See the [sample scheme of work](#) for section B and [teachers' handbook](#) for more information (these are available on the OCR Website). Detailed advice and guidance is also available in the Hodder Education course companion textbook [OCR Media Studies for GCSE](#).

How do I ensure my candidates can analyse representation and stereotyping in an unseen extract?

Candidates need a toolkit for spotting stereotypes and anti-stereotypes that will work with most texts, so their starting point should be social attributes that are always present and usually visible, such as gender, race or ethnicity, age, and ability/disability. They will need to spot at least one stereotype or anti-stereotype in any extract. See the [Representation Toolkit](#) resource loaded on the OCR Social Community.

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The ‘why’ part of the answer should explain why that institution chose that programme and chose to schedule it in that slot.

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Candidates need texts from contrasting institutions for question 4(a) that offer contrasting pleasures for question 4(b). They also get confused about which question they are answering when they are tired at the end of the exam. For these two reasons you should consider picking two texts just for how well they fit their institutions and how cleverly they are scheduled, and two other texts just for their contrasting pleasures (different narrative forms are good for this).

There is evidence that studying comedies the candidates don’t enjoy hinders their answers to question 4(b), so you might consider giving candidates a freer choice for this part of the course – only possible, really, if you study 4 texts instead of 2.

For question 4(a) how can candidates find contrasting examples to compare in terms of scheduling?

One possible method would be to study why a comedy is broadcast at a certain time and day of the week etc on a public service channel e.g. BBC1 or BBC2 and contrast this to a comedy broadcast on a commercial channel.

Are there any exemplar answers available from the exam?

Yes exemplar answers with commentaries from the Principal Examiner can be found in the support materials section of the [GCSE Media Studies homepage](#).

B324 Production Portfolio in Media Studies (Controlled Assessment - 30%)

What is required in the portfolio:

- The production log (planning and research) (30 marks)
- The production itself (60 marks)
- An evaluation of the portfolio (30 marks)

All of the above must be based around **one** of the twelve briefs in the specification. The briefs in this unit **cannot** be amended by centres.

Formats for the portfolio:

See FAQ for Unit B321 for detail.

General

Can teachers change/amend briefs for Unit B324?

No, in Unit B324 the briefs must be carried out as detailed in the specification.

Can blogging be used?

No, blogging isn't one of the accepted formats for presentation of work at GCSE due to controlled conditions and the security of candidate work needed ([see notice to centres](#)).

How should the portfolio be presented?

Work on the CD or DVD should be saved so that candidates can be clearly identified e.g. a folder for each candidate on the CD or DVD with their full name and candidate number. Within the candidate folder should be subsequent folders for their production log, production and evaluation.

If submitted as hard copy the work should be clearly labelled and split into sections for production log, production and evaluation.

Any extra research and planning evidence that helped inform assessment decisions should also be submitted to the moderator in an appendix.

Why should I annotate the work?

As explained in the [June 2010 and 2011 examiners' report](#) for this specification, centres that fail to annotate candidates' work or fill in the Teacher summative comment on the controlled assessment cover sheets risk disadvantaging their candidates, as the absence of annotation or comment make it more difficult for moderators to see how marks had been arrived at and to agree with the centre's assessment.

What resources are needed?

A very thorough resource guide can be found in Section 8 of our [Controlled Assessment Guide](#) (which is available on the OCR website).

Does it matter what Certificate any films used within the course may have?

Answer taken from our [Controlled Assessment Guide](#) (p26):

In theory certification within an educational context does not apply, since it is not technically a public exhibition, BUT in the present climate of protection for "children"

(anyone up to the age of 18), it would be unwise to ignore the expectations and wishes of parents, senior staff, governors, Ofsted inspectors etc. The simplest route to take is to insist that all material has a maximum Certificate of 15; it is always possible to interpret the 'rule' later if, for instance, someone wanted to look at the opening scenes from *The Godfather*. It is always best practice to keep parents informed and seek parental consent if there is any potential controversy.

Group Work

Can candidates submit work as a group for each element of the portfolio?

No, group work is only permitted on the production itself. Remember, even when candidates work in a group, teachers have to mark them on their individual contribution to the group effort.

What is/Is there a best way to arrange groups in terms of roles?

(see answer to question below)

If undertaking group work can more than one candidate be responsible for camerawork and/ or editing, as long as it is made clear which section of the film each candidate filmed/ edited?

Advice taken from the [Controlled Assessment Guide](#) (p6):

If it [the unit] is taken as group work then there is a maximum group size of five, and clear responsibilities / roles for each candidate involved need to be worked out. This does not mean that each candidate has to have an exclusive role (eg director, photographer, sub-editor etc) that no-one else does; indeed it would be wise from many points of view if candidates took on a variety of roles at different times, demonstrating skills as they did so. It does, however, mean that an individual candidate's contribution has to be clear and recognisable and thereby can be assessed. All candidates contributing to a piece of work may not always achieve the same mark.

What is the maximum group size?

Candidates can work individually or in groups up to a maximum of five people.

Production Log (Planning and Research)

What kind of evidence of audience research is needed for the Practical Production (B324)?

See the [June 2010 and 2011 examiners' report](#) for more detail (B324 – Portfolio Evidence section). Unit B324 is a major practical production and we'd expect to see detailed research and planning. In terms of audience, we'd expect the candidates to identify who their target audience is and research similar real media texts to what they have in mind so they understand how these attract their audiences (and their codes and conventions).

Candidates could also build up an audience profile for their product or create a fictional ideal target audience member and describe him or her, their likes and dislikes and what they consume, which may help them visualise what their target audience want and need.

If candidates carry out any direct audience research results of this should be summarised. There is no definitive list of audience research as it will depend upon what project the candidate is undertaking and what audience they have in mind, but you as a marker need

to be confident that they can show understanding of audience in their research, planning and finished product. The best practice to date actually utilises a research summary, after the research stage, to focus the planning effort.

What are the expectations for storyboards for moving image briefs in B324?

Storyboards should be produced as evidence on paper. Storyboards should be completed before productions are undertaken and after candidates have completed the research stage of their brief.

Storyboards are an essential part of preliminary planning for moving image briefs. They form part of the assessment evidence for an individual. Where group work is involved the candidate's own individual storyboard needs to be presented along with the evidence of early individual draft approaches and details of what negotiation with the other group members has taken place and why the final storyboard (which should be included as well in the portfolio) was chosen. The storyboard is also a working document and it is expected that they will be used, and perhaps even modified during the production process.

Examples which are not acceptable include storyboards that have been produced after the event (e.g. screen grabs from the finished film) and group storyboards simply copied in each candidate's portfolio with no evidence of individual assessment.

Production

Can candidates use found material in their Production Portfolio?

The expectation is that the material that makes up the majority of productions will be original candidate work. The use of original material needs to be substantive enough to allow candidates to demonstrate their own achievement – even if some of the content might necessarily have a found component, such as in the case of a film or music magazine. If candidates are working in groups, then every candidate should have original material; for example, in print work this would mean each candidate would need original images on each of their double page spread articles. Use of found material will be limited.

Can candidates use animation/[machinima](#) for video briefs?

Yes, the animated characters or machinima actors are just replacing 'live' actors. If candidates use animation or machinima the evidence needs to be clear in the candidate portfolio that it is original candidate work e.g. thorough planning, shot lists, storyboards, and through evidence of how the production has been put together e.g. screen grabs, as there is potential for work of this kind to just be 'downloaded'. However, teachers supervising this work wouldn't sign the authentication form if they were unsure of the work's authenticity in any way and hadn't witnessed the candidate completing parts of the work regularly in their centre.

Do you have any advice/resources on video techniques or photo techniques?

All our 'how to' guides are available on the [OCR website](#) and on the [OCR Youtube channel](#).

Evaluation

Where can I get an idea of what is required for a top level evaluation?

Check the Level 4 descriptors in section 4.3 of the [specification](#). These show the areas that candidates should be aiming to demonstrate excellence in.

What do candidates need to cover in their evaluation?

Starting points that each evaluation should cover are:

- What candidates were happy with and why
- What candidates were unhappy with and why
- What candidates would change and why, if they could do the project again

The above bullet points need to be read in conjunction with the marking criteria for the evaluation so that the appropriate areas are covered off by each candidate.

As stated in the [June 2010 and 2011 examiners' report](#), to attain the higher mark levels in the evaluation there is an expectation that candidates will be able to move beyond a 'question and answer' format determined by their Centre, to demonstrate analytical skills and a degree of personal reflection.

Can centres submit a video of candidates presenting their Slide Presentation?

Yes. Although this is not required, it is good practice to present on video as it provides extra evidence that backs up your assessment decisions. Let your candidates practise the presentation first before putting them in front of the camera. Also get them to introduce themselves (name and candidate number) so the moderator knows who is talking. If filming a presentation, high quality film isn't necessary for GCSE. A web cam (as long as sound is good enough) would be okay. Any video should be presented in one of the formats discussed already.

Does their need to be evidence of audience feedback in evaluations?

Yes – audience feedback is a key requirement of the assessment criteria. Evidence can be derived from questionnaires, interviews or focus groups, and then be interpreted as part of the evaluation.

Entries/Terminal Rules/Re-Sits

Please see the [specification](#) (section 7) for full details. A summary is below:

- Entries:
 - From 2014 all assessments are available in June only.
- Terminal Rule:
 - From 2014 onwards 100% of the total assessment (all units) must be entered in the series candidates are certifying.
- Re-sits
 - Candidates may enter for the qualification an unlimited number of times.
 - Where a candidate re-takes a qualification, **all** units must be re-entered and all externally assessed units must be re-taken in the same series as the qualification is re-certificated. The new results for these units will be used to calculate the new qualification grade. Any results previously achieved cannot be re-used.
 - For each of the controlled assessment units, candidates who are re-taking a qualification can choose either to re-take that controlled assessment unit or to carry forward the result for that unit that was used towards the previous certification of the same qualification.
 - Where a candidate decides to re-take the controlled assessment, the new result will be the one used to calculate the new qualification grade. Any results previously achieved cannot be re-used. Where a candidate decides to carry forward a result for controlled assessment, they must be entered for the controlled assessment unit in the re-take series using the entry code for the carry forward option (see section 7.4.1 of the 2012 specification)

Controlled Conditions

Please see section 4 of the [specification](#) and the [controlled assessment guide](#) for definitive detail (pages 25 and 26 of the specification). The general guidelines for Media Studies are:

GCSE Media Studies has a medium level of control for completing tasks (**informal supervision**). This essentially means that all work should be carried out in the centre and no assessment work should be carried out at home. Shooting photos or video may take place off site if agreed and discussed and planned with the teaching staff. In these cases candidates need to write up their work straight away in the next timetabled classroom session.

Assessment work can be carried out in normal classroom conditions (not strict exam conditions) in a classroom, library or IT room under informal teacher supervision.

Assessment work for each controlled assessment unit should be completed within the time limits set out in the specification.

Teachers can give feedback to candidates on their work but candidates must form their own ideas and express their own opinions when completing assessment work and not be expressing the ideas and thoughts of their teaching staff. The use of templates should be avoided.

Controlled assessment work must be stored securely in a centre either in hard copy or electronically. When the work is stored and saved candidates should not be able to access other candidates' work.

At the end of the process the teacher needs to be confident that they are able to authenticate their candidates' work and sign an authentication form for each candidate.

Questions

Can I give feedback to a candidate so they can improve their work when they have finished their project? If not, what feedback can I give?

Once controlled assessment work has been taken in and marked by teaching staff it should not be returned to candidates. The work should be kept under secure conditions until the moderation sample is called for – so there would be no opportunity for the candidate to go back and improve things.

Candidates really need solid inductions for controlled assessment units and opportunities for a practice assignment if possible to build up skill levels and understanding with full feedback before they attempt a task under controlled conditions.

Once they start their assessed task under controlled conditions teaching feedback has to be broad, for example, just pointing out the requirements of the brief and making sure candidates are working to schedule.

We can offer check lists for what students need to cover, based on the assessment criteria, but we can't give them templates, is this correct?

Yes, you can offer broad lists which give instructions on what the requirements for each task are but the use of templates should be avoided. Assessment via template isn't really the intention of controlled assessment. Templates can hinder higher achieving candidates as they don't provide them with the stretch and challenge they need if they can't move outside the template structure. Templates can also be too directive in what they are getting candidates to do. Under controlled assessment candidates should be given an understanding of what the task is and the requirements of their task but each assessment decision must be made by each individual candidate.

You can however tell candidates broader, less directed information, for example, in their evaluations for their B324 productions you can tell candidates that they need to consider the aims of their production, audience feedback, codes and conventions, what worked and what didn't work and what they'd change if they could do it again and even show the candidates the marking criteria so they are aware of what they are being assessed on.

Examples of bad practice we have seen include centre produced templates where centres have written the majority of a paragraph and each candidate has just had a space to insert their statement or opinion into the paragraph – this is definitely not allowed or desirable.

Moderation

The following excerpt is taken from the [June 2010 Examiner's Report: Teachers' Tips for 2011](#)

How to Present Controlled Assessment Assignments

- Record the teaching groups on the MS1 forms and ensure the forms are legible
- Ensure that evidence of internal moderation is clear
- Check that all assignments are annotated by the teacher
- Make the details of each assignment clear and give a brief explanation of how the marks were awarded on the Controlled Assessment Cover Sheet
- Label all DVDs, CDs and websites with the title of the production, your centre's name and number and your candidate/s name/s and number/s
- Place controlled assessment assignments in the correct order using card folders or treasury tags, NOT three-sided plastic wallets
- Include the required research and planning material for both Units B321 and B324 with the controlled assessment tasks
- The portfolio for B321 should be presented in three sections in the following order, with the cover sheet on top: the comparative analytical assignment; the production exercise; the evaluative commentary together with evidence of planning. If presented on disk, again make sure the coversheet is submitted as hard copy and make sure there is a folder for each candidate (labelled with name and candidate number) with everything set out clearly so that the moderator can find what they are looking for quickly.
- The portfolio for B324 should be presented in three sections in the following order, with the cover sheet on top: research and planning (including production log and appendix), main production task and then the evaluation. If presented on disk, again make sure the coversheet is submitted as hard copy and make sure there is a folder for each candidate (labelled with name and candidate number) with everything set out clearly so that the moderator can find what they are looking for quickly. An appendix can be submitted in addition to this.
- If group work is presented for Unit B324 then the portfolio needs to consist of individual research and planning (including production log and appendix), group production and an individual evaluation.

Checking resources before submitting for moderation

When checking any electronic work before submitting for moderation it is worth checking to see if it runs in [Open Office](#). **Open Office** is a free office software suite for PCs and Macs that can be downloaded. If your presentations, images and documents all run and open in Open Office without problems they should all work on our moderators' equipment.

Rules of combination / number of media areas

Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of **a minimum of three different media areas**, including **one print** and **one audio-visual**-based medium across the specification.

It is very hard not to meet the rules of combination in the GCSE specification from the way the specification was designed. Examples of meeting the rules for two media in B321 and three media across the whole specification are detailed below:

Example 1

- B321, Film Genres (Romantic comedy, *Bridget Jones* and *Sleepless in Seattle* as texts), Poster for production exercise. [Film and print covered in this unit – 2 media]
- B323 taken as exam [Print and TV comedy covered in the exam]
- B324 Brief 2 - an extract from a new magazine [Print]
Media covered across the specification Film, Print and TV.

Example 2

- B321, Documentary (Michael Moore's *Sicko* and Channel 4's *Dispatches* as texts), storyboard for opening sequence of new TV or film documentary on health care. [Media covered TV and Film]
- B322 taken as exam [Film and TV covered in exam]
- B324 Brief 3 - a print based advertising campaign
Media covered across the specification TV, Film and Print.