



This specification is for **first teach September 2023**.  
First assessment will be **Summer 2025**.

Specification

A LEVEL

# MEDIA STUDIES

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE  
in Media Studies

**H409**

For first assessment in 2025

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## *Disclaimer*

Specifications are updated over time. Whilst every effort is made to check all documents, there may be contradictions between published resources and the specification, therefore please use the information on the latest specification at all times. Where changes are made to specifications these will be indicated within the document, there will be a new version number indicated, and a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource please contact us at: [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk)

We will inform centres about changes to specifications. We will also publish changes on our website. The latest version of our specifications will always be those on our website ([ocr.org.uk](http://ocr.org.uk)) and these may differ from printed versions.

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# 1 Why choose an OCR A Level in Media Studies?

## 1a. Why choose an OCR qualification?

1

Choose OCR and you've got the reassurance that you're working with one of the UK's leading exam boards. Our new A Level in Media Studies course has been developed in consultation with teachers, employers and Higher Education to provide learners with a qualification that's relevant to them and meets their needs.

We're part of the Cambridge Assessment Group, Europe's largest assessment agency and a department of the University of Cambridge. Cambridge Assessment plays a leading role in developing and delivering assessments throughout the world, operating in over 150 countries.

We work with a range of education providers, including schools, colleges, workplaces and other institutions in both the public and private sectors. Over 13,000 centres choose our A Levels, GCSEs and vocational qualifications including Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals.

### Our Specifications

We believe in developing specifications that help you bring the subject to life and inspire your students to achieve more.

We've created teacher-friendly specifications based on extensive research and engagement with the teaching community. They're designed to be straightforward and accessible so that you can tailor the delivery of the course to suit your needs. We aim

to encourage learners to become responsible for their own learning, confident in discussing ideas, innovative and engaged.

We provide a range of support services designed to help you at every stage, from preparation through to the delivery of our specifications. This includes:

- A wide range of high-quality creative resources including:
  - Delivery Guides
  - Transition Guides
  - Topic Exploration Packs
  - Lesson Elements
  - ...and much more.
- Access to Subject Advisors to support you through the transition and throughout the lifetime of the specification.
- CPD/Training for teachers including webinars and regional meetings to introduce the qualifications and prepare you for first teaching.
- Active Results – our free results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual learners or whole schools.

All A level qualifications offered by OCR are accredited by Ofqual, the Regulator for qualifications offered in England. The accreditation number for OCR's A Level in Media Studies is QN: 603/2339/5.

## 1b. Why choose an OCR A Level in Media Studies?

This contemporary, accessible and creative course has been designed with teachers and learners in mind following extensive consultations. This specification will allow learners to study the media in an academic context and apply the knowledge and understanding gained to the process of creating their own media productions.

OCR's A Level in Media Studies is designed to widen the intellectual horizons of the learner through the analysis of both global and historical media. This specification will foster the development of critical and reflective thinking to encourage engagement in the critical debates surrounding contemporary media.

The approach that we have taken in this specification will allow teachers and learners to engage confidently

with critical and theoretical approaches from the perspectives of both analytical consumers and producers of media products.

It is our strong desire that OCR's A Level in Media Studies should inspire learners and develop an aspiration within them to continue learning beyond the confines of the classroom as well as developing personal and interpersonal skills that will serve them well both in Higher Education and in the workplace.

The OCR A Level in Media Studies offers a broad, coherent and rigorous course of study and has been created to ensure that all types of learners can fulfil their potential.

### Aims and learning outcomes

OCR's A Level in Media Studies will enable learners to:

- demonstrate skills of enquiry, critical thinking, decision-making and analysis
- demonstrate a critical approach to media issues
- demonstrate appreciation and critical understanding of the media and their role both historically and currently in society, culture, politics and the economy
- develop an understanding of the dynamic and changing relationships between media forms, products, media industries and audiences
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the global nature of the media
- apply theoretical knowledge and specialist subject specific terminology to analyse and compare media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed in order to make informed arguments, reach substantial judgements and draw conclusions about media issues
- engage in critical debate about academic theories used in media studies
- appreciate how theoretical understanding supports practice and practice supports theoretical understanding
- demonstrate sophisticated practical skills by providing opportunities for creative media production.

## 1c. What are the key features of this specification?

1

The key features of OCR's A Level in Media Studies for you and your learners are:

- an engaging and worthwhile specification that means learners will benefit from studying media
- a contemporary cross-media NEA production with a choice of briefs
- interesting and relevant specified media products for study
- support from a dedicated media studies advisor who can directly answer any queries
- exciting resources with detailed ideas for the classroom
- guidance to support delivery
- synoptic learning that comprehensively ties in the relationships between media products and the theoretical framework of media language, media representation, media industries and media audiences
- an emphasis on textual analysis that enables learners to make judgements on media products, fostering an understanding of context and the use of academic ideas and arguments
- a deeper understanding of media that are encountered by learners on a daily basis
- an opportunity to engage with historical and global media products that should extend the learners' knowledge of the media landscape
- it engages with the academic ideas and arguments that surround the modern world of media
- co-teachability with OCR's AS Level in Media Studies.

## 1d. What is new in OCR's A Level in Media Studies?

This section is intended for teachers using OCR's A Level in Media Studies (H540).

It highlights the difference between this A Level and the new A Level in Media Studies (H409) for first teaching in September 2017:

| What stays the same?   | What's changing?  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The theoretical framework remains at the core of the specification.</li><li>• The marks for constructing media products (NEA) remains at 30%.</li><li>• A choice of brief for the media production (NEA).</li><li>• Use of unseen materials in exams where learners are aware of the media forms being used.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specified media products which have been chosen because they have cultural, social and historical significance.</li><li>• Inclusion of non-English language media products and an understanding of how media products have developed since 1970.</li><li>• Use of academic ideas and arguments to indicate a specific conceptual understanding.</li><li>• Individual production in the NEA. Non-assessed learners can be part of the production team.</li><li>• NEA briefs that will change every year.</li></ul> |

## 1e. How do I find out more information?

If you are already using OCR specifications you can contact us at: [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk).

If you are not already a registered OCR centre then you can find out more information on the benefits of becoming one at: [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk).

If you are not yet an approved centre and would like to become one go to: [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk).

Want to find out more?

**Contact a Subject Advisor:**

Email: [media@ocr.org.uk](mailto:media@ocr.org.uk)

Phone: 01223 553998

**Explore our teacher support:**

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/by-subject/media-and-communication/>

**Join our communities:**

X (formerly Twitter): [@OCR\\_Media\\_Film](https://twitter.com/OCR_Media_Film)

Visit our Online Support Centre at [support.ocr.org.uk](http://support.ocr.org.uk)

**Check what CPD events are available:**

[www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk](http://www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk)

## 2 The specification overview

### 2a. OCR's A Level in Media Studies (H409)

Learners take all Components 01, 02 and 03 to be awarded the OCR A Level in Media Studies.

| Content Overview  | Assessment Overview   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Section A: News and Online Media</b></p> <p>This section consists of <b>two linked in-depth studies</b> that focus on contemporary news in the UK, requiring learners to explore how and why newspapers and their online counterparts are evolving as media products and the relationship between both online and offline news. Learners must select from a list set by OCR.</p> <p><b>Section B: Media Language and Representation</b></p> <p>Learners will explore media language and representation, through media products set by OCR in the following media forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• magazines</li> <li>• advertising and marketing and</li> <li>• music videos</li> </ul>                          | <p>Media messages<br/>(01)</p> <p>70 marks</p> <p>2 hours</p> <p>Written paper</p>  | <p><b>35% of<br/>total<br/>A level</b></p> |
| <p><b>Section A: Media Industries and Audiences</b></p> <p>Learners will explore media industries and audiences, through media products set by OCR for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• radio</li> <li>• video games</li> <li>• film*</li> </ul> <p><i>*Film to be studied in relation to media industry only.</i></p> <p><b>Section B: Long Form Television Drama</b></p> <p>Learners will engage in <b>one in-depth study</b> of television as an evolving, global media form. Learners must study one complete episode of a contemporary English language long form TV drama and one complete episode of a non-English language long form TV drama to inform their study. Learners must select from lists set by OCR.</p> | <p>Evolving media<br/>(02)*</p> <p>70 marks</p> <p>2 hours</p> <p>Written paper</p> | <p><b>35% of<br/>total<br/>A level</b></p> |
| <p>Learners will create a cross-media product in response to an OCR set brief.</p>  | <p>Making media*<br/>(03/04)</p> <p>60 marks<br/>(NEA)</p>                          | <p><b>30% of<br/>total<br/>A level</b></p> |

\* Indicates inclusion of synoptic assessment (see Section 3j).

Learners who are retaking the qualification may carry forward their result for the non-exam assessment component. Learners who wish to re-take the non-exam assessment component must undertake the brief set for the year of assessment.

## Media forms and specified products in the specification

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Learners are required to study **nine** media forms and associated set products as specified by OCR. Learners will study all nine media forms using the theoretical framework which consists of media language,

media representations, media industries and media audiences (see Section 2b for more detail) and also consider the social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts of media products.

## Content and products at a glance

| Media form                | Set product  | Area of subject content to be studied  | To be studied in        |
|---------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|
| Film                      | <i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> (1937)<br><b>AND</b><br><i>Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings</i> (2021)<br>Extracts of the films only to be considered in relation to the media contexts and industries issues exemplified. | Media industries<br>Economic and historical contexts                               | Component 02, Section A |
| Advertising and marketing | Poster advertisements for:<br><i>River Island</i> (clothing), <i>Dove</i> (body care), <i>Shelter</i> (charity).   | Media language<br>Media representations<br>Social and cultural contexts            | Component 01, Section B |
| Radio                     | <b>One</b> complete episode of <i>The BBC Radio One Breakfast Show</i> .   | Media industries<br>Media audiences<br>Economic, political and cultural contexts   | Component 02, Section A |
| Magazines                 | <b>Two</b> front covers of <i>The Big Issue</i> .  | Media language<br>Media representations<br>Social, cultural and political contexts | Component 01, Section B |
| Video games               | <i>Animal Crossing: New Horizons</i> (2020)<br>Extracts of the video game only to be considered in relation to the media contexts, industries and audience issues exemplified.   | Media industries<br>Media audiences<br>Economic and social contexts                | Component 02, Section A |
| Music video               | <b>Two</b> music videos from the lists specified in Section 2c of this specification.  | Media language<br>Media representations<br>Social and cultural contexts            | Component 01, Section B |

| Media form                             | Set product   | Area of subject content to be studied | To be studied in           |   |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Television                             | <b>Two</b> complete episodes (specified in Section 2d by OCR) from the following long form television dramas: <b>one</b> from <b>List A</b> and <b>one</b> from <b>List B</b> .   | All (synoptic)<br>(In-depth study)    | Component 02,<br>Section B |   |
|  | <b>One from List A<br/>(English language)</b>   |                                       |                            | <b>One from List B<br/>(non-English language)</b> |
|  | <i>Mr Robot</i>   |                                       |                            | <i>Lupin</i>                                      |
|  | <i>Killing Eve</i>  |                                       |                            | <i>Money Heist/La Casa de Papel</i>               |
|  | <i>Atypical</i>   |                                       |                            | <i>Trapped</i>                                    |
|  | <i>Stranger Things</i>  |                                       |                            | <i>Deutschland 83</i>                             |
|  |   |                                       |                            |   |
| Newspapers                             | <b>Two</b> front covers from the <i>Daily Mail</i> and <b>two</b> front covers from <i>The Guardian</i><br><b>AND</b><br><b>One</b> complete edition of the <i>Daily Mail</i> and <b>one</b> complete edition of <i>The Guardian</i>  | All<br>(In-depth study)               | Component 01,<br>Section A |   |
| Online, social and participatory media | The <i>Mail Online</i> and <i>The Guardian</i> websites (media industries and audiences)<br><b>AND</b><br>at least <b>two</b> articles from the <i>Mail Online</i> website and at least <b>two</b> articles from <i>The Guardian</i> websites (media language and representation) plus relevant <i>Facebook</i> , <i>X</i> (formerly Twitter) and <i>Instagram</i> feeds from each news organisation where available. | All<br>(In-depth study)               | Component 01,<br>Section A |   |

## Component 01 (Section A) – News

- **Newspapers**  
Learners must study the *Daily Mail* and *The Guardian* to inform their studies, as specified in Section 2c.
- **Online social and participatory media**  
Learners must study the *Mail Online* and *The Guardian* websites, including social and participatory media to inform their studies, as specified in Section 2c.

This section requires learners to study media products set by OCR against all four areas of the theoretical framework and the contexts surrounding the media products.

## Component 01 (Section B) – Media Language and Representations

| Media Forms           | Advertising and Marketing  | Music Videos  | Magazines                      |
|-----------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Set Media Products    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dove</i> (body care advert)</li> <li>• <i>River Island</i> (clothing advert)</li> <li>• <i>Shelter</i> (UK charity advert).</li> </ul> | <p>Learners must choose <b>one</b> video from list A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Corinne Bailey Rae – Stop Where You Are</i></li> <li>• <i>Lil Nas X – SUN GOES DOWN</i></li> <li>• <i>Emeli Sandé – Heaven</i></li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>One</b> video from list B:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sufjan Stevens – Sugar</i></li> <li>• <i>Radiohead – Burn the Witch</i></li> <li>• <i>David Guetta – Titanium</i></li> </ul> | <i>The Big Issue.</i>          |
| Media Language        | ✓  | ✓   | ✓                              |
| Media Representations | ✓  | ✓   | ✓                              |
| Media Contexts        | Social and Cultural  | Social and Cultural   | Social, Cultural and Political |

## Component 02 (Section A) – Media Industries and Audiences

| Media Forms        | Film  | Radio   | Video Games   |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Set Media Products | <p><i>Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings</i> (2021). Marvel Studios/Disney. USA. 12.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> (1937). Disney. USA. U.</p> | <p><i>The BBC Radio One Breakfast Show.</i></p> <p>BBC, UK.</p> | <p><i>Animal Crossing: New Horizons</i> (2020). Developed by Nintendo EPD. Japan. PEGI 3.</p> |
| Media Industries   | ✓   | ✓   | ✓   |
| Media Audiences    |   | ✓   | ✓   |
| Media Contexts     | Economic and Historical   | Economic, Political and Cultural                                | Economic and Social   |

## Component 02 (Section B) – Long Form Television Drama

Learners must study **two complete episodes** of the set long form television dramas listed below to inform their studies.

**One** from list A (US English Language Long Form Television Dramas):

- *Mr Robot* (Season 1, Episode 1, June 2015) BBFC 15
- *Killing Eve* (Season 1, Episode 1, September 2018) BBFC 15
- *Atypical* (Season 1, Episode 1, August 2017) BBFC 12
- *Stranger Things* (Season 1, Episode 1, July 2016) BBFC 12.

**AND**

**One** from list B (European non-English language Long Form Television Dramas):

- *Lupin* (Season 1, Chapter 1, January 2021) BBFC 15
- *Money Heist/La Casa de Papel* (Season 1, Episode 1, May 2017) BBFC 15
- *Trapped* (Season 1, Episode 1, December 2015) BBFC 15
- *Deutschland 83* (Season 1, Episode 1, October 2015) BBFC 15.

This section requires learners to study media products set by OCR against all four areas of the theoretical framework and the contexts surrounding the media products.

## 2b. Content of A Level in Media Studies (H409)

The OCR A Level in Media Studies introduces learners to the role and influence of the media. The main focus of this specification is the media today, both nationally and globally.

However, to ensure learners understand the context of today's fast moving media, they will also be required to study the broader history of media and its role and impact on society, culture, politics and the economy in both domestic and global spheres.

### Theoretical framework

Learners will develop their understanding of the media through the consistent application of the four areas of the theoretical framework:

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

### Contexts and skills

This specification will give learners the opportunity to undertake close analysis and comparison of media products in relation to relevant key social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts.

Learners should have also developed the skills to:

- analyse critically and compare how media products, including products outside the commercial mainstream, construct and communicate meanings through the interaction of media language and audience response use

key theories of media studies and specialist subject-specific terminology appropriately

- use and critically reflect upon a range of complex theories of media studies and use specialist subject-specific terminology appropriately
- debate key questions relating to the social, cultural, political and economic role of the media through sustained discursive writing.

Through this application of the theoretical framework, this specification recognises the fundamental relationship between theory and practice, requiring learners to apply and develop their understanding of the media through both analysing and producing media products.

**Media messages (Component 01)** offers learners the opportunity to:

- consider the relationship between offline and online media products by completing two linked in-depth studies into contemporary newspapers, and their online counterparts, including social and participatory media.
- develop knowledge and understanding of academic ideas and arguments in relation to the two in-depth studies.
- develop knowledge and understanding of media contexts, media language and representations through the study of advertising and marketing, magazines, and music video.

**Evolving media (Component 02)** offers learners the opportunity to

- develop knowledge and understanding of media contexts, media industries and audiences through the study of radio, video games and film

- draw together knowledge and understanding from the whole course whilst considering television as an evolving media form through an in-depth study centred around global contemporary long form television drama
- develop knowledge and understanding of academic ideas and arguments in relation to the in-depth studies.

**Making media (Component 03/04)** offers learners the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in the production of their own individual cross-media product from a choice of set briefs issued by OCR.

### Set Media Products

OCR will review all the specified media products every three years and update them if necessary to ensure that all the specified products remain relevant and available to centres. Where media products are replaced, centres will be notified at least one year in advance prior to teaching a two year course.

### Academic ideas and arguments

Appendix 5e outlines the academic ideas and arguments to be studied with reference to the four areas of the theoretical framework. This information should be used in combination with the content listed in Section 2e.

### Resources

Before a centre begins this qualification, there is a need for suitable media facilities and technologies to

be available and for learners to be taught how to use them before embarking on assessed work. The non-exam assessment component (NEA) requires learners to develop practical production skills and to engage with contemporary media technologies. Therefore, the minimum resourcing requirements that a centre would be expected to have for the delivery of OCR's A Level in Media Studies are digital technology suitable for the construction of media productions (e.g. appropriate cameras, either camcorders or digital SLRs and sound recording equipment) and software for editing, image manipulation and page layout. Also a reliable internet connection is required for research and planning of the production, as well as where necessary, the presentation of learner's work.

### Terminology

Throughout the specification there is reference to the following:

- **'academic ideas and arguments'** refers to the collective writing about the media by a number of writers on media
- **'media product'** refers to media texts, such as television programmes, newspapers, radio programmes etc., as well as to online, social and participatory media platforms
- **'intertextuality'** refers to the way aspects of a particular media product relate to another and thus accrue additional significance.

## 2c. Content of Media messages (H409/01)

### Section A – News

Section A consists of **two** linked, comparative **in-depth** studies that focus on contemporary news in the UK, requiring learners to explore how and why newspapers and their online counterparts are evolving as media products and the relationship between both online and offline news. As in-depth studies, newspapers and online, social and participatory media must be studied in relation to **all**

four areas of the media theoretical framework, including all related theories and all relevant contexts (the subject content table detailing all of the above follows the end of Component 02).

In this section, learners must study the following set products.

#### Media Industries and Media Audiences

| Media Form                                  | Set Product   | Guidance to aid comparison   |
|---|---|--|
| Newspapers                                  | <b>One</b> complete edition of the <i>Daily Mail</i> and <b>one</b> complete edition of <i>The Guardian</i> selected by the centre.                 | Each pair of newspapers selected should be published on the same date.   |
| Online                                      | The <i>Mail Online</i> and <i>The Guardian</i> websites.  | Key pages from each newspaper's website, including the homepage and at least two other pages which help illustrate the scope, scale and content and appeal of each website.        |
| Social and participatory media <sup>1</sup> | The X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and Instagram feeds linked to from the main <i>Mail Online</i> and <i>The Guardian</i> websites where available. | A consideration of how active each newspaper's social and participatory media feeds are, including which articles are featured and which generate the most audience participation. |

**NB:** All set products selected for study in this section must be from the September onwards of the first year of teaching a two-year course. For example, from September 2017 onwards for a candidate entering for assessment in June 2019.

Please turn over for an indicative content list.

<sup>1</sup> It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the social and participatory media feeds studied are age appropriate and suitable for consumption by their learners.

The following indicative list is given as guidance and is not exhaustive.

For example, in relation to media industries and audiences learners should consider:

- the overarching relationship between technological change and newspaper production, distribution and circulation
- the impact of digital convergence on the production, distribution and circulation of news organisations' offline and online offerings
- the significance of issues of ownership and economic factors, including the range of each newspaper's print and online content, the use of online monetization features such as paywalls, subscriptions and games
- the content and appeal of each of the set products and how this is used to target, reach and address different audiences
- how audience may use and interpret the same media in different ways
- how audiences can be reached through different media technologies and platforms
- the impact of the regulatory framework on the newspaper industry and the impact of online news and social and participatory media on regulation.

### Media Language and Media Representation

| Media Form                                  | Set Product  | Guidance to aid comparison  |
|---|--|---|
| Newspapers                                  | <b>Two</b> front covers from the <i>Daily Mail</i> and two front covers from <i>The Guardian</i> selected by the centre.   | Each of the two 'pairs' of front covers should be published on the same date and feature a similar lead article that is of national or international significance, for example this could be a political, economic or sporting event or a lead article related to conflict, crime or health.  |
| Online                                      | <b>At least two</b> articles from the <i>Mail Online</i> website and at least two articles from <i>The Guardian</i> websites.  | Each chosen website article and the associated social and participatory media feeds should link to the themes or issues represented in the front covers chosen.   |
| Social and participatory media <sup>1</sup> | The associated X (formerly Twitter), <i>Facebook</i> and <i>Instagram</i> feeds for the online articles chosen by the centre from the <i>Mail Online</i> website and <i>The Guardian</i> websites where available. | For example, if a <i>Daily Mail</i> front cover lead article is a 'Brexit' related story then learners should study the associated <i>Mail Online</i> article and X, <i>Facebook</i> and <i>Instagram</i> feeds for this story and consider how media language and representations in those feeds position the audience and engage participation. |

**NB:** All set products selected for study for this section must be from the September onwards of the first year of teaching a two-year course. For example, from September 2017 onwards for a candidate entering for assessment in June 2019.

Please turn over for an indicative content list.

<sup>1</sup> It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the social and participatory media feeds studied are age appropriate and suitable for consumption by their learners.

The following indicative list is given as guidance and is not exhaustive. For example, in relation to media language and representations, learners should consider:

- the way events, issues, individuals and social groups are represented through processes of selection and combination, including a consideration of the choices news media make
- the impact of industry contexts (for example ownership) on the choices news producers make about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups
- the ways in which representations constructed by news media make claims about realism
- the positive and negative use of stereotypes by news media and how representations may invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences
- the ways in which the use of media language by news producers incorporates viewpoints and ideologies
- how multiple meanings can be communicated across different news platforms and the impact of technology on media language (for example, post production editing of photos)
- the elements of media language used in newspaper front covers, online websites and social and participatory media such as locations, lighting, choice of camera shot, angle, typography, layout, address of content to the audience and editing and sound as appropriate.

## Section B – Media Language and Representation

Section B focuses on media language and representation and requires learners to consider how and why media language is used by media producers to create meaning and construct various representations of events, issues, individuals and

social groups.

In this section, learners are required to study the following media forms and products set by OCR.

| Media Forms                  | Advertising and Marketing  | Music Videos  | Magazines                      |
|------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Set Media Products</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Dove</i> (body care advert)</li> <li><i>River Island</i> (clothing advert)</li> <li><i>Shelter</i> (UK charity advert).</li> </ul> | Learners must choose <b>one</b> video from list A: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Corinne Bailey Rae – Stop Where You Are</i></li> <li><i>Lil Nas X – SUN GOES DOWN</i></li> <li><i>Emeli Sandé – Heaven</i></li> </ul> <b>AND</b><br><b>One</b> video from list B: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Sufjan Stevens – Sugar</i></li> <li><i>Radiohead – Burn the Witch</i></li> <li><i>David Guetta – Titanium</i></li> </ul> | <i>The Big Issue.</i>          |
| <b>Media Language</b>        | ✓  | ✓   | ✓                              |
| <b>Media Representations</b> | ✓  | ✓   | ✓                              |
| <b>Media Contexts</b>        | Social and Cultural  | Social and Cultural   | Social, Cultural and Political |

### Advertising and Marketing: *Dove* (body care), *River Island* (clothing) and *Shelter* (charity)

Advertising and marketing must be studied in relation to media language and media representations, including a consideration of the social and cultural contexts that influence how media language is used to construct representations.

Learners must study **all three** set advertising and marketing products in this section.

The media products will be made available by OCR. Three contrasting posters have been selected.

***Dove's* 'Beautifully Real Moms'** campaign from 2018 built on their ground-breaking and influential 'Real Beauty' campaign. Shot by Pulitzer prize-winning female photojournalists, the campaign sought to grow Dove's share of the baby care market by challenging media images of picture-perfect mothers.

***River Island's* 'Labels are for Clothes'** campaign from 2018 was launched to mark the brand's thirtieth anniversary and generated significant media coverage for its inclusive approach focusing on models of varying race, body shapes and abilities. The campaign aimed to celebrate people who reject stereotypes and champion self-expression and has been hailed as a milestone in diversity in fashion advertising.

***Shelter***, the UK based housing and homelessness charity launched an advertising campaign in 2011 that was produced for those at risk of homelessness to point them to *Shelter's* free services and guide them to seek advice on issues around homelessness earlier.

Learners need to study the set advertising and marketing products in relation to **all** the subject content bullet points listed under the 'media language' and 'media representations' topics in the subject content table following the end of Component 02 to establish the codes and conventions of each category of advert.

Theories of media language and representation **do not** need to be studied.

Consideration should be made of media language elements specific to advertising and marketing such as locations, costumes, props, makeup, lighting, choice of camera shot, angle, typography, layout and address of written content to the audience.

### Magazines: *The Big Issue*

Magazines must be studied in relation to media language and media representations, including a consideration of the social, cultural and political contexts that influence how media language is used to construct representations.

*The Big Issue* is a niche magazine outside the commercial mainstream that learners may not normally engage with. It provides a contrasting example of how the elements of the theoretical framework for media language can be used to construct alternative representations that appeal to particular audiences, including a consideration of the influence of the social, cultural and political contexts.

Learners must study **two front covers** of *The Big Issue*, from the September of the first year of teaching a two year course, (e.g. from September 2017 onwards for a candidate entering for assessment in June 2019), chosen by the centre. The front covers selected should demonstrate representations that are alternative to the mainstream and of national significance, in terms of the events or issues they portray.

Learners need to study the magazine products in relation to **all** the subject content bullet points listed under the 'media language' and 'media representations' topics in the subject content table at the end of Component 02.

Theories of media language and representation **do not** need to be studied.

Consideration should be made of media language elements specific to magazines such as locations, costumes, props, makeup, lighting, choice of camera shot, angle, typography, layout and address of written content to the audience.

The study of *The Big Issue* **does not** extend to online.

### Music Videos: One pair of music videos

Music video must be studied in relation to media language and media representations, including a consideration of the social and cultural contexts that

influence how media language is used to construct representations.

For the study of music video, learners are required to

study **two** music videos.

Learners **must** study **one** music video from **List A AND one** music video from **List B** below:

| List A   | List B                            |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Corinne Bailey Rae – Stop Where You Are</i> | <i>Suffjan Stevens – Sugar</i>    |
| <i>Lil Nas X – SUN GOES DOWN</i>               | <i>Radiohead – Burn the Witch</i> |
| <i>Emeli Sandé – Heaven</i>                    | <i>David Guetta – Titanium</i>    |

Centres are free to choose any pairing from List A and List B.

The music videos are freely accessible via YouTube and Vimeo.

The music videos in List A all feature their respective artist(s) and are a mixture of performance and narrative, and raise a number of similar representational issues with a focus on the everyday.

The music videos in List B do not feature their respective artist(s) at all, instead, with each music video celebrating the power of narrative and a postmodern focus on visual signification. The videos in List B each use very different representations to each other, but each contrasts clearly with the representations featured in the music videos in list A.

Learners will explore the differences in media language and representation between examples from the two lists. All of the artists selected for both lists are well known, and the lists include a range of artists (considering both gender and ethnicity) and genres as well as ensuring that every music video on the list is age appropriate for an A level programme of study.

Theories of media language and representation **do not** need to be studied.

Learners should investigate how the elements of the theoretical framework for media language are used to construct representations that appeal to particular audiences, including a consideration of the influence of historical, social and cultural contexts. Consideration should be made of media language elements specific to music videos such as camera shots, angles, lighting, settings, locations, costumes, props, makeup, editing and sound as appropriate.

## 2d. Content of Evolving media (H409/02)

### Section A – Media Industries and Audiences

Section A focuses on media industries and audiences and requires learners to consider how and why media products are constructed across different media forms to reach and address a number of audiences.

In this section, learners are required to study the following media forms and products set by OCR.

| Media Forms               | Film   | Radio  | Video Games   |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Set Media Products</b> | <i>Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings</i> (2021).<br>Marvel Studios/Disney. USA. 12.<br><b>AND</b><br><i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> (1937).Disney. USA. U. | <i>The BBC Radio One Breakfast Show.</i><br>BBC, UK. | <i>Animal Crossing: New Horizons</i> (2020).Developed by Nintendo EPD. Japan, PEGI 3. |
| <b>Media Industries</b>   | ✓  | ✓  | ✓   |
| <b>Media Audiences</b>    |  | ✓  | ✓   |
| <b>Media Contexts</b>     | Economic and Historical  | Economic, Political and Cultural                     | Economic and Social   |

#### Film: *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (2021) and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937)

Film must be studied in relation to media industries only, including the economic contexts of the film industry. Learners need to study the set films in relation to **all** the subject content bullet points listed under the 'media industries' topic in the subject content table at the end of this component.

*Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (2021) is part of the Marvel franchise which has dominated contemporary popular cinema and global box offices for over a decade and grossed more than \$25 billion. It offers the opportunity to explore the importance of patterns of media ownership and how they have contributed to Disney's success as a global media conglomerate. The film has a clear pattern of production, distribution and circulation and is a production from a major studio.

*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) is a historically significant media product and was amongst the first films to be selected for preservation

in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress in recognition of it being culturally, historically or aesthetically significant. It was the first feature film produced by Disney and was crucial in its emergence as a major film studio. The film exemplifies patterns of distribution and exhibition and the significance of the development of home entertainment media.

Providing both films for the focus of an industry study will allow learners to consider how the film industry has changed from 1937 to present day in relation to how both set films were produced, distributed and circulated, including considerations of technological change, regulation and the significance of patterns of ownership and economic factors.

Extracts of both films may only be considered in relation to the media industry issues exemplified. Textual analysis is **not** a requirement of the study or assessment of Film as a media form.

Theories of media industries **do not** need to be studied.

### Radio: *The BBC Radio One Breakfast Show*

Radio must be studied in relation to media industries and media audiences, including a consideration of the economic, political and cultural contexts that influence the radio industry and its audiences.

*The BBC Radio One Breakfast Show* is currently the most listened to 'show' on BBC Radio One and forms part of BBC Radio One's overall public service broadcasting (PSB) remit to 'entertain, educate and inform' and is required to demonstrate a 'distinctive' output of content compared to commercial radio.

Learners must study **one complete episode** of *The BBC Radio One Breakfast Show*, from September 2017 onwards, chosen by the centre. Learners need to study the set radio product in relation to **all** the subject content bullet points listed under the 'media industries' and 'media audiences' topics in the subject content table at the end of this component. The selected radio programme should be a standard episode (not a feature or on location episode) and include a range of British music and content promoting British music, celebrity interviews, news items and quizzes/games. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the content selected is appropriate to their learners.

Theories of media industries and audiences **do not** need to be studied.

Learners should consider the significance of public service broadcasting and how *The BBC Radio One Breakfast Show* fits into the overarching ethos of 'informing, educating and entertaining', including consideration of the 'distinctiveness' of the content of the programme compared to commercial breakfast shows and which audience(s) are being targeted and why. The influence of funding should also be considered in relation to content, production, marketing and distribution and there should also be a consideration of technology, for example, the use of technology to distribute the show across a number of platforms other than 'traditional' radio.

### Video Games: *Animal Crossing: New Horizons* (2020)

Video games must be studied in relation to media industries and media audiences, including a consideration of the economic and social contexts that influence the video game industry.

*Animal Crossing: New Horizons* (2020) is a global media product produced by the Japanese multi-national Nintendo allowing for the study of media ownership in a global context. It is one of the best-selling video games of all time and is part of an established franchise.

Learners must study the set video game product in relation to **all** the subject content bullet points listed under the 'media industries' and 'media audiences' topics in the subject content table at the end of this component.

Theories of media industries and media audiences **do not** need to be studied.

Learners should consider the elements of the theoretical framework for media industries and audiences and examine how the producers of *Animal Crossing: New Horizons* have engaged with and constructed their audience and examine issues of ownership and the influence of technology on production and distribution.

Extracts of the video game should only be considered in relation to the media industry and audience issues exemplified.

## Section B – Long Form Television Drama

Section B consists of an **in-depth** study requiring learners to explore television as a media form. This section also gives learners the opportunity to draw together elements from their full course of study, including different areas of the media theoretical framework and media contexts.

As an in-depth study, television must be studied in relation to:

- all four areas of the media theoretical framework (including all related theories)
- all relevant contexts.

In this section, learners will be required to complete a comparative study of **two** contemporary long form television dramas:

- **one** of which **must** be from the set US long form television drama list below;

### AND

- **one** of which **must** be from the set European (non-English language) long form television drama list below.

### Set US Long Form Television Drama List

- *Mr Robot* (Season 1, Episode 1, June 2015) BBFC 15
- *Killing Eve* (Season 1, Episode 1, September 2018) BBFC 15
- *Atypical* (Season 1, Episode 1, August 2017) BBFC 12
- *Stranger Things* (Season 1, Episode 1, July 2016) BBFC 12

### Set European (non-English language) Long Form Television Drama List

- *Lupin* (Season 1, Chapter 1, January 2021) BBFC 15
- *\*Money Heist/La Casa de Papel* (Season 1, Episode 1, May 2017) BBFC 15

- *Trapped* (Season 1, Episode 1, December 2015) BBFC 15
- *Deutschland 83* (Season 1, Episode 1, October 2015) BBFC 15.

Centres should choose the most appropriate long form television dramas for their learners.

Each of the set episodes of the television programmes is an example of a contemporary US and European long form television drama.

The European television drama must be viewed in its original language.

\*The set episode of *Money Heist* has a BBFC rating of 15, as do all episodes of season one. As some episodes in later seasons have a BBFC rating of 18 the series as whole is rated as 18.

The following indicative list is given as guidance and is not exhaustive.

Learners should use **all** the areas of the media theoretical framework (including theory) in relation to their chosen set television programmes to consider, for example:

- the influence of technological change, including digitally convergent media platforms on the production, marketing, distribution and exhibition of long form television drama in a global context (including the impacts of digital distribution platforms on the contemporary global television industry)
- how audiences consume and interpret long form television dramas in different ways, including a consideration of demographic and technological factors related to consumption
- how media language can be used to subvert or challenge genre conventions and a consideration of other factors such as genre hybridity, intertextuality, multiple narrative strands and fandom

- the media form specific elements of media language used to create meaning such as camera shots, angles, lighting, settings, locations, costumes, props, makeup, editing and sound
- the values, attitudes and beliefs conveyed by representations and the social and cultural context of these
- how representations may invoke discourse and ideologies and position audiences
- how audiences' response to and interpretations of media representations reflect social and cultural circumstances
- all relevant contexts, for example, a consideration of the economic context behind the large budgets currently given to contemporary US long form television dramas.

### Age appropriateness and contextualisation

All of the set television episodes are age appropriate for an A Level programme (BBFC certificated 12 or 15), where it is expected that learners will be aged 15 or over when studying these products. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure this and to contact OCR should it present any issues.

Assessment of Long Form Television Drama will always focus on the set episodes. However, if centres wish to gain a wider understanding of the chosen set television programme and an understanding of how multiple narrative strands arc and converge across the series, teachers should choose suitable **age appropriate** extracts from other episodes across **season one**. Viewing additional material is optional.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to monitor the content of the selected extracts to ensure that any extracts studied are age appropriate for their learners.

Please be aware when choosing suitable age appropriate extracts that *Money Heist/La Casa de Papel*, Season 1, Episode 1 has a BBFC rating of 15, while the overall TV series has a BBFC rating of 18.

## 2e. Subject content for components H409/01 and H409/02

The following subject content outlines the knowledge and understanding that underpins this qualification.

The subject content will be assessed across all components. For the examined components (01 and

02), this will be assessed in relation to the relevant set of media products as indicated.

| Subject Content          |  |  |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Topic                    | Key Idea   | Learners must have studied   |
| <b>Contexts of Media</b> | Social, cultural, political, economic and historical contexts.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how the media products studied differ in institutional backgrounds and use of media language to create meaning and construct representations to reach different audiences, and can act as a means of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>reflecting</b> social, cultural and political attitudes towards wider issues and beliefs</li> <li>- <b>constructing</b> social, cultural and political attitudes towards wider issues and beliefs</li> </ul> </li> <li>how media products studied can act as a means of <b>reflecting</b> historical issues and events</li> <li>how media products studied can potentially be an agent in <b>facilitating</b> social, cultural and political developments through the use of media language to construct meaning through viewpoints, messages and values and representations of events and issues</li> <li>how media products studied are <b>influenced</b> by social, cultural, political and historical contexts through intertextual references</li> <li>how media products studied <b>reflect</b> their economic contexts through production, financial and technological opportunities and constraints.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Media Language</b>    | How the media through their forms <sup>1</sup> , codes, conventions and techniques communicate meanings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how the different modes<sup>2</sup> and language<sup>3</sup> associated with different media forms communicate multiple meanings</li> <li>how the combination of elements of media language influence meaning</li> <li>how developing technologies affect media language</li> </ul>   |

<sup>1</sup> Forms of the media: television, film, radio, newspapers, magazines, advertising and marketing, online, social and participatory media, video games and music video.

<sup>2</sup> Modes: images, sound, speech and writing.

<sup>3</sup> Language: media language associated with audio-visual, audio, print and online media.

| Subject Content              |  |  |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Topic                        | Key Idea   | Learners must have studied   |
|                              |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the codes and conventions of media forms and products, including the processes through which media language develops as genre</li> <li>the dynamic and historically relative nature of genre</li> <li>the processes through which meanings are established through intertextuality</li> <li>how audiences respond to and interpret the above aspects of media language.</li> <li>how genre conventions are socially and historically relative, dynamic and can be used in a hybrid way</li> <li>the significance of challenging and/or subverting genre conventions</li> <li>the significance of the varieties of ways in which intertextuality can be used in the media</li> <li>the way media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies.</li> </ul> |
|                              | Theories of media language.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>semiotics, including Barthes</li> <li>narratology, including Todorov</li> <li>genre theory, including Neale</li> <li>structuralism, including Lévi-Strauss</li> <li>postmodernism, including Baudrillard.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Media Representations</b> | How the media portray events, issues, individuals and social groups. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the way events, issues, individuals (including self-representation) and social groups (including social identity) are represented through processes of selection and combination</li> <li>the way the media through re-presentation constructs versions of reality</li> <li>the processes which lead media producers to make choices about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups</li> <li>the effect of social and cultural context on representations</li> </ul>  |

| Subject Content |                                  |  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Topic           | Key Idea                         | Learners must have studied   |
|                 |                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively</li> <li>• how and why particular social groups, in a national and global context, may be under-represented or misrepresented</li> <li>• how media representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world and how these may be systematically reinforced across a wide range of media representations</li> <li>• how audiences respond to and interpret media representations</li> <li>• the way in which representations make claims about realism</li> <li>• the impact of industry contexts on the choices media producers make about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups</li> <li>• the effect of historical context on representations</li> <li>• how representations may invoke discourses and ideologies and position<sup>4</sup> audiences</li> <li>• how audience responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.</li> </ul> |
|                 | Theories of media representation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• theories of representation, including Hall</li> <li>• theories of identity, including Gauntlett</li> <li>• feminist theories, including Bell Hooks and Van Zoonen</li> <li>• theories of gender performativity, including Butler</li> <li>• theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory, including Gilroy.</li> </ul>   |

<sup>4</sup> How audiences are encouraged to adopt a particular 'position' or point of view in relation to what is being represented.

| Subject Content  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| Topic            | Key Idea  | Learners must have studied   |
| Media Industries | How the media industries' processes of production, distribution and circulation affect media forms and platforms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• processes of production, distribution and circulation by organisations, groups and individuals in a global context</li> <li>• the specialised and institutionalised nature of media production, distribution and circulation</li> <li>• the relationship of recent technological change and media production, distribution and circulation</li> <li>• the significance of patterns of ownership and control, including conglomerate ownership, vertical integration and diversification</li> <li>• the significance of economic factors, including commercial and not-for-profit public funding, to media industries and their products</li> <li>• how media organisations maintain, including through marketing, varieties of audiences nationally and globally</li> <li>• the regulatory framework of contemporary media in the UK</li> <li>• the impact of 'new' digital technologies on media regulation, including the role of individual producers</li> <li>• how processes of production, distribution and circulation shape media products</li> <li>• the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on media production, distribution and circulation, including individual producers</li> <li>• the role of regulation in global production, distribution and circulation</li> <li>• the effect of individual producers on media industries.</li> </ul> |
|                  | Theories of media industries.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• power and media industries, including Curran and Seaton</li> <li>• theories of regulation, including those of Livingstone and Lunt</li> <li>• theories of cultural industries, including those of Hesmondhalgh.</li> </ul>  |

| Subject Content |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Topic           | Key Idea   | Learners must have studied   |
| Media Audiences | How media forms target, reach and address audiences, how audiences interpret and respond to them and how members of audiences become producers themselves. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how audiences are grouped and categorised by media industries, including by age, gender and social class, as well as by lifestyle and taste</li> <li>• how media producers target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences</li> <li>• how media industries target audiences through the content and appeal of media products and through the ways in which they are marketed, distributed and circulated</li> <li>• the interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response</li> <li>• how audiences interpret the media, including how they may interpret the same media in different ways</li> <li>• how audiences interact with the media and can be actively involved in media production</li> <li>• how specialised audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms</li> <li>• how media organisations reflect the different needs of mass and specialised audiences, including through targeting</li> <li>• how audiences use media in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital</li> <li>• the role and significance of specialised audiences, including niche and fan, to the media</li> <li>• the way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.</li> </ul> |
|                 | Theories of media audiences.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• media effects, including Bandura</li> <li>• cultivation theory, including Gerbner</li> <li>• reception theory, including Hall</li> <li>• theories of fandom, including Jenkins</li> <li>• theories of 'end of audience', including Shirky.</li> </ul>   |

## 2f. Content of non-exam assessment: Making media (H409/03/04)

Making media (Component 03/04) is a non-exam assessment (NEA) component that gives learners the opportunity to work independently and develop expertise that builds on areas of study from elsewhere in the course. Learners create a cross-media product in response to a brief set by OCR. Making media (Component 03/04) allows learners to create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.

This component provides the opportunity for the learner to demonstrate that they can apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to construct their media products by:

- applying knowledge and understanding of media language to express and communicate meaning to an intended audience
- applying knowledge and understanding to construct representations that portray events, issues, individuals and social groups as appropriate to the brief set by OCR
- applying knowledge and understanding of the media industries requirements to create a product that is appropriate to the media industry context of their chosen brief
- use of media language to create meaning for the intended audience.

### Responding to an NEA brief

#### 1 Preparatory Activities (non-assessed)

Even though there are no marks attached to the preparatory activities, it is essential for learners to carry out these activities in preparation for their production task so that each individual learner's work can be authenticated. Failure to carry out sufficient research into relevant genres and media forms as well as adequately plan a chosen production is also likely to restrict a learner's ability to meet the higher levels of the marking criteria.

##### 1 (a) Research

In preparation for the production task, learners should carry out research into professionally produced media products that are similar in genre, style and form to the media products proposed in their chosen production brief. Learners should deconstruct, analyse and make notes on these professionally produced media products so that they can further develop knowledge and understanding of their chosen media form's distinctive media language, for example:

- how genre conventions are employed
- how and why intertextuality is employed
- how combinations of media language elements are used to create meaning and construct representations that address an intended audience.

Learners should be prepared to analyse the distinctive media language elements appropriate to the brief chosen, listed below:

#### Moving image (television/music video) as part of a cross-media brief:

- camerawork
- editing
- soundtrack
- mise en scène.

#### Radio as part of a cross-media brief:

- use of music
- use of voice
- use of sound effects.

**Magazines as part of a cross-media brief:**

- layout
- typography
- use of language
- use of images.

**Online media as part of a cross-media brief:**

- layout
- navigation
- use of language
- use of images/text/audio/video.

**1 (b) Planning**

Learners should produce planning materials for their individual NEA cross-media production which outline the intentions of their final production. Centres are encouraged to explore appropriate ways of producing relevant planning materials based upon their own strengths and resources.

The following list of planning materials is purely indicative:

- draft script
- storyboard
- location report(s)
- notes on casting and mise-en-scène considerations
- mock-up of a print advert layout or mock-up of a webpage
- rough cuts/drafts
- audience research and feedback.

**2 The NEA brief**

Learners must choose one from a choice of four production briefs. Centres are advised to consider the resources and equipment that they have available for learners to employ in this component when deciding upon choice of production briefs.

Learners must choose **one** of the following:

- a television and online cross-media brief
- a magazine and online cross-media brief

- a radio and online cross-media brief
- a music video and online cross-media brief.

The set NEA briefs will be published on the OCR website on the 1<sup>st</sup> March each year for submission in the following academic year.

**Statement of Intent**

Learners **must** complete a Statement of Intent for their cross-media production which **must** be submitted with their production. A penalty will be applied if it is not supplied to the teacher with a learner's final production (see Section 3i of this specification for more details). The Statement of Intent needs to outline the ways in which the learner proposes to link their media products to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of their production. The Statement of Intent also needs to outline the ways in which the learner proposes to use the four areas of the media theoretical framework to communicate meaning and meet the requirements of their chosen brief, set by OCR.

Learners must complete the Statement of Intent using approximately 500 words. A template will be provided on the OCR website for guidance.

**Length of individual production work**

The lengths specified in the 'Requirements of the brief' section for each individual production (e.g. 3 minutes for a television extract and a home page and one linked web page for the online product etc.) are sufficient to give learners the opportunity to fully address all of the marking criteria. Learners should aim to produce work of the specified length. If work is submitted that is longer than the specified length, only the part up to (and including) the specified length can be credited. Any work beyond this must not be considered for credit against the marking criteria. Work that is shorter than the specified length should be marked against the marking criteria but may not allow learners to access the full range of marking criteria. See Section 3i of this specification for more details.

## Individual production rules

The responses to the OCR set briefs must be undertaken by learners as individuals and all materials must be assessed individually.

However, a learner may make use of unassessed students and others as long as the outcome can be assessed as the work of an individual learner.

For example, others may act in, or appear in, the media product. In addition, unassessed students and others may operate lighting, sound, recording and other equipment under the direction of the assessed **learner** if required. The learner **must**, however, have creative control, as director, and create the final edit of any moving image or radio production piece or edit the photos and write all copy for the print productions. The contribution of any unassessed learners should be clearly indicated on the NEA cover sheet.

Learners are recommended to be given approximately 30 hours of lesson time in which to complete their NEA productions (this total does not include preparatory research and planning). It should be noted that excessive time spent on this component in the classroom could be detrimental to the overall attainment of the learner and teachers should be mindful of striking a balance between the completion of the NEA and preparation for the examined components.

Where NEA briefs require a 'working website', learners are not required to create websites through programming languages such as HTML and can use web design software or templates. However, learners must be responsible for the design of the website and all content (such as text, images and audio-visual material) must be original. Learners must acknowledge any software or templates they have used on the cover sheet.

## NEA portfolio requirements

In summary each individual learner's completed NEA portfolio will consist of the following:

1. non-assessed research notes and planning materials to aid the authentication of work
2. Statement of Intent
3. a teacher assessed cross-media production
4. a non-exam assessment cover sheet that clearly indicates the contribution of any unassessed learners used. This should be completed by the teacher.

In addition, centres complete the CCS160 form, see Section 4d for further details.

## Assistance with productions

It is expected that teachers will train learners in the use of technology for their NEA productions and that centres will provide the necessary equipment for learners to produce their NEA productions.

## Further Guidance

Further guidance on authentication of learners' work, including details of level of supervision and allowable feedback can be found in Section 4d of this specification.

## Marking NEA Productions

The marking criteria for this component can be found in Section 3i of this specification.

## Suitability of NEA Productions

Teachers should use their professional judgement to determine the suitability of the content of learners' NEA productions.

Learners' NEA productions **may not** contain:

- gratuitous violence
- frequent use of strong language and swearing
- nudity
- imitation of dangerous behaviour
- scenes demonstrating or promoting drug taking
- material that could be considered offensive on the grounds of race or gender.

### Submitting NEA Productions

Moving image, radio and print production work should be submitted in universal digital formats that are playable on all PCs and Macs. Work should be checked on a universal media player such as VLC media player or Adobe PDF Reader before submission to ensure compatibility.

Health and safety is not an assessment requirement of this qualification, however, there will always be a requirement of health and safety standards to be met in any creative environment and it is the centre's responsibility to ensure learners are fully aware of relevant regulations and requirements.

## 2g. Prior knowledge, learning and progression

No prior qualification is required in order for learners to enter for an A Level in Media Studies, nor is any prior knowledge or understanding required for entry onto this course.

This specification provides a strong foundation for learners to progress to Higher Education and also equips learners for progression into the workplace.

Find out more at [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk).

## 3 Assessment of A Level in Media Studies

### 3a. Forms of assessment

OCR's A Level in Media Studies is a linear qualification with 70% external assessment by examination and 30% non-exam assessment (NEA). This qualification consists of two components that are externally assessed (Components 01 and 02) and one

component that is assessed by the centre and externally moderated by OCR (Component 03/04). Learners must take all three components to be awarded the OCR A Level in Media Studies.

### Media messages (01) written examination

This component is worth 70 marks and 35% of the marks for the total A level. This is an externally assessed written examination.

Learners will be required to complete an examination lasting **2 hours**.

This exam will consist of two sections. Learners will be required to answer **all** questions.

Section A: News (**45 marks**)

Section B: Media Language and Representation (**25 marks**).

| Section A:<br>News   | Section B:<br>Media Language and Representation  |
|--|--|
| Learners are required to study <b>two</b> media forms in-depth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>newspapers</li> <li>online, social and participatory media.</li> </ul>  | Learners are required to study <b>three</b> media forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advertising and marketing</li> <li>magazines</li> <li>music videos.</li> </ul>   |
| Total: 45 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AO1: 15 marks</li> <li>AO2: 30 marks.</li> </ul>  | Total: 25 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AO1: 10 marks</li> <li>AO2: 15 marks.</li> </ul>  |
| Learners must answer: <p><b>three</b> 10 mark questions</p> <p><b>one</b> 15 mark question</p> <p>Some questions will relate to unseen sources on newspapers and/or online, social and participatory media.</p>                            | Learners must answer: <p><b>one</b> 10 mark question</p> <p><b>one</b> 15 mark question.</p> <p>Some questions will relate to unseen sources on advertising and marketing, and/or magazines.</p> <p>Learners may have to compare the set advertising and marketing products they have studied with the unseen sources.</p> |
| Questions will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media language</li> <li>media representations</li> <li>media industries</li> <li>media audiences</li> <li>media contexts</li> <li>academic ideas and arguments.</li> </ul> | Questions will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media language</li> <li>media representations</li> <li>media contexts.</li> </ul>  |

## Evolving media (02) written examination

This component is worth 70 marks and 35% of the marks for the total A level. This is an externally assessed written paper assessing AO1 and AO2.

Learners will be required to complete an examination lasting **2 hours**.

This exam will consist of two sections.

Section A: Media Industries and Audiences  
(**30 marks**)  
Section B: Long Form Television Drama  
(**40 marks**).

| Section A: Media Industries and Audiences   | Section B: Long Form Television Drama   |
|---|---|
| Learners are required to study <b>three</b> media forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>radio</li> <li>video games</li> <li>film*.</li> </ul>                           | Learners are required to study <b>one</b> media form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>television</li> </ul>  |
| Total: 30 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AO1: 30 marks</li> </ul>   | Total: 40 marks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AO1: 10 marks</li> <li>AO2: 30 marks.</li> </ul>   |
| Learners must answer: <b>two</b> 15 mark questions  | Learners must answer: <b>one</b> 30 mark question<br><b>one</b> 10 mark question.   |
| Questions will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media industries</li> <li>media audiences*</li> <li>media contexts.</li> </ul> <p>* not applicable for Film</p> | <b>Question 3 is synoptic.</b><br>The question in this section will allow learners to draw on their knowledge and understanding from the whole course of study.<br>Questions will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media language</li> <li>media representations</li> <li>media industries</li> <li>media audiences</li> <li>media contexts</li> <li>academic ideas and arguments.</li> </ul> |

## Making media (03/04) non-exam assessment (NEA)

Making media is an externally set, internally assessed and externally moderated component assessing AO3. It is worth 60 marks and 30% of the total A level. Learners are expected to complete both elements of the cross-media production.

The content to be covered in this component is outlined in Section 2f.

Guidance on assessment, including the marking criteria is outlined in Section 3i.

Administration requirements for completing the NEA are outlined in Section 4d.

Learners will be required to produce a cross-media production (**60 marks**).

### 3

## 3b. Assessment Objectives (AO)

There are three Assessment Objectives in OCR's A Level in Media Studies. These are detailed in the table below.

Learners are expected to demonstrate their ability to:

|            | Assessment Objective  | Weighting             |
|------------|---|-----------------------|
| <b>AO1</b> | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:   |                       |
|            | 1. the theoretical framework of media   | <b>20%</b>            |
|            | 2. contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.   | <b>12.5%</b>          |
| <b>AO2</b> | Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:   |                       |
|            | 1. analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories   | <b>17.5%</b>          |
|            | 2. evaluate academic ideas and arguments  | <b>10%</b>            |
|            | 3. make judgements and draw conclusions.  | <b>10%</b>            |
| <b>AO3</b> | Create cross-media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning. | <b>30% (NEA only)</b> |

## AO weightings in OCR's A Level in Media Studies

The relationship between the Assessment Objectives and the components are shown in the following table:

| Component                 | % of overall A Level in Media Studies (H409) |      |     |
|---------------------------|--|------|-----|
|                           | AO1  | AO2  | AO3 |
| Media messages (H409/01)  | 12.5   | 22.5 | 0   |
| Evolving media (H409/02)  | 20   | 15   | 0   |
| Making media (H409/03/04) | 0  | 0    | 30  |
| <b>Total</b>              | 32.5   | 37.5 | 30  |

3

### 3c. Total qualification time

Total qualification time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by a learner to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours and hours spent in preparation, study,

and assessment. The total qualification time for A Level Media Studies is 360 hours. The total guided learning time is 360 hours.

### 3d. Qualification availability outside of England

This qualification is available in England. For Wales and Northern Ireland please check the Qualifications in Wales Portal (QIW) or the Northern Ireland Department of Education Performance Measures /

Northern Ireland Entitlement Framework Qualifications Accreditation Number (NIEFQAN) list to see current availability.

### 3e. Language

This qualification is available in English only. All assessment materials are available in English only and all candidate work must be in English.

### 3f. Assessment availability

There will be one examination series available each year in May/June to **all** learners.

This specification will be certificated from the June 2019 examination series onwards.

All examined components must be taken in the same examination series at the end of the course.

### 3g. Retaking the qualification

Learners can retake the qualification as many times as they wish. Learners must retake all examined components but they can choose to either retake the

non-exam assessment (NEA) or carry forward (re-use) their most recent result (see Section 4d).

### 3h. Assessment of extended response

The assessment materials for this qualification provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line

of reasoning that is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured. Marks for extended responses are integrated into the marking criteria.

### 3i. Internal assessment of non-exam assessment (NEA) Internal assessment

Marking should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising errors or omissions. The awarding of marks must be directly related to the marking criteria.

Teachers should use their professional judgement to select the best-fit level descriptor that best describes the learners work, taking into consideration the general descriptor of that band in the process.

Teachers should use the full range of marks available to them and award all the marks in any level for which work fully meets that descriptor.

There should be clear evidence that work has been attempted and some work has been produced. If a learner submits no work for the component then the learner should be indicated as being absent from the component. If a learner completes any work at all for the component then the work should be assessed

according to the marking criteria and the appropriate mark awarded, which may be zero.

Teachers must clearly show how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria on the non-exam assessment cover sheet.

A combination of the following approaches to indicate how marks have been awarded should be adopted:

- be clear and unambiguous
- be appropriate to the set brief
- facilitate the standardisation of marking within the centre to enable the moderator to check the application of the assessment criteria to the marking.

The non-exam assessment cover sheet for individual learners can be found on the OCR website.

## Final submission

Work submitted for the A Level NEA component should reflect the standard expected for a learner after a full A level course of study.

Centres must carry out internal standardisation to make sure that marks awarded by different teachers are accurate and consistent across all learners entered by the centre. To help set the standard of marking, centres should use exemplar material provided by OCR, and, where available, work from that centre from the previous year. Where work has been marked by more than one teacher in a centre, standardisation of marking should normally be carried out according to one of the following procedures:

- **either** a sample of work that has been marked by each teacher is re-marked by the teacher who is in charge of internal standardisation
- **or** all of the teachers responsible for marking a component exchange some marked work (preferably at a meeting led by the teacher in charge of internal standardisation) and compare their marking standards
- **or** teachers collaborate when marking the work and award a mark agreed through discussions

during marking.

Where standards are found to be inconsistent, the relevant teacher(s) should make adjustments to their marks or re-mark all learners' work for which they were responsible.

If centres are working in a consortium they must carry out internal standardisation of marking across the consortium. Centres should retain evidence that internal standardisation has been carried out.

Once the final piece of work is submitted by the learner for assessment it must not be revised. Adding any material to the work or removing any material from it after it has been presented by a learner for final assessment would constitute malpractice.

The centre should store learners' work in a secure area on the centre network. The work should be saved using the candidate's name and centre number as reference.

For further guidance on how to submit work, refer to Section 4d.

Exams directory: [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk).

## File formats

In order to minimise software and hardware compatibility issues it will be necessary to save learners' work using an appropriate file format.

Learners must use formats appropriate to the evidence they are providing and appropriate to viewing for assessment and moderation purposes.

To ensure compatibility, all files submitted must be in

the formats listed in Appendix 5c.

Where new formats become available that might be accepted, OCR will provide further guidance on the subject webpage.

## Use of 'best fit' approach for marking criteria

The assessment task(s) for each component should be marked by teachers according to the given marking criteria using a 'best fit' approach. For each of the marking criteria, teachers select one of the band descriptors provided in the marking grid that most closely describes the quality of the work being marked.

Marking should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising failure or omissions. The award of marks must be directly related to the marking criteria. Teachers use their professional judgement in selecting the band descriptor that best describes the work of the learner.

To select the most appropriate mark within the band descriptor, teachers should use the following guidance:

- where the learner's work *convincingly* meets the statement, the highest mark should be awarded

- where the learner's work *adequately* meets the statement, the most appropriate mark in the middle range should be awarded
- where the learner's work *just* meets the statement, the lowest mark should be awarded.

Teachers should use the full range of marks available to them and award full marks in any band for work that fully meets that descriptor. This is work that is 'the best one could expect from learners working at that level'. For mark bands with three marks the marks on either side of the middle mark(s) for 'adequately met' should be used where the standard is the highest or lowest mark in the band.

## Making media (H409/03/04) – marking criteria

The learner's cross-media production should be marked as three separate elements against the appropriate marking criteria as shown below, and a total mark awarded out of 60.

| Element of production  | Marking criteria |   | Maximum mark     |
|--|------------------|---|------------------|
| The television/radio/magazine/music video media product                      | 1                | Application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create a media product               | 25               |
| The online media product   | 1                | Application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create a media product               | 25               |
| The digitally convergent nature of the cross-media product to create meaning | 2                | Application of knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media to create meaning | 10               |
|  |                  |   | <b>Total: 60</b> |

Each element of the cross-media production should be judged individually against the relevant set of marking criteria. Marks should be credited according to the level attained for each set of criteria. It should be noted that it is possible for a learner to achieve a different level for each element of the production. For example, a learner may demonstrate an excellent application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create their online product (Level 5) but only demonstrate adequate application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create their television/radio/print/music video media product (Level 3).

### Over-length work

If work is submitted that is longer than the specified length, only the part up to (and including) the specified length can be credited. Any work beyond this must not be considered for credit against the marking criteria. Teachers should stop watching or reading work beyond the specified length. This means that:

- **Brief 1** For the **television production** any work submitted beyond the 3 minute requirement **must not** be considered for credit; For the **online production** any work submitted beyond the 2-page requirement **must not** be considered for credit. Teachers should mark the first homepage and linked page presented.
- **Brief 2** For the **radio production** any work submitted beyond the 3 minute requirement **must not** be considered for credit; For the **online production** any work submitted beyond the 2-page requirement **must not** be considered for credit. Teachers should mark the first homepage and linked page presented.
- **Brief 3** For the **magazine production** any work submitted beyond the 4-front-page requirement **must not** be considered for credit; Teachers should mark the first four front covers presented only. For the **online production** any work submitted beyond the 2-page requirement **must not** be considered for credit. Teachers should mark the first homepage and linked page presented.
- **Brief 4** For the **music video production** any work submitted beyond the 3 minute requirement **must not** be considered for credit;

For the online production any work submitted beyond the 2-page requirement **must not** be considered for credit. Teachers should mark the first homepage and linked page presented.

Work that is shorter than the specified length should be marked against the marking criteria but may not allow learners to access the full range of marking criteria.

All content (including all images, text, video and audio) submitted as part of the NEA production must be original and created by the candidate themselves. The exceptions to this are the use of music in audio/audio-visual production briefs and in the original audio/audio-visual content required for the website production, and the use of existing brand logos. Where candidates have used any other found materials these must not be considered for credit.

A Statement of Intent **must** be supplied by the learner to each teacher with the media production. If a Statement of Intent is **not** supplied then a penalty of 10 marks must be deducted from the learners' overall total out of a maximum of 60. If a learner's outcome prior to the penalty is 10 marks or less, their outcome should be moved to zero marks. The purpose of the Statement of Intent is to understand what candidates have intended to do in the creation of their media product. Whether or not candidates have met the brief to a suitable standard will be assessed by the marking criteria, as indicated in the levels, the Statement of Intent is corroborating evidence.

If a learner only produces **one** of the two required products that make up the cross-media production then they must only be credited against the marking criteria for the product supplied and **cannot** be credited any marks in marking criteria 2: **application of knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media to create meaning.**

The non-examined assessment marking criteria assess **Assessment Objective AO3: Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.**

**1. Application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create a media product (25 marks x 2)**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Level 5</b><br><b>21–25</b><br><b>marks</b> | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>excellent</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create a media product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A sophisticated use of a wide range of appropriate media language techniques that delivers an accomplished demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the distinctive media language of the media form, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ a highly developed use of codes and conventions that communicates meaning that is highly appropriate to the media form</li><li>◦ a highly appropriate use of content and appeal which creates sophisticated meaning for the intended audience</li><li>◦ a sophisticated construction of representations which create well-selected and highly developed insights into the portrayal of events, issues, individuals and social groups as appropriate to the media form.</li></ul></li><li>• Highly developed application of knowledge and understanding of the media industry demonstrated through a sophisticated use of the media form that is highly appropriate to the media industry context of the set brief.</li><li>• An excellent realisation of the chosen brief that addresses all the requirements of the brief and includes all elements of the production detail.</li></ul> |
| <b>Level 4</b><br><b>16–20</b><br><b>marks</b> | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>good</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create a media product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A good use of a range of appropriate media language techniques, that delivers a good demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the distinctive media language of the media form, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ a well-developed use of codes and conventions that communicates meaning that is appropriate to the media form</li><li>◦ an appropriate use of content and appeal which creates effective meaning for the intended audience</li><li>◦ a good use of representations which create well-selected and well-developed insights into the portrayal of events, issues, individuals and social groups as appropriate to the media form.</li></ul></li><li>• Well-developed application of knowledge and understanding of the media industry demonstrated through a good use of the media form that is appropriate to the media industry context of the set brief.</li><li>• A good realisation of the chosen brief that addresses all requirements of the brief and includes almost all elements of the production detail.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Level 3</b><br><b>11–15</b><br><b>marks</b> | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>adequate</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create a media product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An adequate use of a range of mostly appropriate media language techniques, that delivers a competent demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the distinctive media language of the media form, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ a competent use of codes and conventions that communicates meaning that is reasonably appropriate to the media form</li><li>◦ a reasonably appropriate use of content and appeal which creates consistent meaning for the intended audience</li><li>◦ an adequate use of representations which create mainly well-selected insights into the portrayal of events, issues, individuals and social groups as appropriate to the media form.</li></ul></li><li>• An adequate application of knowledge and understanding of the media industry demonstrated through a competent use of the media form that is in the most-part relevant to the media industry context of the set brief.</li><li>• An adequate realisation of the chosen brief that addresses most of the requirements of the brief, although some elements of the production detail may be missing.</li></ul>                      |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Level 2</b><br><br><b>6–10 marks</b> | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>limited</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create a media product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic use of a limited range of appropriate media language techniques, that delivers a partial demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the distinctive media language of the media form, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ an inconsistent use of codes and conventions that communicates meaning that is not always appropriate to the media form</li> <li>◦ a not always appropriate use of content and appeal which creates inconsistent meaning for the intended audience</li> <li>◦ a basic use of representations which create limited-selected insights into the portrayal of events, issues, individuals and social groups as appropriate to the media form.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Limited application of knowledge and understanding of the media industry demonstrated through basic use of the media form that may not always be relevant to the media industry context of the set brief.</li> <li>• A limited realisation of the chosen brief that addresses some of the requirements of the brief; not all elements of the production detail are completed and those that <i>are</i> may be below stipulated lengths/quantity and/or may be reliant on software packages or pre-existing templates.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Level 1</b><br><br><b>1–5 marks</b>  | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>minimal</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create a media product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A poor use of media language techniques, that delivers an inadequate demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the distinctive media language of the media form, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ a minimal use of codes and conventions that communicates little or no meaning that is relevant to the media form</li> <li>◦ a minimal or inappropriate use of content and appeal which creates inadequate meaning for the intended audience</li> <li>◦ a poor use of representations which create minimal-selected insights into the portrayal of events, issues, individuals and social groups as appropriate to the media form.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of the media industry demonstrated through an inadequate use of the media form that may not be relevant to the media industry context of the set brief.</li> <li>• A minimal realisation of the chosen brief that addresses few of the requirements of the brief; production details are likely to be incomplete and substantially below the stipulated lengths/quantity and/or may be over-reliant on software packages or pre-existing templates.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>0</b>                                | No work submitted or work that demonstrates no knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to create a media product.  |

## 2. Application of knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media to create meaning (10 marks)

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Level 5<br/>9–10<br/>marks</b> | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>excellent</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media to create meaning across the cross-media production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sophisticated and coherent links between the two cross-media products that demonstrates a highly-developed awareness of how to use digital convergence to create meaning and engage an intended audience.</li> <li>Sophisticated use of techniques to create a highly-developed sense of branding across the two cross-media products that demonstrates highly appropriate, sustained and insightful meaning for the intended audience.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Level 4<br/>7–8<br/>marks</b>  | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>good</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media to create meaning across the cross-media production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and consistent links between the two cross-media products that create an appropriate and at times insightful awareness of how to use digital convergence to create meaning and engage an intended audience.</li> <li>A good use of techniques to create a well-developed sense of branding across the two cross-media products that demonstrates appropriate and at times insightful meaning for the intended audience.</li> </ul>                |
| <b>Level 3<br/>5–6<br/>marks</b>  | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>adequate</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media to create meaning across the cross-media production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent links between the two cross-media products that create a reasonably appropriate awareness of how to use digital convergence to create meaning and engage an intended audience.</li> <li>An adequate use of techniques to create a sense of branding across the two cross-media products that demonstrates reasonably appropriate meaning for the intended audience.</li> </ul>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Level 2</b><br><b>3–4</b><br><b>marks</b> | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>limited</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media to create meaning across the cross-media production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent links between the two cross-media products, which may not always be relevant, demonstrating a partial awareness of how to use digital convergence to create meaning and engage an intended audience.</li> <li>• A limited use of techniques that creates an inconsistent sense of branding across the two cross-media products that may lack relevance at times but demonstrates some, limited meaning for the intended audience.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Level 1</b><br><b>1–2</b><br><b>marks</b> | <p>The learner demonstrates <b>minimal</b> application of knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media to create meaning across the cross-media production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links between the two cross-media products may be incomplete or not present at all, demonstrating little, if any, awareness of how to use digital convergence to create meaning and engage an intended audience.</li> <li>• A minimal use of techniques that creates little, if any sense of branding across the two cross-media products and demonstrates little or no meaning for the intended audience.</li> </ul>                                     |
| <b>0</b>                                     | <p>No work submitted or work that demonstrates no knowledge and understanding of the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media to create meaning.</p>  |

### 3j. Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment is the learners' understanding of the connections between different elements of the subject. It involves the explicit drawing together of knowledge, skills and understanding within different parts of the A Level course.

The emphasis of synoptic assessment is to encourage the understanding of Media Studies as a discipline.

Synoptic assessment requires learners to make and use connections within and between all different areas of A Level Media Studies, for example:

Section B of Component 02 (Evolving media) offers opportunities for learners to draw on their knowledge

and understanding from the whole course of study in comparing media products:

- in relation to their contexts; and
- through the use of all four areas of the theoretical framework.

Component 03/04 (Making media) offers learners the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding from the whole course of study to a practical cross-media production.

### 3k. Calculating qualification results

A learner's overall qualification grade for OCR's A Level in Media Studies will be calculated by adding together their marks from the three components taken to give their total weighted mark. This mark will

then be compared to the qualification level grade boundaries for the relevant exam series to determine the learner's overall qualification grade.

## 4 Admin: what you need to know

The information in this section is designed to give an overview of the processes involved in administering this qualification so that you can speak to your exams officer. All of the following processes require you to submit something to OCR by a specific deadline.

More information about the processes and deadlines involved at each stage of the assessment cycle can be found in the Administration area of the OCR website.

OCR's *Admin overview* is available on the OCR website at <http://www.ocr.org.uk/administration>.

### 4a. Pre-assessment

#### Estimated entries

Estimated entries are your best projection of the number of learners who will be entered for a qualification in a particular series.

Estimated entries should be submitted to OCR by the specified deadline. They are free and do not commit your centre in any way.

#### Final entries

Final entries provide OCR with detailed data for each learner, showing each assessment to be taken. It is essential that you use the correct entry code, considering the relevant entry rules and ensuring that you choose the entry option for the moderation you intend to use.

Final entries must be submitted to OCR by the published deadlines or late entry fees will apply.

All learners taking an A Level in Media Studies must be entered for one of the following entry options:

| Entry option |                                  | Components |                                 |                     |
|--------------|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Entry code   | Title                            | Code       | Title                           | Assessment type     |
| H409 A       | Media Studies (Moderated upload) | 01         | Media messages                  | External assessment |
|              |                                  | 02         | Evolving media                  | External assessment |
|              |                                  | 03         | Making media (Moderated upload) | Non-exam assessment |
| H409 B       | Media Studies (Moderated postal) | 01         | Media messages                  | External assessment |
|              |                                  | 02         | Evolving media                  | External assessment |
|              |                                  | 04         | Making media (Moderated postal) | Non-exam assessment |
| H409 C*      | Media Studies (Carried forward)  | 01         | Media messages                  | External assessment |
|              |                                  | 02         | Evolving media                  | External assessment |
|              |                                  | 80         | Making media (Carried forward)  | Non-exam assessment |

\*Entry option H409 C should only be selected for learners who are retaking the qualification who want to carry forward their mark for the non-exam assessment.

## Collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system

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Regulators have published guidance on collecting evidence of student performance as part of long-term contingency arrangements to improve the resilience of the qualifications system. You should review and consider this guidance when delivering this qualification to students at your centre.

For more detailed information on collecting evidence of student performance please visit our website at: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/general-qualifications/assessment/>

### 4b. Special consideration

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Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to marks or grades to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time the assessment was taken.

Detailed information about eligibility for special consideration can be found in the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process*.

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### 4c. External assessment arrangements

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Regulations governing examination arrangements are contained in the JCQ publication *Instructions for Conducting Examinations*.

### 4d. Admin of non-exam assessment

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Regulations governing arrangements for internal assessments are contained in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments*.

The NEA briefs are set by OCR every year for this qualification and will be published on OCR's website.

The briefs will be published on 1 March every year for certification in the following academic year. The NEA briefs will not be posted to centres.

It should be made clear to learners that once the final productions have been submitted for assessment, no further work may take place.

## Authentication of learners' work

Centres must declare that the work submitted for assessment is the learner's own by completing a centre authentication form (CCS160). This information must be retained at the centre and be available on request to either OCR or the JCQ centre inspection service.

It must be kept until the deadline has passed for centres to submit a review of results. Once this deadline has passed and centres have not requested a review, this evidence can be destroyed.

### Authentication control

#### Research (limited supervision – non-assessed)

The non-assessed research element for Component 03/04 can be completed under limited supervision. Limited supervision means that learners can undertake this part of the process without direct teacher supervision and outside the centre as required.

During the research phase, learners can be given support and guidance.

Teachers **can**:

- explain the brief
- advise on how the brief could be approached
- advise on resources
- alert the learner to key things that must be included in their final piece of work.

Teachers **must not**:

- practise the learner's chosen brief with them.

Research **must** include:

- learners' notes on professionally produced media products that are similar in genre, style and form to the media products proposed in their chosen brief (see Section 2f of this specification).

Research may also include:

- fieldwork (e.g. a location recce for filming or digitally photographed stills) and internet or paper-based research as appropriate to the chosen brief.

Learners must be guided on the use of information from other sources to ensure that confidentiality and intellectual property rights are maintained at all times.

### Planning (formal supervision – non-assessed)

Formal supervision means work should be completed within the centre under normal teacher supervision in classroom conditions. This ensures that the work of the individual learner is recorded accurately and that plagiarism does not take place. This forms part of the authentication process. Candidates must also be guided on appropriate health and safety considerations when planning and carrying out their production tasks.

### Original materials

Any material submitted by the learner as part of their NEA production must have been produced by the learner themselves.

The exceptions to this rule are the allowable use of copyright free music in the television and radio briefs. In the music video brief, learners are expected to use an existing artist's track rather than create their own.

During the planning phase learners can be given support and guidance including:

- explain the purpose of planning materials
- advise on approaches to planning materials
- advise on resources for planning materials
- advise on health and safety considerations to take into account when planning a production.

Teachers **must not**:

- make creative planning decisions for learners.

### Productions (formal supervision)

All elements of the media production must be completed under formal supervision within the centre, **with the exception of filming, digital still photography and audio recording**, which may take place off-site, where appropriate. However, all off-site activities must be agreed in advance with teaching staff and parental permissions must be sought where required from the learner and cast members. Teachers must be satisfied learners have carried out sufficient health and safety checks before allowing off-site work and learners **must** submit copies of their pre-shooting shot lists and storyboards to teachers.

During the production phase, learners can be given support and guidance.

Teachers **can**:

- explain the purpose of their chosen media brief
- advise on resources for individual productions
- train learners to use any necessary technology or software needed for the production.
- alert the learner to key things that must be included in their final production
- review learners' work before it is handed in for final assessment (this includes rough cut edits) but advice must remain at the general level, enabling learners to take the initiative in

making amendments. One review should be sufficient to enable learners to understand the demands of the assessment criteria.

Teachers **must not**:

- practise the learner's chosen media brief with them
- give detailed advice and suggestions as to how the work may be improved in order to meet the assessment criteria; this includes indicating errors or omissions
- personally intervene to improve the presentation or content of the work
- personally intervene to improve the presentation or content of the work; providing that advice remains at the general level, enabling the learner to take the initiative in making amendments, there is no need to record this advice as assistance or deduct marks.

### First drafts

What teachers **can** do:

Teachers can review learners' work before it is handed in for final assessment. Advice must remain at the general level, enabling learners to take the initiative in making amendments. One review should be sufficient to enable learners to understand the demands of the assessment criteria.

## Head of centre annual declaration

The Head of Centre is required to provide a declaration to the JCQ as part of the annual NCN update, conducted in the autumn term, to confirm that the centre is meeting all of the requirements detailed in the specification.

Any failure by a centre to provide the Head of Centre annual declaration will result in your centre status being suspended and could lead to the withdrawal of our approval for you to operate as a centre.

## Private candidates

Private candidates may enter for OCR assessments.

A private candidate is someone who pursues a course of study independently but takes an examination or assessment at an approved examination centre.

A private candidate may be a part-time student, someone taking a distance learning course, or someone being tutored privately. They must be based in the UK.

A Level Media Studies requires learners to complete non-examined assessment. This is an essential part of

the course and will allow learners to develop skills for further study or employment.

Private candidates need to contact OCR approved centres to establish whether they are prepared to host them as a private candidate. The centre may charge for this facility and OCR recommends that the arrangement is made early in the course.

Further guidance for private candidates may be found on the OCR website [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk).

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## Internal standardisation

Centres must carry out internal standardisation to ensure that marks awarded by different teachers are accurate and consistent across all learners entered for

the component from that centre. This process is outlined further in Section 3i under 'Final Submission'.

## Moderation

The purpose of moderation is to bring the marking of internally-assessed components in all participating centres to an agreed standard. This is achieved by checking a sample of each centre's marking of learners' work.

Following internal standardisation, centres submit marks to OCR and the moderator. If there are ten or fewer learners, all the work should be submitted for moderation at the same time as marks are submitted.

Once marks have been submitted to OCR and your moderator, centres will receive a moderation sample request. Samples will include work from across the range of attainment of the learners' work.

There are two ways to submit a sample:

**Moderated upload** – Where you upload electronic copies of the work included in the sample using our Submit for Assessment service and your moderator accesses the work from there.

**Moderated postal** – Where you post the sample of work to the moderator.

The method that will be used to submit the moderation sample must be specified when making entries. The relevant entry codes are given in Section 4a.

All learners' work must be submitted using the same entry option. It is not possible for centres to use both options within the same series.

Centres will receive the outcome of moderation when the provisional results are issued. This will include:

**Moderation Adjustments Report** – Listing any scaling that has been applied to internally assessed components.

**Moderator Report to Centres** – A brief report by the moderator on the internal assessment of learners' work.

## Carrying forward non-exam assessment (NEA)

Learners who are retaking the qualification can choose to either retake the non-exam assessment — Making Media (03, 04) or carry forward their most recent result for that component.

To carry forward the NEA component result, you must use the correct carry forward entry option (see table in Section 4a).

Learners must decide at the point of entry whether they are going to carry forward the NEA result or not.

The result for the NEA component may be carried forward for the lifetime of the specification and there is no restriction on the number of times the result may be carried forward. However, only the most recent non-absent result may be carried forward.

When the result is carried forward, the grade boundaries from the previous year of entry will be used to calculate a new weighted mark for the carried forward component, so the value of the original mark is preserved.

## 4e. Results and certificates

### Grade Scale

A level qualifications are graded on the scale: A\*, A, B, C, D, E, where A\* is the highest. Learners who fail to reach the minimum standard for E will be

Unclassified (U). Only subjects in which grades A\* to E are attained will be recorded on certificates.

### Results

Results are released to centres and learners for information and to allow any queries to be resolved before certificates are issued.

Centres will have access to the following results information for each learner:

- the grade for the qualification
- the raw mark for each component
- the total weighted mark for the qualification.

The following supporting information will be available:

- raw mark grade boundaries for each component
- weighted mark grade boundaries for each entry option.

Until certificates are issued, results are deemed to be provisional and may be subject to amendment.

A learner's final results will be recorded on an OCR certificate. The qualification title will be shown on the certificate as 'OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Media Studies'.

## 4f. Post-results services

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A number of post-results services are available:

- **Review of results** – If you are not happy with the outcome of a learner's results, centres may request a review of their moderation and/or marking.
- **Missing and incomplete results** – This service should be used if an individual subject result for a learner is missing, or the learner has been omitted entirely from the results supplied.
- **Access to scripts** – Centres can request access to marked scripts.

## 4g. Malpractice

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Any breach of the regulations for the conduct of examinations and non-exam assessment work may constitute malpractice (which includes maladministration) and must be reported to OCR as soon as it is detected.

Detailed information on malpractice can be found in the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures*.

## 5 Appendices

### 5a. Accessibility

Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements allow learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do, without changing the demands of the assessment. Applications for these should be made before the examination series. Detailed information about eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

The A level qualification and subject criteria have been reviewed in order to identify any feature which could disadvantage learners who share a protected Characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise any such disadvantage.

### 5b. Overlap with other qualifications

This qualification has no significant overlap with any other qualifications.

### 5c. Accepted file formats

Further explanation of the use of formats for non-exam assessment can be found in Section 4d.

**Movie formats for digital video evidence:**

MPEG (\*.mpg)  
QuickTime movie (\*.mov)  
Macromedia Shockwave (\*.aam)  
Macromedia Shockwave (\*.dcr)  
Flash (\*.swf)  
Windows Media File (\*.wmf)  
MPEG Video Layer 4 (\*.mp4).

**Audio or sound formats:**

MPEG Audio Layer 3 (\*.mp3).

**Graphics formats including:**

JPEG (\*.jpg)  
Graphics file (\*.pcx)  
MS bitmap (\*.bmp)  
GIF images (\*.gif).

**Animation formats:**

Macromedia Flash (\*.fla).

## 5d. Accessing the set media product

| Media form                | Set product   | Product Availability  |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Television                | <p><b>One</b> from list A (US Long Form Television Dramas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mr Robot</i> (Season 1, Episode 1 June 2015) BBFC 15</li> <li>• <i>Killing Eve</i> (Season 1, Episode 1, September 2018) BBFC 15</li> <li>• <i>Atypical</i> (Season 1, Episode 1, August 2017) BBFC 12</li> <li>• <i>Stranger Things</i> (Season 1, Episode 1, July 2016) BBFC 12.</li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>One</b> from list B (European non-English language Long Form Television Dramas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lupin</i> (Season 1, Chapter 1, January 2021) BBFC 15</li> <li>• <i>Money Heist/La Casa de Papel</i> (Season 1, Episode 1, May 2017) BBFC 15</li> <li>• <i>Trapped</i> (Season 1, Episode 1, December 2015) BBFC 15</li> <li>• <i>Deutschland 83</i> (Season 1, Episode 1, October 2015) BBFC 15.</li> </ul> | Centres need to purchase the set episodes from a commercial retailer, alternatively it may be possible to stream the episodes.  |
| Advertising and marketing | <p>Poster advertisements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dove</i> (body care)</li> <li>• <i>River Island</i> (clothing)</li> <li>• <i>Shelter</i> (charity).</li> </ul>  | Adverts to be made available by OCR.  |
| Film                      | <p><i>Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings</i> (2021)</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> (1937)</p>   | Purchasable from commercial retailer.<br>NB. Textual analysis of the films <b>are not</b> required  |
| Video games               | <i>Animal Crossing: New Horizons</i> (2020)   | Purchasable from commercial retailer<br>NB. There is <b>no</b> requirement for learners to play the game. Teachers are recommended to make use of <b>freely available</b> online clips of gameplay. |
| Magazines                 | <i>The Big Issue</i>  | Centres need to purchase <b>at least two magazines</b> so that learners can study at least two covers.  |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Music video                            | <p>Learners must choose <b>one</b> video from list A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Corinne Bailey Rae – Stop Where You Are</i></li> <li>• <i>Lil Nas X – SUN GOES DOWN</i></li> <li>• <i>Emeli Sandé – Heaven</i></li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>One</b> video from list B:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Suffjan Stevens – Sugar</i></li> <li>• <i>Radiohead – Burn the Witch</i></li> <li>• <i>David Guetta – Titanium</i></li> </ul> | <p>All <b>freely available</b> online e.g. YouTube or Vimeo</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/">https://www.youtube.com/</a></p> <p><a href="https://vimeo.com/">https://vimeo.com/</a></p> |
| Radio                                  | <i>The BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show</i>  | <p>Centre selected episode, <b>freely available</b> online via BBC Radio iPlayer.</p> <p><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer">http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer</a></p>                              |
| Online, social and participatory media | <p>The <i>Mail Online</i> and <i>The Guardian</i> websites</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>at least <b>two</b> articles from the <i>Mail Online</i> website and at least <b>two</b> articles from <i>The Guardian</i> websites plus relevant <i>Facebook</i>, <i>X</i> (formerly Twitter) and <i>Instagram</i> feeds from each news organisation where available.</p>   | <p><b>Freely available</b> online</p> <p><a href="https://www.theguardian.com/">https://www.theguardian.com/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.dailymail.co.uk/">http://www.dailymail.co.uk/</a></p> |
| Newspapers                             | <p><b>Two</b> front covers from the <i>Daily Mail</i> and <b>two</b> front covers from <i>The Guardian</i></p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>One</b> complete edition of the <i>Daily Mail</i> and <b>one</b> complete edition of <i>The Guardian</i>.</p>   | <p>Centres need to purchase four newspapers to ensure learners can study four front covers and two complete editions of the newspapers.</p>   |

## 5e. Academic ideas and arguments to be studied

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### Media Language

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#### Semiology – Barthes

Semiology is the study of signs. Signs consist of a signifier (a word, an image, a sound, and so on) and its meaning – the signified.

The denotation of a sign is its literal meaning (e.g. the word 'dog' denotes a mammal that barks).

Denotations signify connotations – the associations of the denotation (e.g. 'dogness' – the thoughts and feelings associated with dogs).

Denotations and connotations are organised into myths – the ideological meaning. These make ideology seem natural. For example, a Bulldog might activate a myth of Britishness.

#### Narratology – Todorov

Narratology is the study of narrative; in this case, of narrative structure – how the parts fit together to make a whole.

All narratives can be seen as a move from one state of equilibrium (where nothing need occur) to another, new equilibrium. The disruption to the equilibrium is what drives the narrative towards a new equilibrium.

The movement from the initial equilibrium to the new equilibrium entails a transformation (e.g. the hero expresses their heroism and defeats the villain) – this transformation expresses what the narrative values.

#### Genre Theory – Neale

Genre theory is about what genres are, and about how and why they are created, change endure or decline.

Neale argues that genre is a *process* by which generic codes and conventions are shared by producers and audiences through repetition in media products.

This means that genres are not fixed, but constantly evolve with each new addition to the generic corpus (the body of products in a genre), often playing with genre codes and conventions or becoming hybrids with other genres.

Generic codes and conventions are not just established in media products but in products that refer to these products such as critical writings or advertising and marketing material, what Neale referred to as 'the intertextual relay'.

## Structuralism – Levi-Strauss

Structuralism is the study of the hidden rules that govern a structure.

Levi-Strauss thought that the human mind could be investigated by studying the fundamental structure underlying myths and fables from around the world (which he saw as one unitary system). He developed the idea of the 'binary opposition' – that the system of myths and fables was ruled by a structure of opposing terms, e.g. hot-cold, male-female, culture-nature, raw-cooked.

Many writers have analysed media products using the idea of the binary opposition, but seeing the overall system as 'ideology' rather than 'human consciousness'.

## Postmodernism – Baudrillard

Postmodernism is the idea that society has moved beyond modernism – either modernism in art and culture (early 20<sup>th</sup> century) or modernism in the sense of a belief in progress, which dates back much further.

Baudrillard argued that, as modern societies were organised around production of goods, postmodern society is organised around 'simulation' – the play of images and signs.

Previously important social distinctions suffer 'implosion' as differences of gender, class, politics and culture dissolve in a world of simulation in which individuals construct their identities.

The new world of 'hyperreality' – media simulations, for example, Disneyland and amusement parks, malls and consumer fantasy lands – is more real than the 'real', and controls how we think and behave.

## Media Representations

### Theories of Representation – Hall

Representation is not about whether the media reflects or distorts reality, as this implies that there can be one 'true' meaning, but the many meanings a representation can generate. Meaning is constituted by representation, by what is present, what is absent, and what is different. Thus, meaning can be contested.

A representation implicates the audience in creating its meaning. Power – through ideology or by stereotyping – tries to fix the meaning of a representation in a 'preferred meaning'. To create deliberate anti-stereotypes is still to attempt to fix the meaning (albeit in a different way). A more effective strategy is to go inside the stereotype and open it up from within, to deconstruct the work of representation.

### Theories of Identity – Gauntlett

The media have an important but complex relationship with identities. In the modern world, it is now an expectation that individuals make choices about their identity and lifestyle. Even in the traditional media, there are many diverse and contradictory media messages that individuals can use to think through their identities and ways of expressing themselves. For example, the success of 'popular feminism' and increasing representation of different sexualities created a world where the meaning of gender, sexuality and identity is increasingly open.

The online media offer people a route to self-expression, and therefore a stronger sense of self and participating in the world by making and exchanging. These media are places of conversation, exchange and transformation: 'a fantastically messy set of networks filled with millions of sparks – some igniting new meanings, ideas and passions and some just fading away.' People still build identities, but through everyday, creative practice. However, this practice would be improved by better platforms for creativity.

### **Feminist Theory – Van Zoonen**

In patriarchal culture, the way women's bodies are represented as objects is different to the representation of male bodies as spectacle.

Gender is performative – our ideas of femininity and masculinity are constructed in our performances of these roles. Gender is 'what we do' rather than 'what we are'. Moreover, gender is contextual – its meaning changes with cultural and historical contexts.

Van Zoonen disagrees with arguments that the internet, being based on collaboration, is a technology that is true and close to women and femininity. These views are too simple and based on the idea of an essential femininity, whereas there is a rich diversity of ways that gender is articulated on the internet.

### **Feminist Theory – Bell Hooks**

Feminism is a movement to end patriarchy: sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.

'Intersectionality' refers to the intersections of gender, race, class and sexuality to create a 'white supremacist capitalist patriarchy', whose ideologies dominate media representations. She argues that black women should develop an 'oppositional gaze' that refuses to identify with characters – the 'gaze' is political for black Americans, as slaves were punished for looking at their white owners.

### **Theories of Gender Performativity – Butler**

Gender is created in how we perform our gender roles – there is no essential gender identity behind these roles, it is created in the performance. Performativity is not a singular act but a repetition and a ritual that becomes naturalised within the body.

Any feminism concerned only with masculinity and femininity excludes other forms of gender and sexuality. This creates 'gender trouble' for those that do not fit the heterosexual norms.

Butler is an important postmodern writer and has influenced Queer theory – theory which deconstructs and aims to destabilise apparently fixed identities based on gender and sexualities.

### **Theories Around Ethnicity, and Post-Colonial Theory – Gilroy**

The African diaspora caused by the slave trade has now constructed a transatlantic culture that is simultaneously African, American, Caribbean and British – the 'Black Atlantic'.

Britain has failed to mourn its loss of empire, creating 'postcolonial melancholia', an attachment to an airbrushed version of British colonial history, which expresses itself in criminalising immigrants and an 'us and them' approach to the world founded on the belief in the inherent superiority of white western civilisation.

## Media Industries

### Power and Media Industries – Curran and Seaton

A political economy approach to the media – arguing that patterns of ownership and control are the most significant factors in how the media operate.

Media industries follow the normal capitalist pattern of increasing concentration of ownership in fewer and fewer hands. This leads to a narrowing of the range of opinions represented and a pursuit of profit at the expense of quality or creativity.

The internet does not represent a rupture with the past in that it does not offer a level playing field for diverse voices to be heard. It is constrained by nationalism and state censorship. News is still controlled by powerful news organisations, who have successfully defended their oligarchy.

### Regulation – Livingstone and Lunt

Livingstone and Lunt studied four case studies of the work of Ofcom.

Ofcom is serving an audience who may be seen as consumers and/or citizens, with consequences for regulation: consumers have wants, are individuals, seek private benefits from the media, use the language of choice, and require regulation to protect against detriment; citizens have needs, are social, seek public or social benefits from the media, use the language of rights, and require regulation to promote the public interest.

Traditional regulation is being put at risk by: increasingly globalised media industries, the rise of the digital media, and media convergence.

### Cultural Industries – Hesmondhalgh

Cultural industries follow the normal capitalist pattern of increasing concentration and integration – cultural production is owned and controlled by a few conglomerates who vertically integrate across a range of media to reduce risk.

Risk is particularly high in the cultural industries because of the difficulty in predicting success, high production costs, low reproduction costs and the fact that media products are ‘public goods’ – they are not destroyed on consumption but can be further reproduced. This means that the cultural industries rely on ‘big hits’ to cover the costs of failure. Hence industries rely on repetition through use of stars, genres, franchises, repeatable narratives and so on to sell formats to audiences, then industries and governments try to impose scarcity, especially through copyright laws.

The internet has created new powerful IT corporations, and has not transformed cultural production in a liberating and empowering way – digital technology has sped up work, commercialised leisure time and increased surveillance by government and companies.

## Media Audiences

### Media Effects – Bandura

The media can influence people directly – human values, judgement and conduct can be altered directly by media modelling. Empirical evidence best supports direct influence rather than the alternative models of media effects: two-step flow, agenda-setting, no effects, or the media reflecting existing attitudes and behaviour.

Media representations of aggressive or violent behaviour can lead to imitation.

The media may influence directly or by social networks, so people can be influenced by media messages without being exposed to them.

Different media have different effects. The ‘new’ media offer opportunities for self-directedness.

### Cultivation Theory – Gerbner

Exposure to television over long periods of time cultivates standardised roles and behaviours. Gerbner used content analysis to analyse repeated media messages and values, then found that heavy users of television were more likely, for example, to develop ‘mean world syndrome’ – a cynical, mistrusting attitude towards others – following prolonged exposure to high levels of television violence.

Gerbner found that heavy TV viewing led to ‘mainstreaming’ – a common outlook on the world based on the images and labels on TV. Mainstreamers would describe themselves as politically moderate.

### Reception Theory – Hall

Hall’s ‘encoding-decoding’ model argued that media producers encode ‘preferred meanings’ into texts, but these texts may be ‘read’ by their audiences in a number of different ways:

- The dominant-hegemonic position: a ‘preferred reading’ that accepts the text’s messages and the ideological assumptions behind the messages
- The negotiated position: the reader accepts the text’s ideological assumptions, but disagrees with aspects of the messages, so negotiates the meaning to fit with their ‘lived experience’
- The oppositional reading: the reader rejects both the overt message and its underlying ideological assumptions.

### Fandom – Jenkins

Fans act as ‘textual poachers’ – taking elements from media texts to create their own culture.

The development of the ‘new’ media has accelerated ‘participatory culture’, in which audiences are active and creative participants rather than passive consumers. They create online communities, produce new creative forms, collaborate to solve problems, and shape the flow of media. This generates ‘collective intelligence’.

From this perspective, convergence is a cultural process rather than a technological one.

Jenkins prefers the term ‘spreadable media’ to terms such as ‘viral’, as the former emphasises the active, participatory element of the ‘new’ media.

### **'End of Audience' Theories – Shirky**

In the 'old' media, centralised producers addressed atomised consumers; in the 'new' media, every consumer is now a producer. Traditional media producers would 'filter then publish'; as many 'new' media producers are not employees, they 'publish then filter'.

These amateur producers have different motivations to those of professionals – they value autonomy, competence, membership and generosity. User-generated content creates emotional connection between people who care about something. This can generate a cognitive surplus – for example, Wikipedia can aggregate people's free time and talent to produce value that no traditional medium could match.

'The Audience' as a mass of people with predictable behaviour is gone. Now, behaviour is variable across different sites, with some of the audience creating content, some synthesising content and some consuming content. The 'old' media created a mass audience. The 'new' media provide a platform for people to provide value for each other.

## Summary of updates

| Date         | Version | Section                                     | Title of section   | Change   |
|--------------|---------|---|--|--|
| May 2018     | 1.1     | Front cover                                 | Disclaimer   | Addition of Disclaimer   |
| May 2018     | 1.2     | 2a, 2c, 2f, 5d                              | OCR's A Level in Media Studies, Content of Media messages (H409/01), Content of non-exam assessment: Making media (H409/03/04), Accessing the set media product.   | Clarification of set media products and NEA production.  |
| August 2018  | 1.3     | 3d<br>4d                                    | Retaking the qualification<br>Admin of non-exam assessment   | Update to the wording for carry forward rules  |
| January 2020 | 1.4     | 1e<br>4d<br>4f                              | How do I find out more information?<br>Admin of non-exam assessment<br>Post-results services   | Delete link to Social Forum and replace with link for Online Support Centre<br>Amend Enquiries About Results to review of results<br>Amend Enquiries About Results to review of results  |
|              |         |   |  | Update to specification covers to meet digital accessibility standards   |
| June 2023    | 2       | 2a.<br>2c.<br>2d.<br>5d.<br>3<br>4a.<br>4d. | OCR's A Level in Media Studies (H409)<br>Content of Media messages (H409/01)<br>Content of Evolving media (H409/02)<br>Accessing the set media product<br>Assessment of A Level in Media Studies<br>Pre-assessment<br>Admin of non-exam assessment | Changes to the set media products: advertising and marketing, music videos, film, video games and long form television drama.<br>Insertion of new section 3c. Total qualification time.<br>Update to the wording of moderation submission options. |
| March 2024   | 2.1     | 3d, 3e<br>4a<br>Checklist                   | Qualification availability, Language<br>Pre-assessment   | Inclusion of disclaimer regarding availability and language<br>Update to include resilience guidance<br>Inclusion of Teach Cambridge   |

| Date           | Version | Section                     | Title of section   | Change  |
|----------------|---------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| September 2024 | 2.2     | Sections 2a, 2f, 3a, 3i, 4d | The specification overview<br>Content of non-exam assessment: Making media (H409/03/04)<br>Forms of assessment<br>Internal assessment of non-exam assessment (NEA) Internal assessment<br>Admin of non-exam assessment | Update to section references.<br>Clarification of NEA marking guidance wording. |
| April 2025     | 2.3     | 1e, 2a, 2c                  | How do I find out more information?<br>Content and products at a glance<br>Content of Media messages (H409/01)   | Twitter changed to X  |

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# YOUR CHECKLIST

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