

**A LEVEL**

**Moderators' report**

# **FILM STUDIES**

**H410**

For first teaching in 2017

**H410/03/04 Summer 2024 series**

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## Introduction

Our moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

## Online courses

We have created online courses to build your confidence in delivering, marking and administering internal assessment for our qualifications. Courses are available for Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016).

### Cambridge Nationals

All teachers delivering our redeveloped Cambridge Nationals suite from September 2022 are asked to complete the Essentials for the NEA course, which describes how to guide and support your students. You'll receive a certificate which you should retain.

Following this you can also complete a subject-specific Focus on Internal Assessment course for your individual Cambridge Nationals qualification, covering marking and delivery.

### GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016)

We recommend all teachers complete the introductory module Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, which covers key internal assessment and standardisation principles.

Following this you will find a subject-specific course for your individual qualification, covering marking criteria with examples and commentary, along with interactive marking practice.

### Accessing our online courses

You can access all our online courses from our teacher support website [Teach Cambridge](#).

You will find links relevant to your subject under Assessment, NEA/Coursework and then Online Courses from the left hand menu on your Subject page.

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email [support@ocr.org.uk](mailto:support@ocr.org.uk).

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## General overview

Most centres engaged enthusiastically and creatively with the demands of the specification. It is clear that candidates have enjoyed their experience and have, as a result, produced some excellent products. Moderating their work has been a joy and once again there have been some really professional products submitted.

Most candidates demonstrated skill in the application of the micro-elements of film form and centres are encouraged to continue to create opportunities for candidates to learn and practise effective use of these. In the most successful work, candidates engaged in thoughtful critical analyses of the set short films, carefully planned their productions based on the knowledge and understanding gained from their research, used their creativity and technical skills to produce artefacts demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the micro-elements of short film and its distinctive narrative form, and then critically evaluated their productions in relation to their analyses of the set short films.

For this series most centres took advantage of being able to upload work to the new Submit for Assessment platform (the 03 option) with fewer submitting hard copies of work (04 postal). The new platform enables moderators to stream work securely, or download it. Whichever option is chosen, centres are requested to ensure that all files (virtual and physical) are clearly labelled with the **candidate's number and name**. It is also a requirement that all work is either uploaded or sent to the moderator. Some centres only partially uploaded their submissions, slowing the moderation process. The use of blogs, while no longer the preferred method of submission, still demonstrates good practice for the submission of research and planning materials; this enables both teachers and moderators to see the development of the candidate's work. If this method is adopted, centres are requested to include clear links, preferably hyperlinks, to the candidates' work.

Centres continue to work effectively with the published marking criteria for this component, with many centres applying it accurately. In previous sessions, some centres were unclear about the assessment of the screenplay with storyboard option. Now, all but a few seem to have taken onboard that when assessing this option both the screenplay and storyboard should be assessed together for knowledge and understanding of short film and its narrative form (mark scheme 1) and micro-elements (mark scheme 2). A holistic approach should be taken in much the same way as if marking the short film option. The centres incorrectly marking the screenplay and storyboard separately, assessing the screenplay for knowledge and understanding of short film and its narrative form and the storyboard for knowledge and understanding of micro-elements, is now minimal.

Teacher commentary on the candidates' cover sheets continues to be really helpful with personalised comments reflecting the marking criteria. It is important that these comments are as clear as possible and refer to the candidate's work in relation to the appropriate mark descriptors.

## Preliminary activities

While preliminary activities are not assessed, it is a requirement that they be submitted for moderation; this allows both the teacher and moderator to authenticate the candidate's work. The majority of centres are encouraging candidates to engage with this essential process, but many are still not submitting a full range of research and planning. It is important that candidates clearly demonstrate the full process of production. Over the years the amount and quality of these materials seems to have decreased, in many cases to the detriment of the final product. Candidates are not marked down for non-submission of research and planning, but they effectively self-penalise through products that do not demonstrate sufficient knowledge and understanding.

The most effective presentations of research and planning continue to be online showing a clear sense of process. Some centres continue to submit a few printed pages describing either the planning completed or the final production process. Centres could consider doing more research and planning to better inform end products. Preliminary activities could also include opportunities to acquire and develop the skills needed to accomplish the technical aspects of production. Research, especially of the set short films, is a requirement of the specification and essential to informing candidates' knowledge and understanding of what they are producing. Centres should discourage research, for this component, into feature films and their narrative forms as this often distracts from the distinctive short film form.

## Production work

This series, the short film option continued to be the preferred option of most candidates. Some centres have offered both options with the majority of their candidates taking up the short film option. Centres continue to deal well with assessing both options in parallel. The production work submitted demonstrated varying levels of understanding of the short film and its distinctive narrative form, but generally candidates continue to have a greater understanding of form than in previous years.

## Short film

There continue to be some excellent examples of short films produced for this option. Some of the top-level products would hold their own at film festivals. The level of creativity, combined with genuine understanding of the narrative form, is a real joy to see. The most successful short films continue to be demonstrably influenced by aspects of the set short films and have a clear three act structure with a narrative resolution.

Candidates have moved away from unsuccessfully produced 'experimental' films which 'break' narrative conventions and now seem to have a greater focus on clearly identified conventions.

A dominant feature of the set short films is that the story arc is complete and many candidates are now identifying this. Following the three act structure is to be encouraged unless candidates can challenge the form in a sophisticated way and are able to articulate their understanding through their evaluation.

## Screenplays with digital stills

This option requires candidates to produce a 'screenplay for a new short film (10 pages, equivalent to 10 minutes of screen time) including a digitally photographed storyboard of a key section of the screenplay, illustrating, through careful construction of mise-en-scène and shot selection, how the screenplay would be realised (20 digitally photographed key frames)'.

Candidates produced some creative and technically well-constructed work for this option. The most effective screenplays were easy to read as complete narratives and included direction as well as clearly indicated dialogue. Candidates who used professional software for this purpose were able to best present their ideas.

Some storyboards were excellent representations of the screenplays and included a range of appropriate directions, including sound and dialogue, as well as the required digital images. The photography for this element should be equivalent to the cinematography of the filmed option, showing an understanding of framing, positioning, mise-en-scène (including lighting), colour, and direction of actors. Some candidates are still having problems with formatting their storyboards and as a result not producing work of the quality required at A Level. Storyboards should be formatted appropriately with a maximum of two images per A4 page and images should be presented in landscape format, preferably 4:3 or 16:9, to represent a film still. Some candidates still did not seem to understand the importance of aspect ratio and presented their key frames in a variety of ratios.

While still in its infancy, moderators have noted the use of artificial intelligence (AI) by some candidates. AI can be beneficial to idea generation, for example, if credited, but should not be used as an alternative to the application of candidates' knowledge and understanding. Candidates must not use AI to produce images for their storyboards, as these are not considered to have been produced by the candidate and do not demonstrate their own application of knowledge and understanding of micro-elements. Centres should ensure they are familiar with the JCQ's guidance on the use of AI in [assessments](#). Further support on AI can be found on this [page](#) of our website, and guidance on the use of AI in Film Studies is available in this [blog](#).

## Evaluation

On the whole, evaluations continue to be detailed. Most allowed candidates to reflect on the set short films and how they had influenced the development of their own work. Most evaluations referred to the influence of at least two films from the set list, but often more. Some candidates continue to refer to the short films in detail but then do not successfully relate them to their own productions. It is pleasing to see that the practice of analysing feature films, and applying their conventions, which is not appropriate to the short film format, has become rare. Candidates can draw on analysis of short films outside of the collection but should be encouraged to use the collection as their primary reference. More successful evaluations often used stills from the set short films and their own productions to support their written analysis. This is good practice and should be encouraged.

The evaluation element continued to be the most accurately marked with teachers appropriately rewarding candidates when they wrote with precision and sophistication and giving lower marks to work that was descriptive, repetitive and lacking in detail.

Candidates who did well generally:	Candidates who did less well generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applied learnt skills, knowledge and understanding to their productions</li> <li>• completed a range of appropriate research and planning, including analysis of the set short films</li> <li>• employed the distinctive codes and conventions of short film effectively</li> <li>• for their storyboards, constructed a range of well-considered photographic images</li> <li>• effectively evaluated their own work in relation to the set short films.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• did not develop their technical skills</li> <li>• did not apply their prior learning to their productions</li> <li>• did not complete appropriate research and planning</li> <li>• did not apply appropriate codes and conventions</li> <li>• described the process of production rather than evaluating their own work in relation to the set short films.</li> </ul>

## Avoiding potential malpractice

Centres should make sure that all photographic imagery is made by the candidate. This is especially pertinent to the storyboard for those following the Screenplay option. The specification requires 20 photographic images to demonstrate the candidate's understanding of the micro-elements of filmmaking. These must not be hand-drawn images, found images, or AI generated images.

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# Supporting you

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**Don't have access?** If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

## Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

## Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

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Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

## Signed up for ExamBuilder?

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**You will need an Interchange account to access our digital products. If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.**



# Online courses

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## Enhance your skills and confidence in internal assessment

### What are our online courses?

Our online courses are self-paced eLearning courses designed to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications. They are suitable for both new and experienced teachers who want to refresh their knowledge and practice.

### Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation
- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately
- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators
- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators
- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills
- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

### How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from [Teach Cambridge](#). Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find available courses for your subject under Assessment - NEA/Coursework - Online courses. Click on the blue arrow to start the course.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this [link](#) and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

### Which courses are available?

There are **two types** of online course: an **introductory module** and **subject-specific** courses.

The introductory module, Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, is designed for all teachers who are involved in internal assessment for our qualifications. It covers the following topics:

- the purpose and benefits of internal assessment
- the roles and responsibilities of teachers, assessors, internal verifiers and moderators
- the principles and methods of standardisation
- the best practices for collecting, storing and submitting evidence
- the common issues and challenges in internal assessment and how to avoid them.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units
- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units
- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units
- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

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