

**CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)**

**Examiners' report**

# **DIGITAL MEDIA**

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**05843–05846, 05875**

**Unit 2 Summer 2024 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' 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. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. 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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Unit 2 series overview

The Unit 2 Pre-production and planning paper offers candidates the opportunity to engage with a fictional scenario to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of planning a new media product. This series saw a wide range of responses covering the full spectrum of marks; candidates responded in a differentiated way to the individual questions, and it was particularly pleasing to see centres taking feedback on board from previous reports in the two design questions in Section B. There was a marked improvement in this section, with some truly excellent responses evident, demonstrating a clear understanding of the requirements of the specification.

In the scenario for this series, candidates worked as interns at BritishMotn Films to develop a new crime drama, 'Harrison's End', for the streaming service UKFLX. It was clear that many candidates understood the brief and were well prepared for the structure and style of the examination. Timing also seemed like less of an issue with this series, with most candidates completing the paper in full.

To do well on this paper, candidates needed to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of time constraints, target audience factors, purpose of different resources, health and safety, purpose of different planning documentation, as well as ethical issues. For the two design questions, candidates were asked to apply their knowledge and understanding to create a storyboard and production schedule. They were also asked to apply their knowledge and understanding to evaluate planning and pre-production documentation, in this series, a treatment.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• managed their timing well and completed the paper in full</li> <li>• read and understood the specific requirements of the questions</li> <li>• demonstrated an understanding of the brief and engaged fluidly with the questions</li> <li>• contextualised their responses appropriately using the brief</li> <li>• could confidently use terminology appropriately as relevant to the question</li> <li>• wrote in depth, especially in Question 10, evaluating the effectiveness of the stated pre-production document.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• did not manage their timing well</li> <li>• did not engage with or misread the question and provided generic responses</li> <li>• did not understand the brief and made sweeping generalisations without reference to the brief</li> <li>• wrote short or descriptive responses</li> <li>• did not use terminology well.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

Planning a new crime drama series for UKFLX proved to be an engaging scenario, and it was clear that candidates understood the demands of the brief. Candidates who wrote in detail, often contextualising their responses within the brief, achieved the highest marks. However, it seems that some candidates did not read the questions properly and either misinterpreted the question or missed a key requirement. Centres should encourage their candidates to highlight command words in the question, as well as the key aspects the question is asking them to address.

### Question 1 (a)

1

(a) Identify **three** skills that Ali will use in her job role.

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

[3]

This was a relatively straightforward question, and most candidates identified relevant skills that Ali could use in her job role. Given that Ali's job role is a casting and location director, the most popular responses were related to organisation, decision-making, budgeting, and creativity.

The most common misconception in this question was candidates identifying key aspects of Ali's job role rather than the skills she would require in her role.

There were also instances where candidates identified brief requirements as opposed to skills relevant to job roles in the digital media industry. Some candidates also misread this question and discussed James or Nina, which was incorrect.

## Question 1 (b)

(b) Identify and explain **one** time constraint that James will face when planning 'Harrison's End'.

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..... [3]

There were two key time constraints mentioned in the last paragraph of the brief, yet some candidates made this question more challenging by alluding to implied time constraints, such as James having to complete a risk assessment, or deal with copyright situations. Given that a wide range of possible time constraints could be implied from the brief, if candidates alluded to the possibility of a delay or a hold-up due to the factor they identified, they could still access all 3 marks.

## Question 2

- 2 Identify and explain **two** implications that the genre and type of media production UKFLX has commissioned will have on the planning process.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[6]

This question received mixed responses from candidates, as they did not always fully understand the genre and type of media production that 'Harrison's End' was. Candidates could consider a wide range of implications, such as: the target audience, the narrative of crime dramas, the casting implications for a television drama series, the distribution platform being a streaming service and the budget for the drama.

Candidates who grasped what the question was asking frequently identified a valid implication, explained it, and then contextualised it within the brief. Generally, candidates could articulate why the crime drama genre would influence the planning process but did not connect it directly to the brief. The implications of the type of media production, such as 'Harrison's End' being a television drama with an episodic structure, were typically not well considered by candidates. However, if candidates discussed two plausible genre implications, they could still access the full range of marks for this question.

### Question 3

**3** Identify **four** client requirements, other than the time constraints, from the product brief.

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

**[4]**

This question was exceptionally well answered by candidates. There were a wide range of possible responses, and if they were relevant to the brief, marks were given.

The most common misconception was candidates not reading the question properly and identifying time constraints instead.



## Question 4 (a)

4

- (a) Identify and explain **two** target audience factors that the team will need to consider when planning the pilot episode.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[6]

Candidates generally answered this question well, clearly demonstrating understanding of target audience factors and often using their knowledge from Unit 1 to explain how this would impact the content of the crime drama, especially the pilot episode. A common response noted that, since the audience is 25 and over, more explicit content and language could be used. Candidates also used their understanding of the genre from Question 2 to explain how this would appeal to audiences who enjoy crime and mystery programmes. Impressive use of terminology was seen, including terms like enigmas, red herrings, and complex narrative structure.

## Question 4 (b)

(b) Identify **one** resource that Nina will need, to complete her job roles.

Explain why this resource is needed.

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..... [3]

This question was exceptionally well answered by the candidates. There were a variety of plausible resources that Nina could use, and it was rewarding to see candidates contextualise their responses and reasoning within the brief. The most frequent responses to this question centred around specific types of hardware (such as laptops) or software (like Celtx for screenwriting). The usefulness of these tools was commonly highlighted in terms of their ability to facilitate quick revisions, the ability of sharing with colleagues and allowing for digital storage.

When candidates did not score full marks for this question, it was predominantly because they misread the question and discussed another member of the team. However, if the resource was plausible, then 1 identification mark was still given.

## Question 5 (a)

5

- (a) Identify **two** project milestones that James could include on a production schedule for the fictional crime drama.

1 .....

2 ..... [2]

This was another well answered question, and candidates often used the words 'completed' or 'finished' to clearly indicate that what they identified was a project milestone.

## Question 5 (b)

- (b) Explain **one** reason why health and safety documentation would be needed when completing the test footage.

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.....  
..... [3]

This question received mixed responses from candidates. Some provided very generic explanations as to why health and safety documentation is required, while others briefly contextualised it within the brief. Only a minority explained why it would be needed when filming the test footage. Given that the command word in this question is 'explain', it is important that candidates elaborate on why specific health and safety documentation, such as a location recce or a risk assessment, must be conducted to protect the staff and actors on set while filming the test footage.

More successful responses typically highlighted specific risks associated with filming the test footage and explained how certain safety documentation could help prevent these issues from occurring.

## Question 6

6 Nina has completed the screenplay and shooting script. She has asked you to review them.

Compare the **similarities** and **differences** between a screenplay and a shooting script.

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..... [8]

This question was generally well answered by candidates. As the term 'screenplay' is not specified in the unit content, candidates who explained one or both documents in detail without any comparison were able to achieve the full range of marks.

Responses typically demonstrated an accurate knowledge and understanding of a shooting script and used this knowledge to compare how these two planning documents are similar and/or different. Candidates who understood one or both planning documents generally responded to the question well; however, some candidates did not appear to be familiar with a shooting script despite it being listed in the specification as a required planning document.

More successful responses often dealt with the question chronologically, first explaining what a screenplay is, then what a shooting script is, and finally identifying at least one similarity and one difference. The best responses linked their points to the brief and explained how each document would be useful to the different staff members at BritishMotn Films. Some candidates demonstrated excellent understanding of the real-world application of these documents. For example, some candidates discussed how screenplays are used at table readings and are generally more useful to actors and directors, whereas shooting scripts are more technical and therefore more useful to the crew on set for staging and executing technical aspects of the shoot. Where such knowledge and understanding were demonstrated, candidates often achieved full marks for this question.

Less successful responses did not understand the purpose of a shooting script. Some candidates incorrectly explained that shooting scripts are used at table readings. Less successful candidates still often correctly identified that both documents share some similarities in their format and structure, and that both can be used on set while filming, and were therefore rewarded for this.

## Exemplar 1

The similarities of a screenplay and shooting script is that they will both include the typical script conventions e.g. dialogue, page numbers, <sup>line numbers</sup> scene numbers, <sup>\*</sup>location<sup>4</sup> e.g. Warchester coffee shop INT. (meaning interior). The screenplay and shooting script both give the actors ideas/mental picture of what they will be doing and how it will look.

<sup>\*</sup>, stage directions

However, a shooting script has a higher level of detail as it includes, sound effects, camera angles, camera movements, camera shots<sup>transitions</sup> etc, whereas the screenplay does not. It includes this extra information as this script is also used for/by the camera crew/operators, producers and directors. This is so they can visually see what the plan looks like in real life then make their own creative decisions as to what will look better for the final programme and what runs smoother etc. [8]

Exemplar 1 demonstrates a clear, detailed, and excellent comparison of a screenplay and a shooting script. The response addresses the question chronologically. The candidate also has a very good understanding of these two planning documents and uses this knowledge to explain how they could be used in the brief.

## Question 7

7 Explain **two** ethical issues Ali will need to consider during the casting process.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[4]

This question was generally well answered because candidates showed a clear understanding of the ethical issues Ali must consider during the casting process. Many candidates considered factors like class, age, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality and how these would need to be considered by Ali when casting for the various roles in 'Harrison's End'. Impressive responses were seen to this question, too, where candidates considered factors like the gender pay gap, typecasting and stereotyping practices, and the reputation of actors.

## Section B overview

Some truly excellent responses were seen in the two design questions in this series, demonstrating that candidates and centres are taking feedback on board from previous series. The storyboard question elicited some very impressive work. Question 9 showed a significant improvement in the responses to a production schedule since the January 2024 series.

### Question 8

**8** You are helping Nina visually plan the pilot episode of 'Harrison's End'.

In the space below, create a **storyboard** of the one-minute opening scene of the pilot episode. The scene will feature **before** the title sequence. You should consider the specifics provided in the product brief.

Marks will be awarded for:

- content
- fitness for purpose.

[9]

This question elicited some truly remarkable responses given the timed conditions. It was clear that candidates had extensive practice in creating storyboards and some candidates had comprehensive understanding of the conventions associated with this planning document.

A key point to emphasise is that candidates must carefully read the question. Some candidates produced very generic storyboards that only briefly linked to the brief, while others missed the question completely and created storyboards for unrelated topics, such as a drinks advert. Understanding the question is crucial in these instances. The marks given are based on both the content, which includes ideas related to the brief, and fitness for purpose, which includes demonstrating an understanding of storyboard conventions and their application in the context of the brief.

Where candidates lost marks on this question, it was typically due to not including the required conventions of a storyboard. The use of the camera was often well done, and even if not explicitly mentioned by the candidate, examiners could usually infer this from the candidates' drawings. However, it was evident that candidates often spent too much time creating their drawings without incorporating essential technical details like scene numbers, timings, and sound information which centres should encourage the use of in the future.

#### Key point

The range of pre-production documents which candidates are expected to have knowledge and understanding of are detailed in the unit specification. The same range of documents are included in the endorsed textbook. Candidates should be using this documentation in practical activities, which would further embed their layout characteristics and use in a vocational context.

#### Key point

Candidates should use the dotted lines to specify the camerawork, sound and timing as well as providing a brief overview of what is happening in that particular frame.

## Question 9

- 9 You are creating a production document to help James manage the tasks and activities in the project.

In the space below, create a **production schedule** that outlines the main tasks, activities, and timeframes the team need to complete to plan, film and publish the pilot episode.

Marks will be awarded for:

- content
- layout
- fitness for purpose.

There were marked improvements in this planning document compared to previous series. There were fewer instances of candidates presenting information in a haphazard, random table format. For the most part, candidates approached this question well and often presented relevant tasks and activities, assigned relevant staff members, and identified key milestones and resources required for the project.

This question required candidates to create a production schedule to assist James in managing tasks and activities for the project. The brief explicitly states that the final deliverables are due in six months, yet many candidates did not reflect this timeframe in their schedules, often planning only for a single day or the initial few weeks. A significant number of candidates also frequently neglected to include contingencies in their plans.



## Question 10\*

**10\*** James has completed a **treatment** so that his planning ideas are clearly understood by UKFLX and their potential sponsors.

Evaluate the effectiveness of creating a **treatment** as part of the pre-production and planning process for 'Harrison's End'.

Use the content from the product brief to support your answer.

[20]

This question was largely well answered by candidates who were prepared and had a good understanding of a treatment and its purpose in pitching ideas. It is important to stress that the command word in this question is 'evaluate'. While marks are given for knowledge and understanding of the purpose and use of a treatment, candidates are primarily assessed on their evaluation of how useful (or not) this might be to the production team, in this case, James, the production manager.

More successful responses were structured around the use and purpose of a treatment and how it might be used in the planning and pre-production process for 'Harrison's End'. Candidates often supported their points with clear and detailed references to the brief while using evaluative language to explain why it might be useful at different stages and times. Many responses evaluated why a treatment might be useful for showing sponsorship opportunities in 'Harrison's End', and how it might (or not) be useful for sponsors to see if their brand ethos fit that of the new crime drama / UXFLX.

Less successful responses often did not understand what a treatment was, and their responses were largely structured around a planning document they felt more secure in discussing. This approach was problematic as it did not answer the question, limiting them to a maximum of Level 1. Other less successful responses often did not address all requirements of the question; for example, they might have explained what a treatment was, briefly applied its use and purpose to the brief, but then neglected to evaluate its effectiveness. This was also problematic as the mark scheme descriptors required evaluation to move out of Level 1, and the omission of this significantly impacted the mark a candidate could achieve. Many of the less successful responses operated at this level because of this.

Many candidates spend too much time in their response suggesting more appropriate planning/pre-production documents. While this is an effective way of evaluating the effectiveness of a document, candidates often made this the focus of their response and so neglected a key requirement of the question. Centres should encourage candidates to limit their use of this approach and perhaps even leave it towards the end of the response after they have fully evaluated the effectiveness of the document in the first instance.

There is a comprehensive list of pre-production and planning documents in the specification that candidates should have the opportunity to discuss as part of teaching and learning. It is recommended that all materials are covered, as it was evident in some cases that candidates did not know what a treatment was.

## Exemplar 2

A treatment document is a pre-production tool that illustrates the synopsis/brief version of what the plot of the series and/or singular episode is. This document allows the company to share a brief summary of the purpose/storyline of the TV programme "Harrison's End". This means that the treatment will need to ~~include~~ "features" include details about "opportunities to attract appropriate sponsors" as stated in the brief. For example, if there is a good coffee shop in Warchester, this could be used as an inspiration/or be used to film some of the scenes of the TV show so then this coffee shop becomes an icon within the show and that coffee shop can attract more customers in real life, thus boosting their own revenue.

However, a treatment sheet is only a brief/vague document that doesn't do justice to the programmes full potential. So, instead of using a treatment sheet as part of making sponsors understand the ideas for the show. UKF-LX could communicate via mobile with the owners of local food + drink and technology companies and organise dates for them to

## Exemplar 3

A treatment is a document where all the information regarding the planning and pre-production is collated. It usually has more detail than an original proposal. It would provide the client with a detailed, descriptive overview as to what ~~the~~ will be included. For example the treatment could include information about the target audience, planning stages, such as moodboards, mindmaps and blue sky thinking techniques. ~~UKFLX~~<sup>James</sup> could include a storyboard of how the film will run, alongside that it could have a set design of where they will be filming and the camera positions. This gives ~~the~~ UKFLX and their potential owners <sup>full</sup> an idea of the planning and prep gone into it.

Here you can see two very different approaches to this type of question.

Exemplar 2 shows the opening of a response which received a middle Level 4 mark. The response opens perceptively and lucidly, demonstrating a clear understanding of the treatment's role in producing a new television crime drama. It thoroughly contextualises a treatment within the nuances of the brief and provides an evaluative point on why a treatment may be useful in attracting sponsors. Overall, the response demonstrates a convincing and excellent knowledge and understanding of treatments and their purpose and effectiveness in presenting ideas to potential sponsors.

Exemplar 3 shows the opening of a response which received a high Level 2 mark. The opening demonstrates understanding of what a treatment is, however, it is largely generic and lacks specific references to the brief. The candidate suggests that other pre-production documents need to be used alongside a treatment, which is valid, but the response then shifts focus to explaining the usefulness of those other pre-production documents. This detracts from the focus of the question, which is to evaluate the effectiveness of using a treatment.

## Assessment for learning



Centres should provide a wide range of opportunities for candidates to apply exam technique skills, particularly for Question 10. Focus should be on breaking down the question, understanding the purpose of the document, and using the brief to contextualise their points.

Candidates should also practise using evaluative language in their responses to fully demonstrate to the examiner their understanding of the pre-production/planning document and its advantages and disadvantages.

Creating a short plan before beginning the response, noting down some advantages and disadvantages of the document in question, might benefit candidates in the future.

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