

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR GCE AS AND A LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES



JULY 2016

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This is a **Regulatory Document** under **Condition B7** of the *Interim Standard Conditions of Recognition¹: Compliance with Regulatory Documents*.

¹ <http://qualificationswales.org/regulation/monitoring-awarding-bodies/?lang=en&>

Introduction

This document sets out the approval criteria for AS and A Level Media Studies qualifications. These have been developed through stakeholder engagement and public consultation. They include the requirements that an awarding body must meet when developing the specification and assessment materials for the qualification.

The approval criteria in this document will come into effect from 18 July 2016.

Qualifications Wales will only approve qualifications that meet all of the requirements set out in this document together with those set out in the *GCE AS and A Level Qualification Approval Criteria*² and *Interim Standard Conditions of Recognition*³. In developing qualifications to meet these requirements awarding bodies must have regard to *Fair Access by Design*⁴.

Where the requirements of the Subject Approval Criteria set out in this document differ from those prescribed in the *GCE AS and A Level Qualifications Approval Criteria* and the *Interim Standard Conditions of Recognition*, the requirements in this document will take precedence.

² <http://qualificationswales.org/regulation/approved-and-designated-qualifications/as-a-level-approval-criteria-july-2016/?lang=en>

³ <http://qualificationswales.org/regulation/monitoring-awarding-bodies/?lang=en&>

⁴ <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150727-fair-access-by-design-en.pdf>

Subject aims and objectives

1. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must enable learners to:
 - 1.1. understand the relevance and impact of the media and its role in their daily lives;
 - 1.2. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the global nature of the media;
 - 1.3. develop skills of enquiry, critical understanding and analysis of the media through engagement with media products and concepts and through the creative application of practical skills;
 - 1.4. explore and understand relevant contexts of media;
 - 1.5. develop an understanding of the dynamic and changing relationships between media forms, products, media industries and audiences;
 - 1.6. develop their independence when researching and creating practical work and forming their own views and interpretations;
 - 1.7. analyse and apply critical perspectives to media products;
 - 1.8. evaluate their own practical work.

Subject content

2. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must reflect the subject aims and objectives in the content.
3. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications should build on learners' informal learning, prior experience of media in Key Stages 1 to 3 and the knowledge, understanding and skills established at Key Stage 4.
4. At AS, Media Studies specifications should introduce learners to a range of media products, concepts and critical perspectives.
5. At A2, learners should be able to synthesise the knowledge, understanding and skills gained at AS, demonstrating the ability to engage with increasingly complex and sophisticated ideas. They should also experience a wider range of critical perspectives, developing and demonstrating an understanding of how wider contexts such as social, cultural, and historical factors shape the creation of meanings and responses.

Knowledge and understanding

6. Key media concepts

AS and A Level specifications must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following key media concepts and relevant critical perspectives:

6.1. Media language

6.1.1. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how media language, codes and conventions create meanings.

6.1.2. At AS, Media Studies specifications must require learners to know, understand and be able to apply the following critical perspectives:

- i. semiotics;
- ii. narratology
- iii. genre theory.

6.1.3. At A2, Media Studies specifications must require learners to know, understand and be able to apply the following critical perspectives:

- i. structuralism;
- ii. post-modernism.

6.2. Media representation

6.2.1. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how the media represents events, issues, places and social/cultural groups.

6.2.2. At AS, Media Studies specifications must require learners to know, understand and be able to apply critical perspectives on:

- i. representation;
- ii. identity;

6.2.3. At A2, Media Studies specifications must require learners to know, understand and be able to apply critical perspectives on:

- i. gender;
- ii. ethnicity.

6.3. Media industries

6.3.1. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media industries' processes of production and distribution.

- i. At AS Media Studies specifications must require learners to understand the significance of patterns of ownership and control and economic factors;
- ii. In addition, at A2 Media Studies specifications must require learners to understand the regulatory framework of contemporary media industries in the UK.

6.4. Media audiences

6.4.1. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how different audiences/users respond to and interact with media products and processes.

6.4.2. At AS, Media Studies specifications must require learners to know, understand and be able to apply the following critical perspectives:

- i. media effects theory;
- ii. cultivation theory.

6.4.3. At A2, Media Studies specifications must require learners to know, understand and be able to apply critical perspectives on:

- i. fandom.

6. Media forms

6.1. Taken together, AS and A2 learners must be required to study the following media forms:

- television
- film
- radio
- newspapers
- magazines
- advertising and marketing
- video games
- music videos

6.2. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must require learners to study relevant examples of media products to demonstrate, where appropriate, the relationship between media forms and online platforms.

Media products

8. At AS and A2 learners must be required to study in depth, three contrasting media forms. For one of the media forms the media product must be set by the awarding body.
9. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must provide learners with a choice of media products to study.
10. Taken together, AS and A2 must require learners to study contrasting media products which:
 - 10.1 possess cultural, social and historical significance;
 - 10.2 and provide rich and challenging opportunities for interpretation and analysis, enabling learners to develop a detailed understanding of how the media communicate meanings;
 - 10.3 demonstrate emerging, future developments of the media;
 - 10.4 include a Welsh dimension⁵.
11. AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must require learners to study media products which encompass different historical periods and intended audiences.
12. Taken together, AS and A2 Media Studies specifications must require a learner to study at least one product aimed at an audience which is neither English nor Welsh speaking.

Skills

13. AS and A2 Media Studies specifications must require learners to develop the ability to:
 - 13.1. use media terminology appropriately;
 - 13.2. research, plan, construct and evaluate media products;
 - 13.3 apply their knowledge and understanding of media concepts through analysis and interpretation of media products;
 - 13.4. apply critical perspectives and subject specific terminology to develop an argument.
14. A2 Media Studies specifications must require learners to develop the ability to:
 - 14.1. engage with increasingly complex and sophisticated ideas, concepts and critical perspectives;

⁵ Welsh dimension includes media products a) produced by the media industry in Wales, and/or b) set mainly in Wales and/or c) intended for a Welsh audience.

14.2. make connections between media products, concepts, contexts and critical perspectives;

14.3. use research in a focused way to support a specific outcome.

Assessment objectives and their weightings

15. The assessment of the knowledge, understanding, and skills required in the specification must target the following assessment objectives in line with the indicated weightings:

Objective	Requirements	Weighting		
		AS	A2	Full A Level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the key concepts and critical perspectives of media studies; and at A2, contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes. 	30%	30%	30%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media studies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyse media products, and at A2, in relation to their contexts, using critical perspectives as appropriate; evaluate their own practical work. 	35%	35%	35%
AO3	Research, develop and create media products for an intended audience, applying knowledge and understanding of key concepts of media studies.	35%	35%	35%

Scheme of assessment

16. A Level Media Studies specifications (at AS and A2) will have 40 per cent of assessment weighting allocated to non-examination assessment.

17. The non-examination assessment must be designed and set:

17.1 on the basis that it should be completed by each Learner during periods of assessment totalling specified hours;

- 17.2 to be taken under conditions specified by the awarding organisation, including, in particular, conditions which ensure that the evidence generated by each learner can be authenticated;
- 17.3 to ensure that each learner is assessed on their individual contribution to the research, planning, development, creation and evaluation of one media production.
18. The non-examination assessment undertaken in AS Media Studies will require learners to produce one media production with assessment of individual research, development and evaluation, applying knowledge and understanding of the key concepts in media studies. Briefs will be reviewed annually by the awarding body.
19. The non-examination assessment undertaken in A2 Media Studies will require learners to produce one cross-media production, with assessment of individual research, development and evaluation, applying knowledge and understanding of the key concepts in media studies and the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media. Briefs will be reviewed annually by the awarding body.

Rationale Required: On submitting the GCE Media Studies proposals to Qualifications Wales for approval, the awarding body is required to provide rationale to show how the assessment briefs are set and reviewed.

**Further
information**

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