

# **GCE AS AND A LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES**



**Summary of decisions and analysis of responses  
to our consultation on reforming GCE AS and  
A Level Media Studies for first teaching in  
September 2017**

# Summary of decisions and analysis of responses to our consultation on reforming GCE AS and A level Media Studies for first teaching in 2017

## **Executive Summary**

Between 4 April and 15 May 2016, Qualifications Wales consulted on proposals for reformed GCE AS and A Level Media Studies qualifications to be Approved for first teaching in Wales from September 2017. A copy of the consultation proposals and questions is available at [this link](#).

In July 2016 we published *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup>, which set out the detailed requirements for how the reformed qualifications should be designed and assessed. The requirements are informed by the responses to our consultation and by views expressed by learners through a supplementary engagement exercise.

This report summarises the responses we received to the consultation of the proposals and explains the decisions that we took in light of these, which are reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup>.

This report is available in English and in Welsh. Respondents' comments have been translated, where appropriate, in accordance with the language of the report.

Percentages used throughout this document have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

## **Background**

AS and A Level Media Studies is being reformed in Wales for first teaching from September 2017, as part of a wider programme of reforms to GCSEs, AS and A Levels. The only awarding body who will develop and offer the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies qualification in Wales will be WJEC, as it is the only awarding body who has agreed to develop reformed AS and A Levels designed specifically for award in Wales.

The proposals on which we consulted were developed through engagement with a number of stakeholders including the awarding body WJEC, schools and further education institutions (FEIs), higher education institutions (HEIs) and the Welsh Government (WG).

## **Summary of proposals and decisions**

### *Aims and objectives*

Following the consultation, we have made a number of amendments to the aims and objectives of the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies qualification.

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<sup>1</sup> [Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies](#)

## *Content*

Following the consultation, we have made a number of changes to the proposed subject content which include:

- removing online, social and participatory media from the required media forms
- requiring learners to study in depth three contrasting media forms, one of which is to be set by the awarding body
- requiring learners to study at least one English or Welsh medium product and one non-English/Welsh medium product.

## *Assessment objectives*

We have made a number of amendments to the assessment objectives and weightings of the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies qualification.

## *Assessment*

We have broadly retained the proposed assessment methodologies in the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies qualification.

## **Consultation responses**

In total, 8 respondents completed all, or part of, the online consultation for AS and A Level Media Studies. Of these, the majority of respondents identified themselves as teachers or lecturers and two respondents identified themselves as other.

## **Subject aims and objectives**

For the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies qualification we proposed the following subject aims and objectives:

*AS and A Level specifications in media studies should encourage learners to:*

- *enhance their enjoyment and appreciation of the media and its role in their daily lives;*
- *develop critical understanding of the media through engagement with media products and concepts and through the creative application of practical skills;*
- *explore production processes, technologies and other relevant contexts;*
- *become independent in research skills and their application, in their practical work and in developing their own views and interpretations.*

*Learners are required to:*

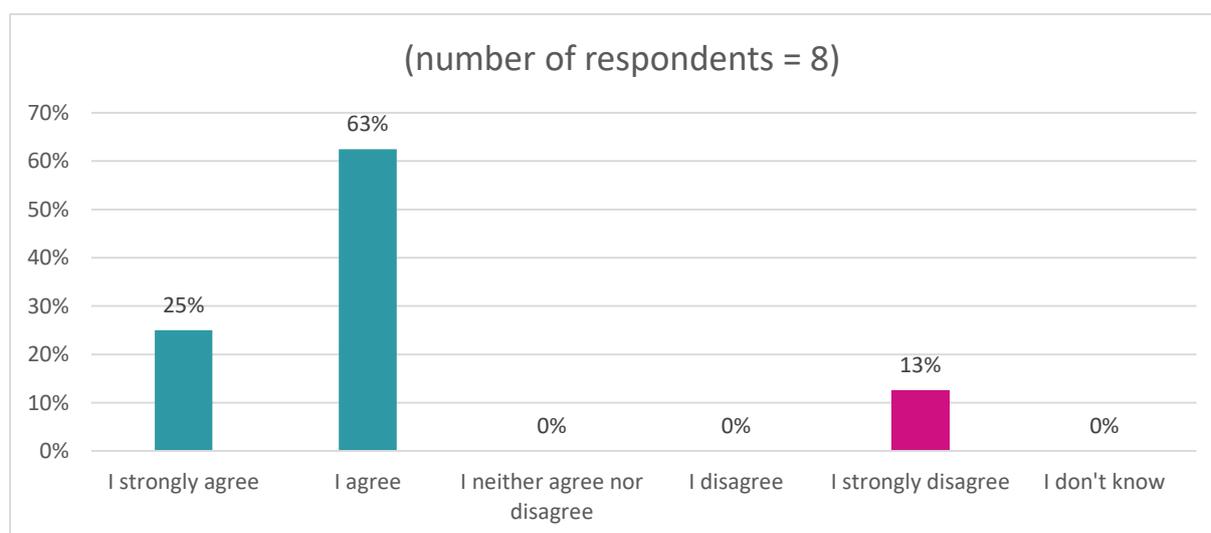
- *analyse media products;*
- *evaluate their own work;*
- *evaluate academic theories.*

In our consultation, we asked:

**Q1: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed subject aims for the new AS and A Level Media Studies in Wales?**

As illustrated in Chart 1 below, 88% of those who responded to question 1 agreed or strongly agreed with our proposal and 13% strongly disagreed.

Chart 1. showing responses to question 1 of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.



- One respondent who agreed with the proposal stated that the proposal is “promising but some aspects are still concerning and need reflection”.
- A respondent who disagreed with the proposal stated “this is inappropriately demanding and out of line with requirements for England”.

Following the consultation, we have made a number of amendments to the subject aims and objectives. As a result, the subject aims and objectives reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup> are as follows:

- *AS and A Level Media Studies specifications must enable learners to:*
  - *understand the relevance and impact of the media and its role in their daily lives;*
  - *demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the global nature of the media;*
  - *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;*
  - *explore and understand relevant contexts of media;*

- *develop an understanding of the dynamic and changing relationships between media forms, products, media industries and audiences;*
- *develop their independence when researching and creating practical work and forming their own views and interpretations;*
- *analyse and apply critical perspectives to media products;*
- *evaluate their own practical work.*

**Subject content**

**Theories and Theorists**

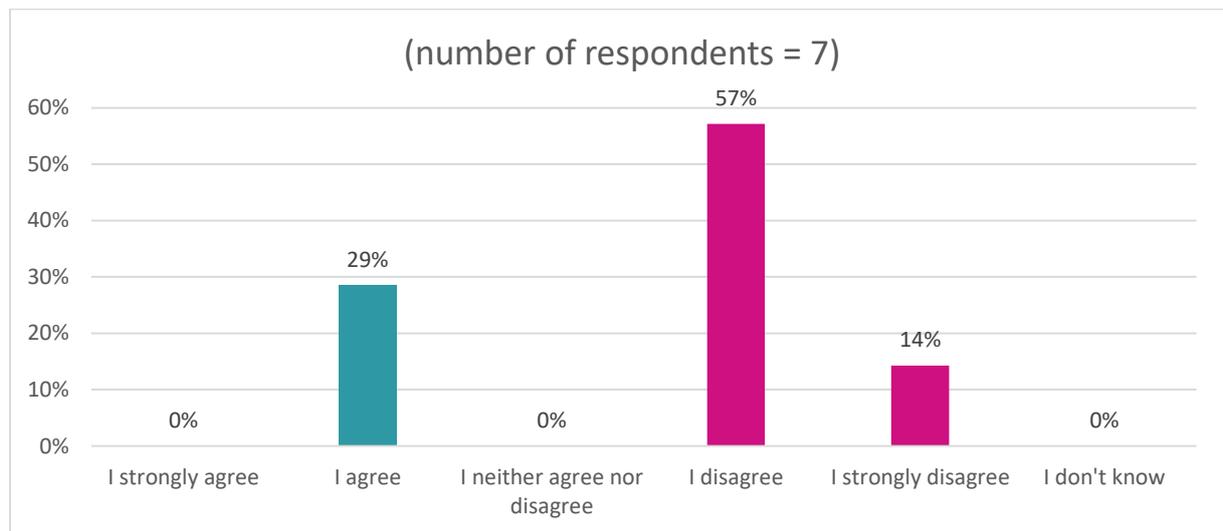
We proposed that the inclusion of theories is required within the subject content for the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies. However, the theorist to be studied alongside each theory should not be prescribed and should be included as indicative content.

In our consultation, we asked:

***Q2a: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the subject content for A Level Media Studies in Wales should include prescribed theories?***

As shown in Chart 2 below, 29% of respondents agreed with the proposal and 71% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

*Chart 2. showing responses to question 2a of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.*



- One respondent who agreed with the proposal commented that “historical context is important”.
- One respondent who strongly disagreed with the proposal stated that:

”It becomes very difficult to teach when the theoretical framework is prescribed. I strongly agree that teachers should teach theory but strongly disagree that the theories and theoretical framework should be dictated”

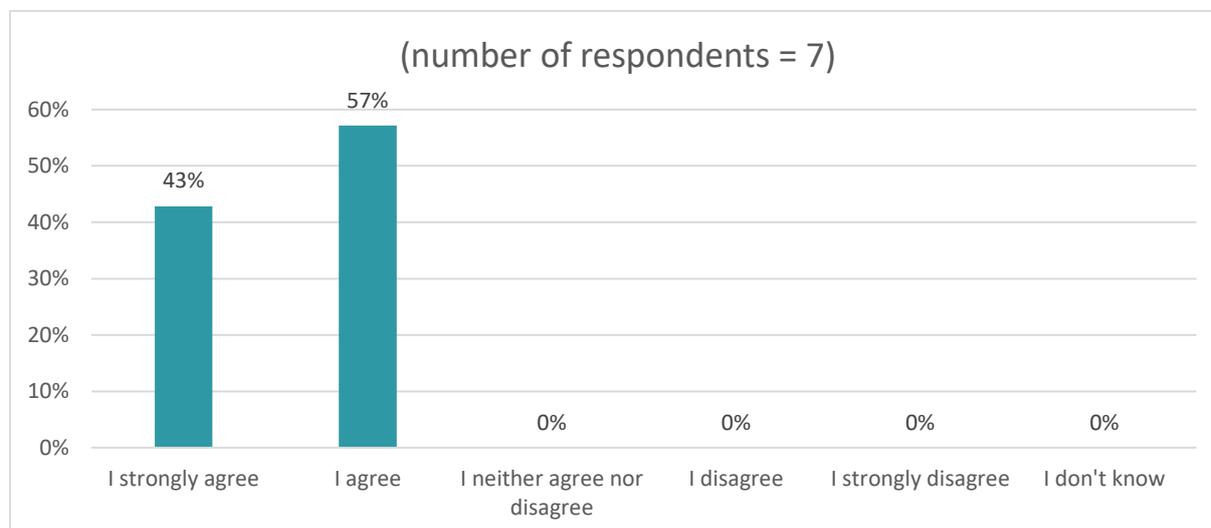
Following the consultation, we have changed prescribed theories to critical perspectives for better clarity which is reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup>.

In regards to prescribed theorists, we asked:

**Q2b: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the subject content for A Level Media Studies in Wales should not include prescribed theorists for each theory and they should be included in the indicative content?**

As illustrated in Chart 3 below, 43% of respondents strongly agreed with the proposal and 57% agreed.

*Chart 3. showing the responses to question 2b of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.*



- A respondent who strongly agreed with the proposal stated that “prescribing theorists is extremely problematic”.

The published *Approval Criteria GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup> reflects the proposal and the view of respondents.

## **Media forms**

For the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies consultation, we proposed that the subject content should cover the following media forms:

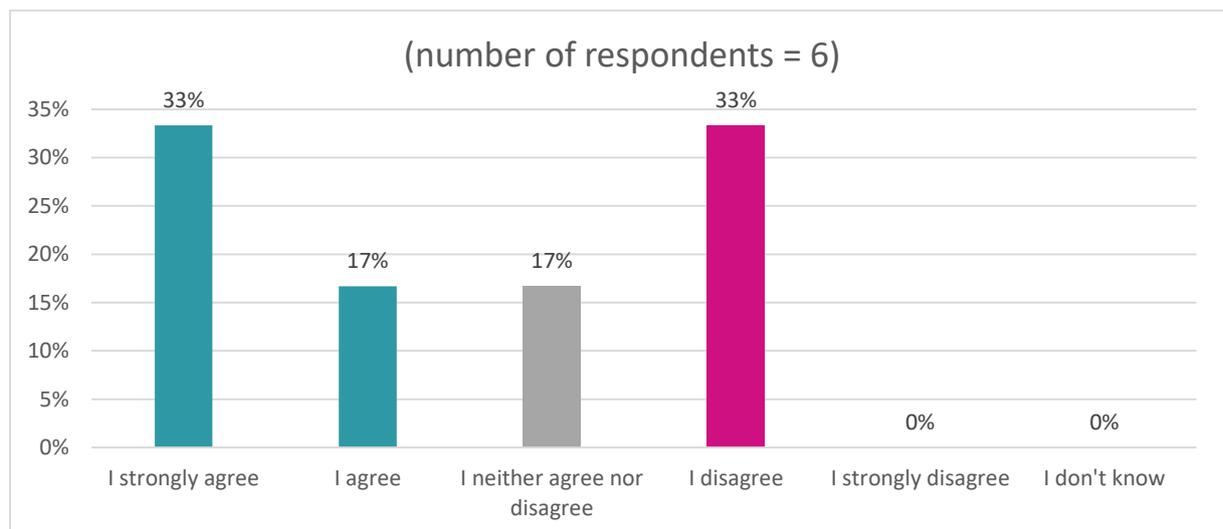
- television
- film
- radio
- newspapers
- magazines
- advertising and marketing
- online, social and participatory media
- video games
- music video

In our consultation we asked:

***Q3a: To what extent do you agree/disagree that learners should be required to study all the media forms proposed through their study?***

As shown in Chart 4 below, 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal and 33% disagreed, 17% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

*Chart 4. showing responses to questions 3a of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.*



- Two respondents who disagreed with the proposal commented that fewer forms should be studied, with one respondent stating that:

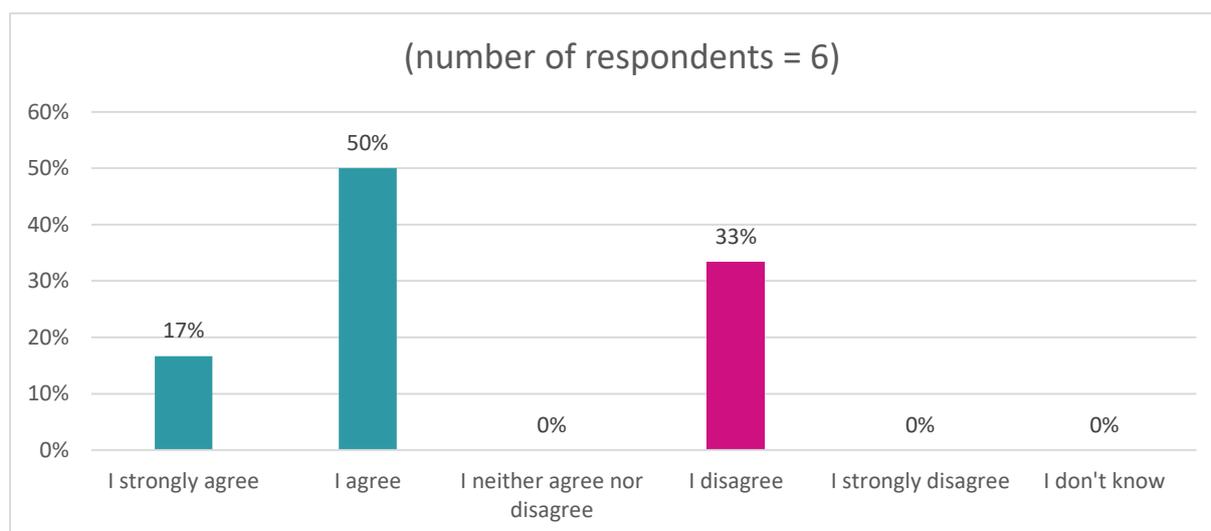
”There are too many forms here to cover appropriately in a one year course...It would be preferable to study fewer forms in greater depth, possibly with some element of choice from the overall list”

Following the consultation, we have decided to remove ‘online, social and participatory media’ from the list of required forms as they are a platform for a number of the other forms prescribed. This is reflected in the published *Approval Criteria GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup>.

**Q3b: To what extent do you agree/disagree that media forms should include a Welsh perspective where appropriate?**

As illustrated in Chart 5 below, 67% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal and 33% of respondents disagreed with the proposal

*Chart 5. showing responses to question 3b of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.*



- Two respondents who agreed with the proposal commented on the need for flexibility, stating that:
  - “Again this needs to be flexible rather than prescriptive”
  - “I agree but think that the key phrase has to be - where appropriate”
  - “A Welsh perspective should definitely be required in parts but not for all media forms”
- One respondent who disagreed with the proposal stated that “it will be difficult to find appropriate examples of some forms that have a Welsh perspective and this will restrict the options for study”.

Following the consultation, we have changed the requirement that media forms should include a Welsh perspective where appropriate, to learners must study a media product which includes a Welsh perspective as part of their course of study. This is reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup>.

### **Media Products**

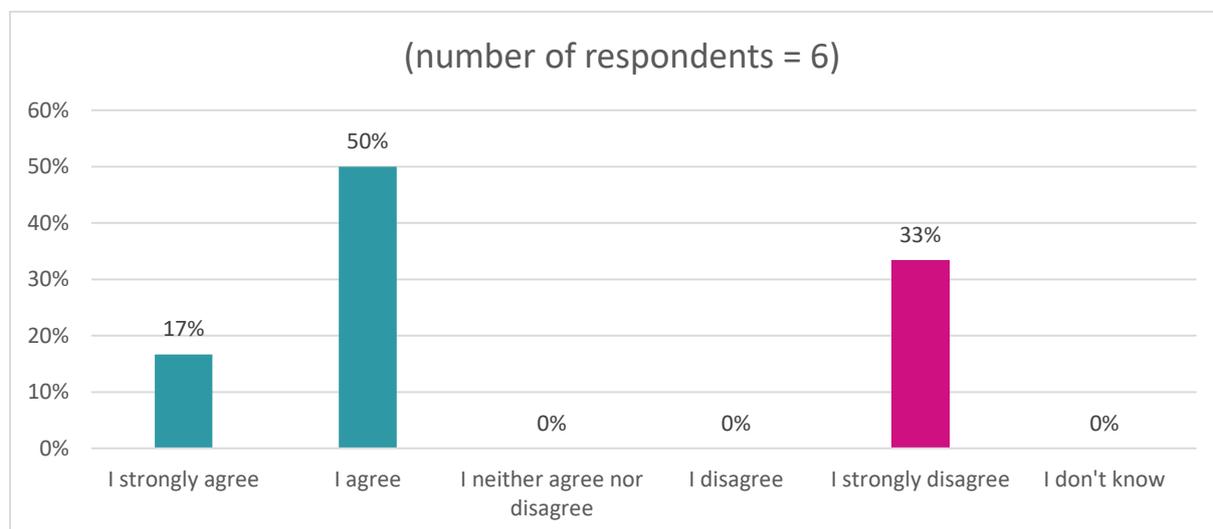
We proposed that the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies qualification should require learners to study in depth at least one audio/visual, one print and one online media form through contrasting media products set by the awarding body; also that learners must be provided with a choice of media products to study.

In our consultation, we asked:

***Q4a: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the subject content for A Level Media Studies in Wales should include set products and study in depth at least one audio/visual, one print and one online form?***

As shown in Chart 6 below, 67% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal and 33% of respondents strongly disagreed.

*Chart 6. showing responses to question 4b of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.*



- One respondent who agreed with the proposal commented that “...it is good for students to study texts in depth”.

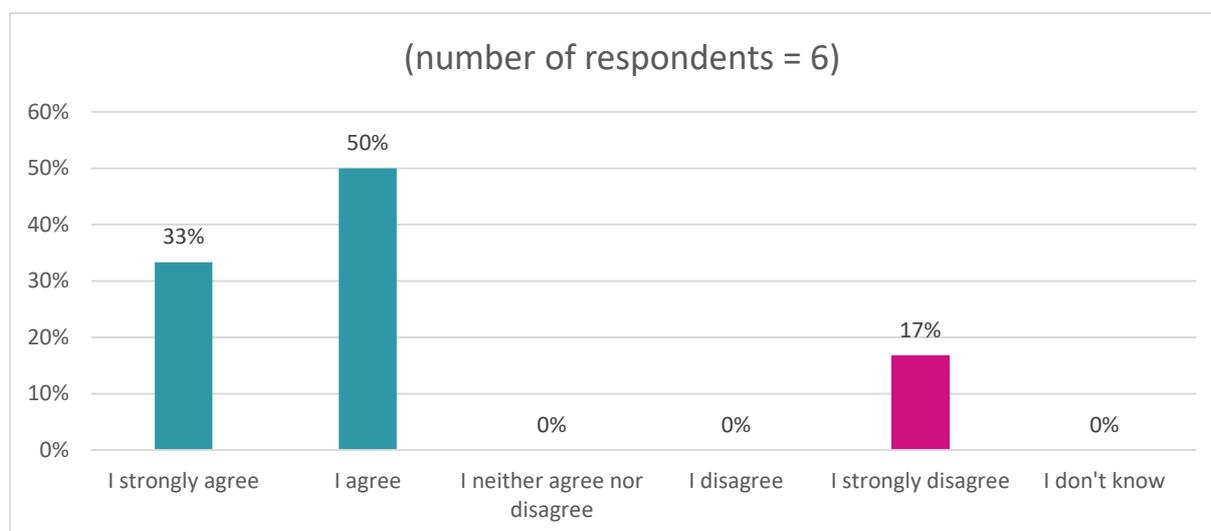
- One respondent who strongly disagreed with the proposal stated that “it is possible to set products for some forms (e.g. television), but there are real problems with trying to set products for print and online forms”.

Following the consultation, we have decided that 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. This is reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup>.

**Q4b: To what extent do you agree/disagree that A Level Media Studies in Wales should include the requirement for media products to encompass a range of structures, forms, historical periods and intended audiences?**

As shown in Chart 7 below, 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal and 17% strongly disagreed.

*Chart 7. showing responses to question 4b of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.*



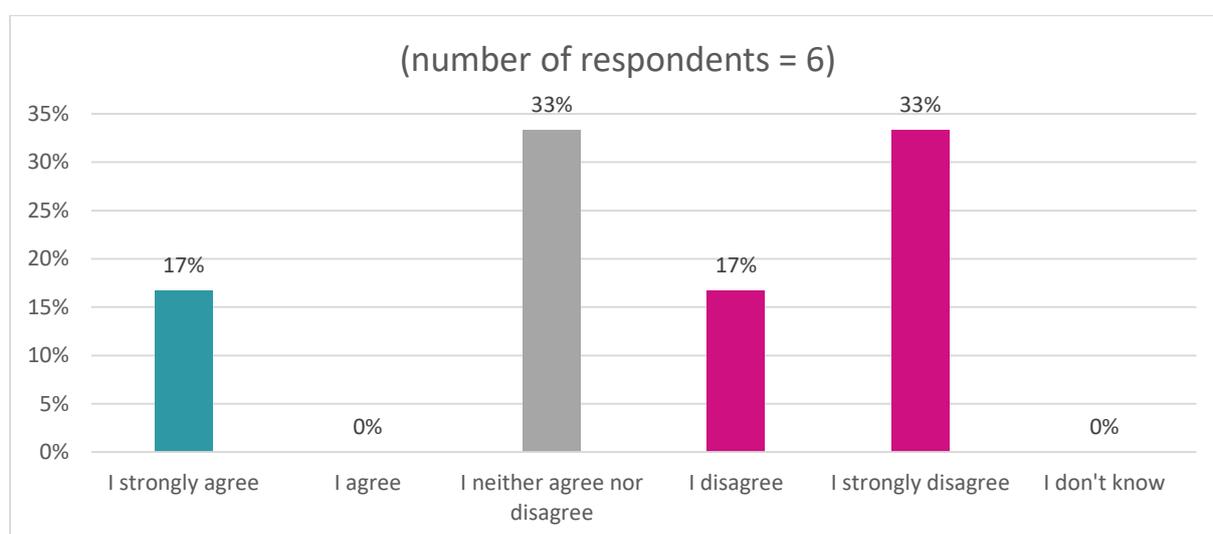
- One respondent who strongly disagreed with the proposal stated that “it should absolutely not be a requirement to study one Welsh medium product. This would be extremely restrictive and would severely limit the products that could be set.”

The published *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup> reflects the proposal and the view of the majority of respondents.

**Q4c: To what extent do you agree/disagree that A Level Media Studies in Wales should include the requirement for at least one English medium, one Welsh medium and one non-English/Welsh product to be studied?**

As illustrated in Chart 8 below, 17% of respondents strongly agreed with the proposal and 50% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Thirty three percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal.

Chart 8. showing responses to question 4b of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.



- One respondent who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal stated that “I absolutely agree that there must be a Welsh perspective; I agree that students should study a non English/Welsh text but – no matter what we do – too many students find it difficult studying a Welsh language text”.
- Respondents who disagreed with the proposal stated that “I think this will be really difficult in some cases and restrictive. A Welsh dimension or cultural perspective would be more workable”.

We have reflected on this and as a result, taken together, AS and A2 Media Studies specifications must require learners to study at least one English or Welsh medium product and one non-English/Welsh medium product. This requirement is reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup>.

## **Assessment Objectives**

Qualifications Wales proposed the following assessment objectives and weightings for the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies:

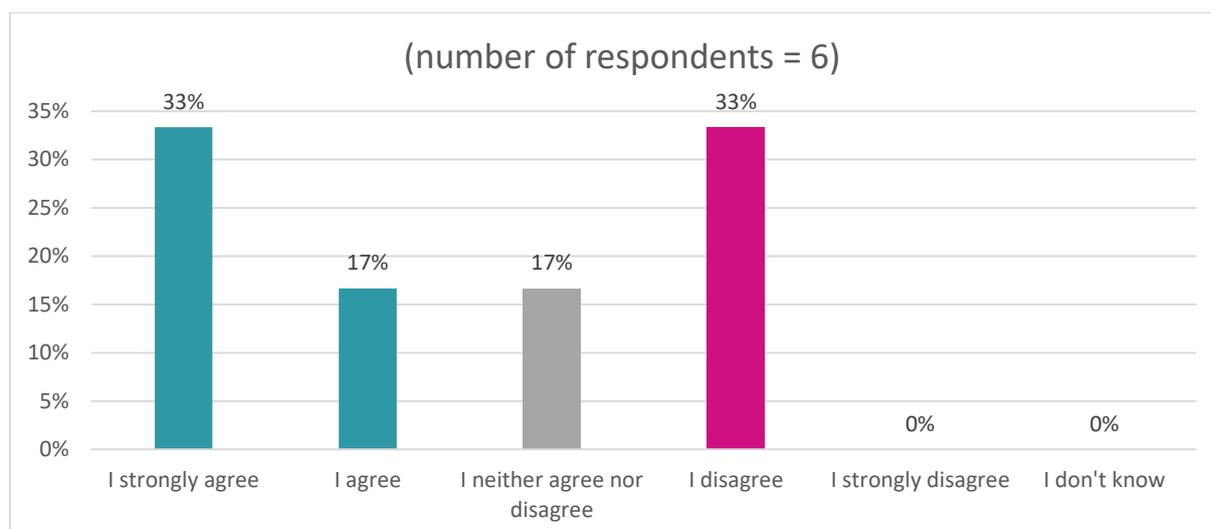
	<b>Assessment objective</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
<b>AO1</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the theoretical concepts of media studies</li><li>• contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.</li></ul>	30%
<b>AO2</b>	Apply knowledge and understanding of the conceptual framework of media studies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts, using academic theories</li><li>• evaluate their own practical work.</li></ul>	35%
<b>AO3</b>	Research, develop and create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the conceptual framework of media studies to communicate meaning.	35%

In our consultation, we asked

***Q5: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the assessment objectives and weightings proposed for A Level Media Studies in Wales?***

As shown in Chart 9 below, 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, 33% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 17% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 9. showing responses to question 5 of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.



- One respondent who agreed with the proposal commented that “these are broadly agreed but the wording of AO2 needs to change”.
- One respondent who disagreed with the proposal stated that “coursework and groupwork should be valued more”.
- A respondent who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal stated that a “60:40 split would be better”.

We have made a number of small amendments to the wording of the assessment objectives. These amendments were made to improve the clarity of wording and to reflect that theories have been changed to critical perspectives. The revised assessment objectives are:

AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the key concepts and critical perspectives of media studies; and
- at A2, contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.

AO2 Apply knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media studies to:

- analyse media products, and at A2, in relation to their contexts, using critical perspectives as appropriate;
- evaluate their own practical work.

AO3 Research, develop and create media products for an intended audience, applying knowledge and understanding of the conceptual framework of media studies.

## **Non-examined assessment**

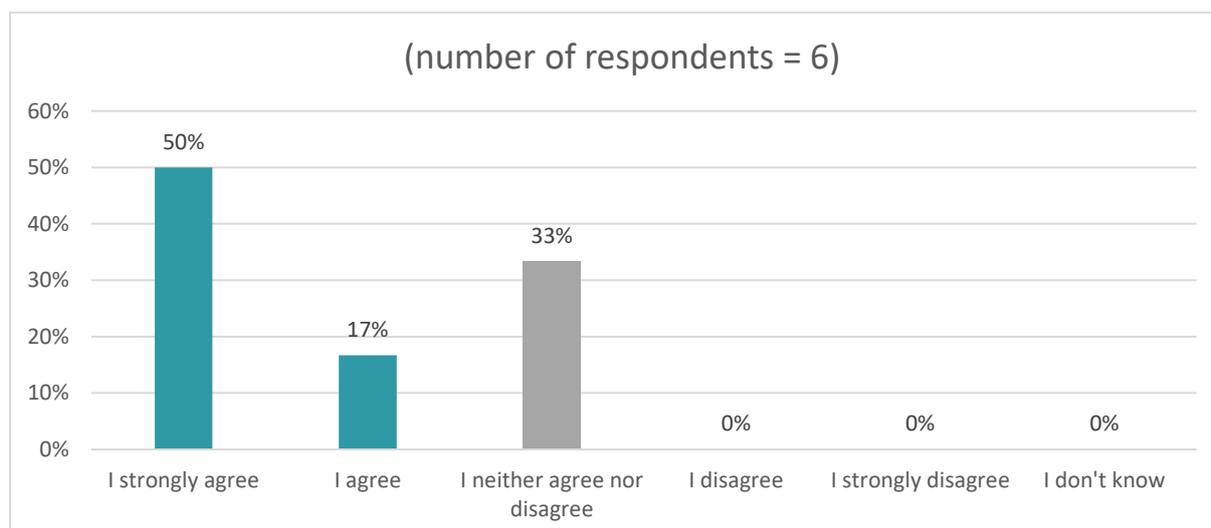
We proposed to have 40% and 60% weighting between NEA and examinations respectively in A Level Media Studies in Wales.

In our consultation, we asked:

**Q6: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to retain NEA for A Level Media Studies in Wales?**

As illustrated in Chart 10 below, 67% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal and 33% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

*Chart 10. showing responses to question 6 of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.*



- Respondents who strongly agreed with the proposal stated that:
  - “This is essential for media at AS and A2”
  - “NEA is the only valid way of assessing some of the core skills of this subject”.
- A respondent who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal commented that “I would prefer to keep the 50% balance but think that 40% / 60% is likely to be acceptable”.

The published *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup> reflects the proposal and the view of the majority of respondents.

We proposed the following requirements for the NEA components of the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies in Wales:

Qualification	Possible requirements for Wales
AS Level	One media production, with assessment of individual research, development and reflection, applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical concepts in media studies.  Briefs set by awarding body and reviewed every year.
A Level	One cross-media production, with assessment of individual research, development and reflection, applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical concepts in media studies and the digitally convergent nature of contemporary media.  Briefs set by awarding body and reviewed every year.

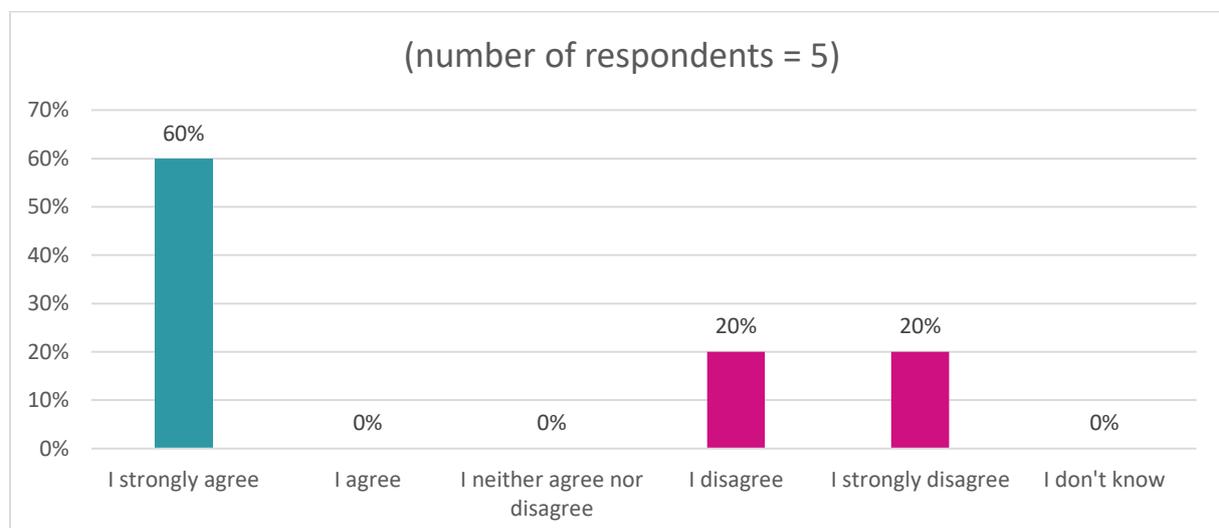
**Note: In the GCE AS and A level Media Studies consultation, an incorrect table was used in this question. Although 3 respondents were affected by this error, analysis of responses showed minimal impact.**

In our consultation, we asked:

**Q7a: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed requirements for NEA for A Level Media Studies in Wales?**

As shown in Chart 11 below 60% of respondents agreed with our proposal and 40% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Chart 11. showing responses to question 7a of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.



- One respondent who strongly agreed with our proposal commented that they “like the fact that Wales is keeping research and reflection as part of this (unlike England) but I don’t agree with changing the brief every year”.
- A respondent who strongly disagreed with the proposal stated that “there are no good reasons for the brief to change and this creates serious logistical difficulties for centres and teachers”.

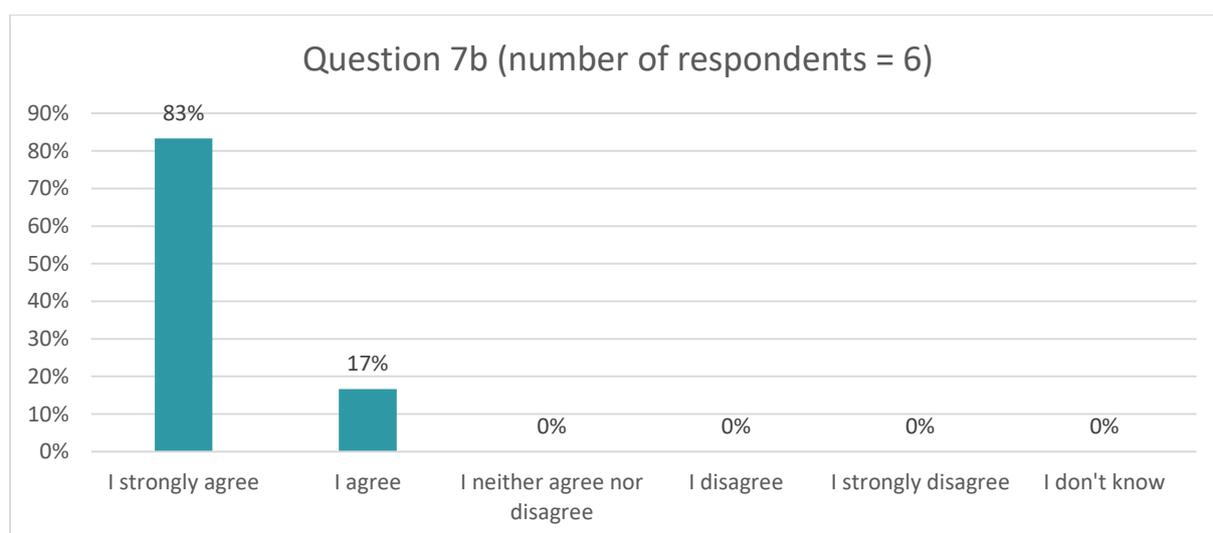
The proposed NEA components are reflected in the *Approval Criteria for GCE AS and A level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup>, with the following minor amendments:

- A Level requirement has been changed to the requirement for A2;
- at both AS and A2, ‘reflection’ has been replaced with ‘evaluation’;
- at AS, ‘theoretical concepts’ has been replaced with ‘key concepts’;
- at both AS and A2, ‘briefs set by awarding body and reviewed every year’ has been replaced with ‘briefs will be reviewed annually by the awarding body’.
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**Q7b: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the media production can be an individual or group tasks for A Level Media Studies in Wales?**

As shown in Chart 12 below, 83% of respondents strongly agreed with the proposal and 17% agreed.

Chart 12. showing responses to question 7b of the AS and A Level Media Studies consultation.



- Respondents who strongly agreed with the proposal stated that:
  - “It is essential that there is the option to create audio-visual productions in groups for both educational and logistical reasons”

- “Given that Wales is proposing research and reflection as well there are plenty of opportunities to accurately assess the contributions of individual students to group A/V projects”.

The proposal is reflected in the *Approval Criteria GCE AS and A Level Media Studies (2016)*<sup>1</sup>.

### **Support and Resources**

In all our consultations, we asked:

**What support and resources do you feel centres and teachers may require to achieve maximum readiness to deliver the revised specification? Please provide comments**

Those who responded to this question highlighted, amongst others:

- the need to provide textbooks and online resources
- the potential benefits of centrally-organised CPD events and INSET training
- the need for exemplar exam papers and sample assessment materials
- and the usefulness of model answers to indicate the expected level of response.

We will share the points raised with the awarding body, consortia and Welsh Government.

### **Impact on individuals with protected characteristics**

In all our consultations, we asked respondents the following question:

***Please highlight below if you feel any of this proposal has the potential to have a positive or negative impact on individuals with protected characteristics and whether any of the proposal would cause accessibility issues for learners in Wales.***

For the reformed AS and A Level Media Studies consultation, no respondents highlighted any positive or negative impacts on individuals with specific protected characteristics.

**Further  
information**

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