MEDIA PRODUCTION (MED315117)

GENERAL

The examiners noted the following points. These will be reflected in the 2018 Guidelines.

- A minor product should not be replicated within the external folio. For example the minor product Commercial/Advertisement cannot be a trailer of the major or an advertising page within the 12-page magazine. Each product should be an original self-contained project with new footage/images and design aspects.
- The print news story needs to be a finished product ie a page from a magazine or newspaper formatted conventionally.
- Where over 5% of content is not that of the students, there should be prescriptive outcomes/guidelines as to how ratings will be affected. This needs to be same for under word count.

FOLIO – SCREEN

- There is no need for a clapper on the narrative or journalism product. A clapper is only used for advertisements that are being designed for TV. There should also be no credits on journalism or commercial products.
- Journalism pieces should not be done as satire - some candidates used the conventions of news in a “drama” mock-up/send-up as their journalism product (e.g. mock interviews)
- It is important that the journalistic piece presented uses the appropriate codes and conventions. That is, recognised codes and conventions of form and genre must be applied in the product.
- Candidates must use current pro-forma for all projects.
- Copying an advertisement completely is not recommended. For example using the brand/logo/tag line and slogan is acceptable but come up with an original idea based on that tag line instead of “plagiarising” an entire advertisement. There is no design aspect when an advertisement has been copied in all aspects of narrative and design.
- Casting of actors needs to be believable and achievable. If you need an old man then cast an old man, not a 16-year-old dressed as an old man. If age/gender needs are not readily available create a product that is achievable within personal constraints.
- Mockumentary is not an excuse for lazy technical control. Justification for hand-held camera use is a must but also needs to be technically controlled.
- Shooting handheld and then stabilising in post is overall detrimental to the design aspect.
- Within journalism pieces, ensure that the interview is not fictional. Pretending to be the CEO of News Ltd destroys the authenticity of the journalistic piece. It would be far more valid to use a real expert rather than pretending to be an expert. Choose a subject that is achievable and that you have access to.
- Screen commercial length needs to be carefully considered for context of screening eg TV commercials are 30 and 60 seconds. Internet ads are in increments of 5 seconds. This standard need to be adhered to.
• In Journalism products, interviews with jump cuts where sentences have been cut should be covered with montage or flash to white as a convention.

• Journalism stories on “fake” violent related topics are not acceptable. Re-enactments of school shootings, killings, and use of pretend “file footage” is not accepted as a part of the journalism unit and is marked accordingly.

• The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance specifies that real weapons are not to be used on set unless a license has been granted to the production company. Therefore, students should not have real weapons on set.

• Teachers need to ensure they approve major pieces of work before they go into production to avoid stories which have inappropriate content.

• There appears to be a misunderstanding as to what genre actually means as a term. In the pro-forma, there too many hybrid named genres (eg horror-comedy-satire-paranormal) as the name of the genre. It made it very difficult to demonstrate understanding of codes and conventions of a genre that doesn’t exist. As a result the narrative became very confused. The guidelines and syllabus suggest the following for each unit:
  ○ Advertising - TV commercial or online promo/advertisement
  ○ Journalism - news story, video profile, short documentary
  ○ Narrative - Drama eg thriller, action, comedy, romcom etc.

• Simpler storylines fared much better in the assessment due to the credibility, authenticity and overall success of the production. Complex narratives were very difficult to produce and hence the overall awards suffered.

• Stronger folios were those that had a highly prepared and organised pre-production stage, a refined achievable idea, were well cast, demonstrated good time management, and were in appropriate locations relevant to the narrative and costumes and props that enhanced the narrative.

• Commercials should be about a product that exists. Advertisements or brands which were completely fictitious did not fare well due to that lack of authenticity and believability, credibility.

• A number of advertisements did not have a call to action. They simply ended without a slogan, tag line, where to buy, website or phone number.

• Sound level outputs were all over all over the place. Industry standard output is between -18 and -12dB.

• File formats should be .mp4 or .MOV not .wmv as specified in the guidelines.

• Students need to watch, listen and check their exports on their USB before submitting. A number were not exported correctly, wrongly labelled, and simply didn’t work.

• Mobile phones should not be used as the only camera source for productions, particularly in the major narrative piece.

FOLIO – PRINT

• Print screenshots included in folios needed to have purposeful annotations or reflections and should be presented in colour. As should proof-sheets/contact-sheets - these should also indicate selected shots for the final product with justification.

• Hyphenation in products is not being turned off and creates issues with large numbers of split words cascading down the column.
• Legibility due to inappropriate choice of background versus opacity was an issue. Candidates should ensure a printed-colour draft is viewed before the final print-run is processed.

• Write-up: when the word count was under the required amount criterion 1 was penalised. More time should be spent on the write-ups to ensure the candidate has adequately supported their production with articulated purposes/aims etc.

• Imitation of convention goes a long way! An inspiration journal or “mood board”, examples of conventions, etc. should be utilised by candidates as a starting point in the creation of their own product.

• Where artist’s work is being profiled, it is important that there are photos that demonstrate interaction between the artist and the work. If the artwork is shown as an autonomous piece it needs to be cited/referenced. Photos in this instance need to ensure that they do not constitute a high percentage in the overall magazine.

• Font size had an impact on Criterion 4, 5 and 7. Candidates need to emulate codes and conventions of the chosen genre. Font size is usually around 9/10 depending on font characteristics.

• There were issues with “leading”, creating large line spacing within paragraphs.

WRITTEN EXAM

QUESTION 1 – 5 RESPONSES

• No A ratings in this question since answers were not able to discuss what the codes and conventions of news were in the first instance and were unable to link to a specific story or social issue.

• Discussion of the codes and conventions were not linked to a specific product. eg generalised statements about lighting and dress attire of presenters was mentioned, but candidates were unable to explain why or how that helps with a news bulletin/story being engaging to an audience.

• Sweeping and inaccurate statements such as, “people in Barbados would not know how to use a camera” as justification for how the story is being presented in the middle of a hurricane was irrelevant, generalised and totally incorrect.

QUESTION 2 – 44 RESPONSES

• Examiners accepted responses where students had correctly identified Media Watch as a watchdog.

• Stronger responses used clear examples from Media Watch and linked their discussion to the specific codes. They could quote directly from the Code of Ethics which code had specifically been breached.

• Stronger responses could analyse and evaluate the reasons why the codes were breached eg for entertainment, ratings, commercial pressures, and the consequences for society of this breach.

• Facts used by candidates were incorrect in some instances and the use of colloquial language was common eg “dodgy reporting”, instead of critically analysing journalism and its role in society.

QUESTION 3 – 42 RESPONSES

• Overall this question was answered well by candidates. They were diligent and sustained in their responses.

• Generally, there was a secure understanding of media ownership laws both historically and currently. Some were confused about the current changes to legislation quoting that it had been passed and was now law, this is incorrect.

• The role media moguls such as Rupert Murdoch were well discussed and strong examples provided.
• Stronger responses could utilise their knowledge of the legislative framework and apply to it socio-political comments that were clearly reasoned eg 2013 election and the involvement of the front pages at the time.

• Weaker responses saw it as chance to provide a Rupert Murdoch biography or summarised scenes from Outfoxed or threw as many facts into their answer as they could without being able to analyse and evaluate and connect the information to the question.

QUESTION 4 – 37 RESPONSES

• Responses were generally very focussed on explaining the broad differences between the private and public funded broadcaster - only a few wrote from a print perspective. Most seemed to understand the difference in how funding is achieved between the two sectors.

• The stronger responses demonstrated understanding of the theory and could also apply that to the question. These candidates weaved in their analysis as opposed to listed examples under each heading.

• Techniques used were generally well discussed. Strong responses could highlight specific technique differences and why they were used with regard to target audience, demographics.

QUESTION 5 – 43 RESPONSES

• This question was not answered very well overall with a large number receiving C's and D's for criterion 2. Candidates struggled to discuss how technology had “affected” the quality of journalism often getting tied up discussing the demise of traditional media and not returning to the question in their discussion.

• The examples that were chosen were weak in demonstrating their thoughts and they struggled to use these examples to demonstrate their analysis of how technology has affected journalism.

• Strong responses could discuss the business models and the job losses because of online content and the difficulty of speed vs accuracy in reporting news events. Candidates were able to discuss the way consumer patterns has resulted in a drop in revenue for traditional media organisations as revenue has flowed to new platforms eg Google and FaceBook who receive the majority of revenue from advertising. They could discuss the connection between revenue and new media and how that impacts quality journalism.

• Weaker responses typically provided a historical perspective on journalism, (as far back as 1475!), without explaining its connection to 21st century convergence and how and why this is happening and its effect on journalism. They tended to make broad sweeping generalised statements, personal in tone and language with rhetorical questions.

QUESTION 6 – 17 RESPONSES

• This question was not answered very well overall. The rationale behind sensationalism was not discussed at all in some instances. Examiners were looking for an understanding of the drivers/motives behind sensational reporting/tabloid journalism.

• Candidates were unable to describe the reason behind why these sensational news stories exist.

• Financial motives, commercial interests and sparking public debate were themes in stronger answers.
SECTION B

QUESTION 8 – 13 RESPONSES

- Many candidates did not answer the question in relation to the statement “Social values change over time”. Answers tended to deconstruct an ad in terms of its production values and didn’t focus on the social values.

- Stronger responses could discuss gender representation and stereotypes in relation to two contrasting advertisements, often from different time frames, to support their opinion.

- Weaker responses focussed on the method of production with regard to a target audience rather than the message of the advertisement.

QUESTION 9 – 26 RESPONSES

- Stronger responses could utilise an advertisement that gave them scope to discuss an idea, values or attitude and were able to deconstruct in terms of production elements. These responses integrated a discussion around the social and cultural consequences.

- Strong responses could analyse and deconstruct the production elements and how it conveys particular messages and were able to describe and inform the assessor which ad they had chosen without an overly long narrative of the ad.

- Weaker responses focussed on re-telling the narrative of the advertisement and vaguely mentioned the codes and conventions or production elements that helped convey the message and meaning.

QUESTION 10 – 26 RESPONSES

- Stronger responses could synthesise a considered discussion about two products, who their target audiences were and the various production techniques used to influence target audience, not just the retelling of the narrative.

- Weaker responses either spoke only about one ad, or spoke only about the narrative or only about the production techniques. Few could synthesise all into an analytical response.

- Some responses relied on making broad sweeping statements for example about the target audience without identifying the target audience. Using the language of the question is not enough - they need to unpack and evaluate the key terms of the question.

QUESTION 11 – 18 RESPONSES

- The panel took into consideration the wide-ranging definition and understanding of what students thought was a “controversial” advertisement. Poorly understood in terms of controversial ie some candidates chose an ad that they thought was personally topical and interesting but not necessarily controversial on a social, political or cultural level.

- Candidates didn’t allow for the concept that there was an intentional reason as to why advertisers chose to make an ad controversial.

- Public service announcements on issues such as ICE, domestic violence advertisements/commercials are not necessarily controversial, but advertisers used “shock” values to convey a message - some students were confused with this concept.
QUESTION 12 – 55 RESPONSES

- Most candidates could successfully explain the varying types of stereotypes that exist in advertising.

- Weaker responses focused on discussing the narrative of the advertising examples they chose instead of the actual stereotypes and why advertisers use them.

- The choice of advertisements in some cases did not help strengthen the discussion. In some cases, the selected ad was a weak example for the identified stereotype.

- Stronger responses could define stereotypes, select one area to focus on, used strong examples of advertisements and were able to discuss the use and reinforcement of these stereotypes in society and the rationale behind why advertisers use them in the first place.