

GCE



Chief Examiner's and  
Principal Moderator's Report

# Journalism in the Media and Communications Industry

Summer Series 2018



## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Education (GCE) in Journalism in the Media and Communications Industry for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk).



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# GCE Journalism in the Media and Communications Industry

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Assessment Unit AS 1 Journalism in Print

This year's examination paper proved accessible to all levels and prompted a variety of responses in Sections A and B. There was a slight increase in candidates this year. Overall, the performance was uneven, with the standard of responses generally lower than last year. However, the majority of candidates were able to complete all of the tasks and demonstrate their strengths and skills in one or both sections of the paper.

#### Section A

- Q1** This question was handled well, and for many candidates it was their strongest answer. The vast majority of candidates provided a competent discussion of the angle and content of the pieces. There was also some excellent language analysis. In terms of the nature of the publications (tabloid/ quality newspaper), some lazy generalisations crept into responses. Some candidates were digressive in their answers, for example, branching out into a generic discussions of newspaper types. It should be noted that digressive material is not rewarded and therefore candidates should be careful to ground all of their discussion in the pieces themselves.
- Q2 (a)** Although the majority of candidates wrote non-sensationalised stories with content that was legally sound, this news writing task was not handled as ably as in previous years. Many responses failed to strike a suitable angle, for example, in many cases, the fact that the victim of the hit-and-run incident was a rising footballing star was not mentioned in the intro. Some candidates struggled to achieve a clear structure and a good flow in their articles. As with last year, factual and spelling errors detracted from candidates' otherwise good responses. Again, candidates should be reminded that they need to carefully emulate journalistic phrasing, for example in introducing/ punctuating quotations.
- (b)** This short news-writing task was handled much better than Q.2.a. A variety of angles were chosen (e.g. the celebrity angle, or the importance of the charity), all of which were deemed valid; and some strong answers very effectively selected and prioritized the information given. Headlines mostly reflected the chosen angles, but some were judged to be vague. Weaker responses included those which lacked clarity, persistently repeated the wording of the stimulus, failed to adhere to the word count, or omitted news-worthy content. Candidates should be reminded that quality of written communication, including accurate spelling and punctuation, is important in all tasks.
- Q3** This question received mixed responses. Most candidates made a good attempt at re-ordering the paragraphs and were duly rewarded. The majority of candidates selected a suitable photo and wrote valid headlines and captions. In a few instances, candidates wrote captions which bore little or no relation to the photo selection; and some wrote speculative or inappropriately emotive headlines and captions, particularly for Photograph 4. Candidates should be aware that factual accuracy in journalistic reporting is paramount.

## Section B

All three question options were attempted, with questions 5 and 6 proving the most popular. The most successful responses sustained a clear focus on the key terms of the question and provided relevant examples. Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding and used up-to-date examples, and were duly rewarded. However, the examining team expected to see more analysis and an awareness of different perspectives in candidates' responses.

- Q4** This question was attempted by very few candidates, however the candidates that attempted it tended to do well. The most successful responses demonstrated a secure knowledge of different newspaper types and their roles and news values; and some offered very relevant and thoughtful examples to substantiate their arguments.
- Q5** This question was attempted by many candidates, with varying degrees of success. The vast majority of candidates showed a sound knowledge and understanding of the Freedom of Information Act, however this could only take them so far. The best responses combined secure knowledge and understanding with analysis and relevant examples. Disappointingly, few original examples were provided, and an over-reliance on past mark schemes was detected. Despite this, relevant and valid examples dating from within the past five years were rewarded.
- Q6** This question saw a wide range of responses. Successful answers provided a thoughtful analysis of the ethics involved in using journalistic sources. Some answers discussed a range of ways in which sources are used, and provided astute examples to illustrate their points: these responses were highly rewarded. However, a worrying number of responses failed to read or respond to the specific question, which was about the ethics around sources rather than ethical issues more generally, and therefore many lapsed into digression.

## Principal Moderator's Report

Centres are continuing to produce a range of excellent work. It is pleasing to see that quality teaching and engaged and enthusiastic learning is evident in all centres.

It is pleasing to note that the majority of centres are demonstrating an accurate and consistent application of the mark scheme, often accompanied by detailed and insightful summative comments. Such annotation continues to be very useful to the moderation team especially where the comments highlight specific aspects of the work that the teacher had given credit for and/or clarified how the mark scheme had been used. However, centres should desist from making generalised, positive annotations when it's not warranted. References, where relevant, to evident limitations are also required to achieve balanced commentary.

Although the full range of marks was awarded by many teachers, some centres continued to exercise leniency. Centres should note that Band 4 folders do not always receive full marks for every element of work submitted. Attendance at an Agreement Trial should clarify and reassure centres that their top candidature may not always offer a consistent performance across all of the Assessment Objectives. Full marks should be reserved only for very high quality work and should not automatically be given to a centre's top candidate/s.

Most centres completed administrative elements diligently. The online eModeration system continues to work well in ensuring an accessible administration process.

## Assessment Unit AS 2 Print Portfolio

This unit allows candidates to showcase their knowledge and understanding of journalistic concepts and gives them an opportunity to put them into practice. Candidates continue to be engaged in an exploration of local issues that are of interest both to them and to their identified target audience. As a result, it was pleasing to see some very strong, newsworthy pieces.

Statement of Intentions - The stronger statements continue to succinctly propose a vision for their portfolios by including details of audience demographics, news values, sources, technical formatting and legal and ethical considerations. Many candidates however, confuse ethics and legalities and use generic statements to fulfil this requirement. Some candidates also complete their statement retrospectively and issues with QWC and tense confusion remain a problem.

Log books - The level of planning and research gathering once again impressed the moderation team. Rigorous and purposeful research and planning was in evidence across many centres, allowing candidates to access the higher mark bands for this aspect of their portfolio.

Centres, however, should be reminded that for AO2 (Planning and Research and Audience and Style) QWC is an important criterion and lapses in QWC – which is a core journalistic skill - cannot be awarded full marks.

Portfolio pieces - generally this allowed many candidates to pursue different areas of interest and produce some very good work. Candidates are becoming more adept at choosing issues that interest them which is generally a successful approach. However, in some cases over enthusiasm led certain candidates to depart from the journalistic principles of objectivity and balance. Confusion between the conventions of a feature article and a topical news story continue to be apparent; centres are advised to clarify the characteristics of each of these pieces. A few candidates in different centres used an already released movie or book to write a review on; this is not considered appropriate as a local link is not evident. In the photomontage, several candidates failed to adhere to the conventions of captions and wrote paragraphs rather than succinct captions. Several candidates undermined their editorials by using the personal pronoun. This betrayed a misunderstanding of the purpose and conventions of newspaper editorials (or leaders) which are meant to express the newspaper's view, not the journalist's.

In several cases, candidates inserted their own personal opinions into news stories, features and other aspects of the portfolio. Centres are strongly reminded that the only appropriate place in this portfolio for a journalist's opinion is the review.

A number of candidates did not adhere to the specified word counts across the portfolio. Access to the higher mark bands cannot be achieved in such instances.

Centres are again reminded that a magazine format is an option which may better suit some candidates' interests. However, any candidates choosing the magazine option should be encouraged to thoroughly investigate the appropriate magazine conventions before embarking on their portfolio.

Evaluations - a range of marks are being awarded here, with the stronger evaluations addressing weaknesses as well as strengths. The less successful ones tended to be descriptive rather than evaluative of process and product. Candidates should attempt to refer back to the aims and objectives from their Statement of Intentions to better inform their evaluation.

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Assessment Unit A2 1 Cross-Platform Journalism and Digital Interactivity (A2JA/AJR1)

The examining team was once again pleased by the journalistic skills demonstrated by candidates at A2. The paper as a whole clearly catered for a range of learning styles and abilities. Despite the time constraints of the exam, many candidates produced lively and appropriate news pieces across Section A. Disappointingly, responses in Section B were less impressive than last year: many showed basic knowledge but struggled to produce effective discussion and analysis.

#### Section A

- Q1 (a) (i)** A wide range of marks was awarded for this question. The content was generally handled well and the word count adhered to. Some engaging articles and suitable headlines were produced, with stronger candidates proving confident enough to include the social media sources and handle them with due care. Weaker responses tended to sensationalise the story and/or use potentially libellous content in their article. A surprising number of articles libelled the funfair by failing to fairly report the fact that a previous investigation had cleared it of wrongdoing. Pleasingly, there was less evidence of over-reliance on the stimulus this year, with fewer candidates replicating the wording and structure of the stimulus.
- (ii)** The majority of candidates demonstrated a clear sense of news value and awareness of the format of a news flash. Despite the short word limit, many candidates were able to include the main points of the story and prioritise them in an appropriate manner, showing clear awareness of the target audience. Any weaknesses stemmed from replicating the phrasing of the stimulus or, in some cases, poor selection of material.
- (b)** A wide variety of responses was seen in this radio news package task. The strongest answers demonstrated secure selection and prioritisation of material while confidently following the radio script format and achieving a good flow. Some of the cues were very fluently written, leading to confident and engaging scripts. Weaker responses tended to show an insecure selection and prioritisation, or relied too heavily on the stimulus. A number of scripts proved very repetitive, repeating similar information across various sources, and thus demonstrating a poor ability to select.

Overall, a stronger grasp of what constitutes a news package was in evidence this year, however, as with last year, it is clear that many candidates would benefit greatly from closely listening to and studying the conventions of radio news packages.

- (c)** Candidates' responses varied hugely in Question 1 (c), with the evaluation clearly proving challenging for many. The strongest evaluations were those which provided a methodical and thorough interrogation of why decisions had been taken and why elements had been included or omitted from their pieces. Weaker evaluations were descriptive and generic and failed to illustrate with examples from their work. Many responses were descriptive and relied on basic statements. Some focused on their 'strengths' but were less inclined to engage with 'weaknesses'. Candidates should be aware that such flaws in their website article, newsflash and radio news package script are to be expected but they will be credited for acknowledging these weaknesses in Part (c) of this task.

**Q2** This question was generally handled well. Many candidates successfully chose the lead story (story 6) to start their bulletin and the vast majority of candidates selected from this and other suitable stories (stories 1, 5, 7, 2) for their bulletin. A variety of combinations was offered to which the examining team were open. Sound selection and prioritisation was in many cases enhanced by effective crafting and editing, allowing candidates to access the top mark band.

### Section B

All three essay questions were attempted and proved accessible, with Question 3 and Question 5 the most popular. It was clear that candidates had learned relevant information and it was pleasing to note that examples tended to be more relevant and more fully developed than in previous years. The strongest responses were those which responded to the invitation of the question to 'discuss' and offered counter-arguments and a range of perspectives, however these were disappointingly few in number.

**Q3** This essay was a popular choice and prompted relevant discussion and some up-to-date examples. However, many responses relied on stating factual information about Ofcom (for example, listing the various sections and their sub-clauses in substantial detail) rather than providing an analytical discussion of the role and purpose of Ofcom. Unfortunately, only a minority of candidates proved able to use relevant and recent examples from broadcast journalism to inform a balanced, analytical discussion.

**Q4** Only a few candidates attempted this question. Answers tended to be characterised by confusion and failed to provide adequate or relevant examples.

**Q5** This question prompted some thoughtful and well-considered responses. The growth of citizen journalism was clearly understood and relevant discussion centred on how it has impact professional journalism. Examples were generally relevant and were duly rewarded. Weaker responses failed to demonstrate any nuance or balance. Some responses were surprisingly negative about professional journalism and failed to demonstrate a sound understanding of the main discussion points.

## Principal Moderator's Report

### Assessment Unit A2 2 Online Print and Broadcast Feature Portfolio (A2JB/AJR2)

This unit offers candidates a practical opportunity to produce a cross-platform feature portfolio. The portfolio should contain both written and audio or video work which enables the candidate to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding of an interactive digital landscape. Their own research and practical work will highlight their skill in print and broadcast journalism.

Some excellent work continues to be produced in all centres with the standard of work once again highlighting an engaged and enthusiastic range of quality teaching and learning at A2. As at AS, most centres demonstrated accurate and consistent marking accompanied by detailed summative comments which were helpful during the moderation process in aiding an understanding of how the mark scheme has been used. A few centres exercised leniency in the awarding of marks; attendance at an Agreement Trial could help to alleviate this and assist in the consistent application of marks.

Once again it needs to be stressed that while the on-line feature article is not required to be a live interactive website with working links, there is an expectation that it should be presented as such so as to demonstrate knowledge of presentation and formatting, including the positioning of the vox pops on the page.

More centres are submitting hard copies of their features (to accompany their digital copy) which are carefully annotated; this is considered excellent practice as it was clear to see how the mark scheme had been awarded.

As at AS level, most centres completed administrative elements diligently; the on-line system has proved invaluable in ensuring this.

## **Cross-Platform Research Case Study**

Candidates continue to choose issues that are relevant and interesting to them; a diverse range of topics were sampled, which is most encouraging to see.

More centres are becoming confident in adapting their chosen theme to a regional and local angle, which is needed in order to fulfil the rubric of the tasks; some candidates, however, continue to show confusion over the idea of thematic unity and their products are not always strongly linked to the theme of their case study. This should be strongly discouraged.

It is again strongly recommended that candidates identify the actual broadcast pieces and on-line articles they are using for analysis with time of broadcast/date clearly stated. This should be indicated on the case study and should not be counted in the overall word count.

Language, Representation, Ownership and Audience – these four key concepts should be compared and contrasted throughout the case study and a balanced treatment across the platforms is required. Full marks cannot be awarded if the word count has been exceeded.

Centres should also note that an inclusion in the Statement of Intentions about the case-study requirements is unnecessary. Candidates have to compare and contrast these key elements across platforms therefore an indication of intent is obsolete.

## **Portfolio:**

### **Online Feature**

The strongest candidates were once again able to use their case study as a spring board for exploring their chosen theme in a regional context.

Some candidates are still experiencing difficulties in adapting their chosen case study theme to appeal to a regional target audience, while still maintaining and adhering to the conventions of a feature. It is very important that the candidate is comfortable with the THEME they have chosen as this should allow for an easier adaptation.

The conventions of using source material in a feature continues to present problems for some candidates. Access to higher grades remains impossible without thoroughly researched primary source material.

More centres are becoming adept and confident in the creation of voxpops and the quality of the voxpops continues to improve. Centres who encouraged their candidates to film a variety of people across age ranges and gender and who used a variety of questions to garner different opinions were, once again, the most successful. The better and more appealing pieces continue to come from candidates who took to the streets and filmed. It would be helpful if centres encouraged their students to ask questions which invite a diverse range of views. In some centres the one minute requirement was not always fully adhered to, with some voxpops being significantly shorter.

The 100 word statement is an opportunity for candidates to be specific. Some centres are still relying on overly generalised assertions which cannot access top marks. To gain top marks the statement needs to address the candidates' individual pieces rather than simply making generic statements about Facebook and Twitter.

### **3 minute Package**

Quite a few centres are opting for the broadcast option and this has accounted for – in some cases - stronger standards of work. The aesthetic appeal was more obvious and there was a stronger sense of purpose in the crafting of the product. A wide and varied range of local issues were presented in this packaged format and it served as an excellent medium for some very confident candidates. The better work came from genuine interviews which weren't scripted and footage taken by the candidate from the local area which added authenticity to the product. Some confusion still exists regarding the conventions of packaged material with a few centres using bulletin formats to address this requirement. Attendance at support events may help alleviate this confusion.

The radio package remains a popular choice. As in the previous series, these were, on the whole, both appealing and interesting in terms of content, but some still tended to lack the auditory qualities that are so important to radio when attempting to engage a radio audience. An improvement has been noted, but if possible, candidates should be encouraged to listen carefully to packaged radio material to help improve their awareness of the necessary conventions.

Centres should aim to ensure that the editing process is given ample time so that packages are as professional and close to industry standard as possible.

### **Planning and Research**

The importance of planning and research continues to improve among the centres. While there were definite variations in the quality of Log Books, on the whole the consensus is that this aspect of the work is gaining momentum.

The candidates who performed best were those candidates who demonstrated extensive research across all the pieces in their digital portfolio. The log book sample should consist of ten pages that showcases the range of research undertaken and should equally reflect the three main tasks. The best Log Books this year were again those used as a working document, demonstrating thought processes and justifications for decisions made by the candidate. Unlike AS, no guidance is offered on how many pages should be used for each piece therefore any purposeful and judicious reasoning in evidence was rewarded here.

### **Evaluation**

Candidates showed a promising ability to identify and acknowledge both the strengths and weaknesses of their own work. Weaker candidates tended to describe what they did rather than show much awareness of the challenges in the processes they undertook. The better candidates offered perceptive and insightful reflections on how to improve. This is an opportunity for candidates to explain what could have gone better if certain obstacles were removed – i.e. sources unavailable etc. – and so should be encouraged to honestly reflect on the work they have produced.

## Contact details

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