

**GCE**

**AS and A Level Specification**

# **Communication and Culture**

**For exams from June 2014 onwards**

**For certification from June 2014 onwards**



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Vertical black lines indicate a significant change or addition to the previous version of this specification.

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Why choose AQA?

It's a fact that AQA is the UK's favourite exam board and more students receive their academic qualifications from AQA than from any other board. But why does AQA continue to be so popular?

- **Specifications**

Ours are designed to the highest standards, so teachers, students and their parents can be confident that an AQA award provides an accurate measure of a student's achievements. And the assessment structures have been designed to achieve a balance between rigour, reliability and demands on candidates.

- **Support**

AQA runs the most extensive programme of support meetings; free of charge in the first years of a new specification and at a very reasonable cost thereafter. These support meetings explain the specification and suggest practical teaching strategies and approaches that really work.

- **Service**

We are committed to providing an efficient and effective service and we are at the end of the phone when you need to speak to a person about an important issue. We will always try to resolve issues the first time you contact us but, should that not be possible, we will always come back to you (by telephone, email or letter) and keep working with you to find the solution.

- **Ethics**

AQA is a registered charity. We have no shareholders to pay. We exist solely for the good of education in the UK. Any surplus income is ploughed back into educational research and our service to you, our customers. We don't profit from education, you do.

If you are an existing customer then we thank you for your support. If you are thinking of moving to AQA then we look forward to welcoming you.

## 1.2 Why choose Communication and Culture?

Communication and Culture is a new GCE to replace Communication Studies. The change of title signals a greater emphasis on the cultural aspects of communication, but there is also a strong element of continuity between the two specifications.

The innovations here reflect developments in an expanding sector of Higher Education, but in ways which will be accessible, stimulating and relevant to 16-18 year olds. Programmes of study in Communication and Culture at this level will provide many opportunities for students to relate their own life experiences to contemporary academic debates. The specification requires the close examination of cultural practices, cultural products and the ways in which cultural meanings are communicated. At AS, the focus is on the understanding of communicative codes in a cultural context whilst at A2 the focus shifts to the application and critical evaluation of these codes. At A2 the assessment pattern is relatively open ended, giving candidates the maximum opportunity to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their knowledge and their ability to apply conceptual material in different contexts.

Students start with an investigation of their own cultural environment and move on to consider different forms of communication and interpretation

both within and between cultures. It is a precept of the specification that tolerance springs from an understanding of such differences.

### Key Features

- A dynamic area of study with a strong contemporary orientation
- Excellent preparation for further study
- Transferable academic, work-related and personal development skills
- A framework for creative and stimulating case study work
- Opportunities for independent and autonomous study as well as teacher-led case studies
- An integrated programme of practical and academic activity
- A valid and coherent AS qualification
- Clear development and progression from AS to A2
- A choice of coursework topics set in advance
- Support materials provided for set topics

## 1.3 How do I start using this specification?

### Already using the existing AQA GCE Communication Studies specification?

- Register to receive further information, such as mark schemes, past question papers, details of teacher support meetings, etc, at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>. Information will be available electronically or in print, for your convenience.
- Tell us that you intend to enter candidates. Then we can make sure that you receive all the material you need for the examinations. This is particularly important where examination material is issued before the final entry deadline. You can let us know by completing the appropriate Intention to Enter and Estimated Entry forms. We will send copies to your Exams Officer and they are also available on our website [http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p\\_entries.html](http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_entries.html)

### Not using the AQA specification currently?

- Almost all centres in England and Wales use AQA or have used AQA in the past and are approved AQA centres. A small minority are not. If your centre is new to AQA, please contact our centre approval team at [centreapproval@aqa.org.uk](mailto:centreapproval@aqa.org.uk)

## 1.4 How can I find out more?

### Ask AQA

You have 24-hour access to useful information and answers to the most commonly-asked questions at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>

If the answer to your question is not available, you can submit a query for our team. Our target response time is one day.

### Teacher Support

Details of the full range of current Teacher Support meetings are available on our website at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/support/teachers.html>

There is also a link to our fast and convenient online booking system for Teacher Support meetings at <http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking>

If you need to contact the Teacher Support team, you can call us on 01483 477860 or email us at [teachersupport@aqa.org.uk](mailto:teachersupport@aqa.org.uk)

# 2 Specification at a Glance

## AS examinations

### Unit 1 – COMM1

#### Understanding Communication and Culture

50% of AS, 25% of A Level

Written paper, 1 hour 45 minutes

80 marks

Four compulsory questions

Available June only

### Unit 2 – COMM2

#### The Individual and Contemporary Culture: Portfolio

50% of AS, 25% of A Level

Externally set topics, internally marked and externally moderated

80 marks

Web-Folio/Portfolio of work

Available June only

AS  
Award  
1626

## A2 examinations

### Unit 3 – COMM3

#### Communicating Culture

25% of A Level

Written paper, 2 hours

80 marks

Compulsory question and choice of one essay question

Available June only

### Unit 4 – COMM4

#### Communication and Culture in Practice: Portfolio

25% of A Level

Externally set topics, internally marked and externally moderated

80 marks

Web-Folio/Portfolio of work

Available June only

A  
Level  
Award  
2626

$$\boxed{\text{AS}} + \boxed{\text{A2}} = \boxed{\text{A Level}}$$

# 3 Subject Content

## AS

Units 1 and 2 provide an integrated and complementary introduction to the study of Communication and Culture. Both units deal with the personal level of communication and candidates' own experience of cultural products and cultural practices. The interaction between the individual and the broader cultural environment is a key area of investigation.

Please refer to the key terms document in the Teacher Resource Bank on the AQA website. This provides a glossary of 'Essential' and 'Useful' terms to be used with the Communication and Culture specification.

The content of the two units is underpinned by a set of key concepts. These are:

- Communication
- Culture
- Context
- Representation
- Value
- Identity
- Power
- Code.

## A2

Units 3 and 4 not only build on the work on Communication and Culture established in AS, they also provide in themselves an integrated and extensive programme of study. This A2 course offers more challenging texts and contexts and a greater focus on theoretical readings of contemporary culture.

Please refer to the key terms document in the Teacher Resource Bank. This provides a glossary of 'Essential' and 'Useful' terms to be used with the Communication and Culture specification.

Both units deal with the broader issues of cultural reproduction and transmission and with a plethora of critical opinions and perspectives, not least the candidate's own. In terms of key concepts the central focus switches from identity to power, though the former is still a significant feature of the conceptual work.

In addition to the key concepts of the AS course above, A2 adds the following:

- Ideology
- Mode of address
- Discourse
- Narrative
- Technology.

In a similar way to Units 1 and 2, although linked by broadly similar content, the two A2 units are different in their primary focus. The focus of Unit 3 is on *knowledge* and *understanding* whilst that of Unit 4 is on *exploration* and *application* of the concepts and content of the whole course.

## 3.1 Unit 1 COMM1 Understanding Communication and Culture

### Introduction

The focus of this introductory unit is the personal level of communication in the realm of the candidate's own experiences of cultural practices and cultural products. Following a programme of study, candidates will need to demonstrate how to:

- analyse and interpret the practices of everyday life
- analyse and interpret cultural products
- show that the 'everyday' is worthy of study
- explore the relationship between culture and communication.

A key concept is the notion of the 'toolkit'; a set of resources which can be deployed in the reading of cultural products and practices in order to produce coherent analyses and insights.

Candidates will also need to demonstrate skill in the application of such resources in a range of relevant contexts.

### Assessment Objectives

- AO1 Demonstrate skills in the application of communication forms and both competence and creativity in applying the conventions of written and multimedia formats
- AO2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of concepts and critical debates relevant to the discipline of communication and culture

### Content

This unit deals with the *nature* of culture and the *codes* through which culture is communicated.

#### *The Nature of Culture*

- Definitions of Culture
- The meanings and practices of everyday life
- High culture and popular culture
- The relationship between culture and value

### *Cultural Codes*

- Verbal and non-verbal communication
- Identity and self-presentation
- Group communication
- Reading images and products

### *Toolkits*

- Semiotics
- Process

### Assessment

Externally examined written paper 80 Marks  
1 hour 45 minute examination

Candidates answer two questions requiring short responses to statements about culture and communication. (50% of total marks)

Textual analysis question (Cultural product).  
Candidates are supplied with the image of a cultural product or an example of a cultural product which is itself an image or set of images. Using a given set of resources from a 'toolkit', candidates are required to analyse and interpret the cultural product. (25% of total marks)

Reading and response question (Cultural practice).  
Candidates are supplied with a written description of a situation involving communication within a cultural context. This may be supplemented by visual material. Using a given set of resources from a 'toolkit', candidates are required to analyse and interpret the situation. (25% of total marks)

## 3.2 Unit 2 COMM2 The Individual and Contemporary Culture: Portfolio

### Introduction

In this unit candidates pursue their study of the Key Concepts in relation to two sites:

- Communication, Culture and the Individual (Site A)
- Cultural Contexts and Practices (Site B).

In addition, candidates will demonstrate the ability to explore, apply and develop the content of Unit 1 in the construction of an individual coursework portfolio.

Each candidate's portfolio will comprise the following elements:

### Section A 40 marks

Investigation into Communication, Culture and the Individual

500 word study

Exploration of Cultural Products and Practices

1000 word study

50% of total marks for this unit: (AO1 12, AO3 20, AO4 8)

### Section B 40 marks

Presentation entitled 'My Culture; who am I in context. Exploring Personal and Cultural identity'

50% of total marks for this unit: (AO1 12, AO3 20, AO4 8)

### Assessment Objectives

- AO1 Demonstrate skills in the application of communication forms and both competence and creativity in applying the conventions of written and multimedia formats
- AO3 Demonstrate analytical, comparative and interpretive skills in applying relevant concepts and perspectives to cultural products and cultural practices
- AO4 Demonstrate the ability to identify and investigate primary and secondary material appropriate to the exploration of key concepts in communication and culture

### Content: Sites

#### *Communication, Culture and the Individual (Site A)*

This site focuses on the ways in which personal identity is negotiated, both psychologically (internally) and through social interaction. Candidates will start by considering how they get to be the people they are. It therefore both addresses understandings of 'the self' and the ways in which we understand our 'selves' and construct and present our specific cultural identities.

In terms of content focus, this site will encourage the critical reading of ourselves as culturally-significant texts. It will ask candidates to make sense of such phenomena as clothing, hairstyles, body adornments, language, personal possessions and personal taste in the context of their socialisation into British society.

These should be addressed subjectively (in terms of their own personal experience) and critically (in terms of the 'toolkit' provided by Unit 1).

The emphasis is on the individual as sender of messages both consciously and sub-consciously and as an active negotiator of their individual identity.

In doing so candidates will engage with one or more of the following cultural codes:

- Verbal and/or non-verbal communication
- Identity and self-presentation
- Group communication.

#### *Cultural Contexts and Practices (Site B)*

This site offers candidates the opportunity to consider the different ways in which they 'speak' to their culture and it to them, and the different 'places' (physical and psychological) in which they do this. This will involve an exploration of significant communicative codes (verbal and visual, primitive and technological) and a consideration of significant personal and social contexts, ranging from the physical confines of their bedroom to the psychological context provided by their close friends.

Here 'socialisation' can essentially be viewed as the interaction and influence of a set of significant sources: family, religion, education, media, peers. These influences can be seen working through individuals, through cultural codes and through the constructed environment.

Here the emphasis is on the individual as receiver of messages of all kinds from a variety of sources: from shop assistants and shopping centres, from OAPs and DVDs, from virtual and real environments.

## Topics

The current COMM2 topics (Section A) can be found on the Communication and Culture pages of the AQA website.

## Assessment

The portfolio consists of two **readings** and a **presentation**. The first reading (the 'investigation') concerns itself with the individual and how we all negotiate identities for ourselves. The topic for the investigation must be chosen from Site A. The second reading (the 'exploration') is focused on the wider context (and thus requires some exploratory reading to be done). The topic for the exploration must be chosen from Site B. The presentation is the place where these two sites are reconciled (or at least brought together).

All elements of the coursework must be publishable to the web. AQA foresees in the future all GCE Communication and Culture coursework being submitted for moderation electronically.

Each candidate's portfolio will comprise the following elements:

### *Section A Readings (50% of total marks)*

#### *Investigation into Communication, Culture and the Individual*

500 word study (Topic chosen from Site A)

This piece of work provides an opportunity for candidates to explore aspects of their own cultural identity. Every year AQA will set a range of three topics from which one must be chosen for this study. These topics will form part of a rolling programme, with each topic available for a minimum of two years. Each topic will relate to the ways in which individuals utilise codes of culture and communication to perceive themselves and others.

The onus should be on the candidate to interpret the chosen topic for their individual study within the following parameters:

- Based on individual, personal experience
- Engagement with one or more of the following cultural codes:
  - Verbal and/or non-verbal communication
  - Identity and self-presentation
  - Group communication

## Exploration of Cultural Contexts and Practices

1000 word study (Topic chosen from Site B)

This piece of work provides an opportunity to explore the ways in which cultural meanings and messages are embodied in cultural practices and cultural products. Every year AQA will set a range of three topics from which one must be chosen for this study. These topics will form part of a rolling programme, with each topic available for a minimum of two years. Each topic will relate to the ways in which cultural products and/or cultural practices address individuals.

For this study candidates should collate material from appropriate secondary sources and integrate this with material drawn from their own direct observation. The term secondary source does not necessarily imply, but does not exclude, academic/theoretical texts, but rather suggests that part of this task is to consider other perspectives on the chosen topic. These sources may include popular and quality journalism (newspapers and magazines), websites, film, radio and television and the testimonies of others.

The onus should be on the candidate to interpret the chosen topic for their individual study within the following parameters:

- draws on appropriate secondary sources
- based on the meanings and practices of everyday life
- engages with techniques of 'reading' cultural practices and/or products.

## Section B Presentation (50% of total marks)

This study is the culmination of the practical study of Communication and Culture at AS level. Candidates must select a topic for an individual presentation within the terms of the following brief:

- The presentation must address the broad theme: "My culture; who am I in context. Exploring Personal and Cultural Identity"
- Both Site A and Site B must be addressed i.e.
  - Communication, Culture and the Individual
  - Cultural Contexts and Practices
- Two of the following key concepts must be explicitly applied:
  - Power
  - Value
  - Identity
  - Representation
- Candidates may or may not choose to develop topics covered in Section A, **Readings**.

The purpose of the presentation is to deal with the struggle between 'who we want to be and 'who we're allowed to be': the place where the personal and cultural meet. The presentation will focus on the interrelationships between the individual and wider cultural influences. It will offer an exemplification of the ways in which identity is consciously and unconsciously 'negotiated' in the context of social and cultural norms.

### Format of the presentation

The presentation must include both audio and visual elements (except in the circumstances described below for students who have a registered disability). It must be a completed piece of work, not a draft or a set of plans or an outline. The form and context of the presentation should be suitable for an audience of the candidate's peers i.e. Communication and Culture students. However the presentation need not necessarily be delivered to this audience. Feedback and audience evaluation are not required. The presentation should be of a size or length which would engage the full attention of its audience for approximately 6 – 8 minutes.

The presentation must be completed in a format which can be digitised and uploaded to the web.

Audio elements may include any or all of the following:

- Speech
- Music
- Sound effects

Visual elements may include any or all of the following:

- Still images
- Moving images
- Graphics
- Animation
- Written text

Examples of possible formats are given below:

- Short documentary style video or vlog
- PowerPoint style presentation
- Website
- 'Live' presentation to camera

Hearing impaired or sight impaired students may submit presentations with only sound or only visual components of similar length.

## Guidance

The 'directed' tasks offer a significant amount of individual choice, which is central to AS work, but also offer a necessary discipline. The topics will be released in the following format each April on the Communication and Culture subject pages of the AQA website.

### *Communication, Culture and the Individual (Site A)*

The investigation should be 500 words long. Candidates must therefore 'specialise' and focus on something specific rather than generic. The other specific element is the candidate's own personal experience, which is the element to be analysed.

### *Cultural Contexts and Practices (Site B)*

The exploration should be 1000 words long. It asks students to place their personal experiences into a wider context. This partly involves finding what others have written/said/produced on their chosen topic and applying these to their own situation. This must be a selective process since 1000 words still puts the emphasis on being efficient and concise.

### *Primary and Secondary Sources*

There is no formal requirement that academic writing has to be included. Writing and talking about culture covers as broad a range as cultural practice does; it is found in newspapers and magazines of all types and in film and television as well as in books. Similarly each of the topics offers clear opportunities to engage with primary sources, whether these be CD recordings, shopping mall food halls or city centre skate parks.

## Administration

This unit is internally assessed and externally moderated. For moderation procedures please see Section 7.

Centres should assess each of the elements for this unit in accordance with the given mark scheme for that element and record their marks for each element in the appropriate places on the Candidate Record Form (CRF), having ensured that an appropriate internal moderation process has taken place.

All sections of the CRF must be completed in full by the teacher. Additional annotation on the candidates work is no longer a requirement of this specification.

## Marking Grids

All coursework and examination responses are marked according to marking criteria generated by the four Assessment Objectives. An important first stage is to see how these map generically onto the four levels that form the basis of all marking within this specification.

## Generic AS Grid

Level	<b>AO1:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.	<b>AO2:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to understand the content and concepts offered by the qualification.	<b>AO3:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.	<b>AO4:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.
	<i>This reflects the degree to which the candidate has entered the discourse of the subject and/or produced effective communication in their chosen medium.</i>	<i>This reflects the degree to which the work provides evidence of knowledge and understanding of the content and concepts of Communication and Culture.</i>	<i>This reflects the degree to which the content of the work manages to provide insightful analysis of given or chosen aspects of the candidate's own experience.</i>	<i>This reflects the degree to which the candidate has sought the opinions of others. In doing so it will also assess the candidate's use of relevant sources.</i>
4	Highly technical in its register and/or creative and/or proficient in its use of the chosen format.	Knowledge and understanding will be very good in terms of its range of knowledge and/or depth of understanding.	Analysis will be exploratory and open and will offer insights into its chosen theme.	Source material will be challenging and skilfully assimilated.
3	Sound in terms of its range and control and good in terms of its effectiveness.	Level of knowledge and understanding will be secure and will evidence sound subject specialist knowledge.	Analysis will be good in the sense that it will offer a specific informed commentary on the candidate's cultural practices.	Use of source material is good but it lacks the skill of those in the level above.
2	Limited vocabulary, perhaps only partly understood, rising to a degree of competence evidenced by the effective use of a fairly narrow range of terms/concepts.	Evidence will range from a limited, largely non-specialist relevance through to a simple but competent grasp of Communication and Culture content.	Analysis will rise from being of limited use through to the establishing of competence.	Use of source material moves from 'limited use' to 'competent use'.
1	Basic, non-technical and unconvincing.	Evidence will be basic, non-specific and unconvincing.	Analysis will be ineffective or unduly derivative.	Little (if any) reference to the opinions of others.

The generic grid should provide a useful general guide to the overall quality and value of any given piece of work. It is supplemented by the task-specific mark scheme which indicates just how marks should be allocated to candidates' work (and how many).

Remember that internal assessors are intended to apply a mark scheme consistently. This means, as far as possible, being able to accurately reflect the quality of a candidate's work within the context of others at your centre: rank order should be reflected in your final marks.

Remember also that coursework marking needs to reflect:

- the conditions in which the work is produced (e.g. opportunities to draft and redraft), which differ very significantly from those of a formal examination. We should therefore expect more here than a candidate would produce in an examination
- the weighting of the Assessment Objectives in this unit (these are made explicit in the mark schemes).

### *The Principle of 'Best Fit'*

The AS coursework is awarded two marks (each out of a maximum of 40 marks) which should reflect the overall quality of the 'readings' and the 'presentation'. These marks are notionally divided between the three Assessment Objectives (AO1, AO3, AO4).

## Section A: 'Readings'

The Investigation and the Exploration should be marked together under the general heading 'Readings' using the following mark scheme:

Unit 2 coursework: Section A mark scheme:

Level	OVERALL MARKS	AO1: This tests the ability of the candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.	AO3: This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.	AO4: This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.
4+	36-40	Work at this level is <b>impressive</b> and genuinely engaging.  The material is fluently structured and the register of communication and culture is used with precision.	<b>Offers an insightful and fully supported personal response</b> , which is precisely focused on the chosen task. The Investigation offers a succinct and sharply defined analysis of the candidate's own identity. The Exploration constructs a sustained, evaluative and detailed cultural debate. Confident and impressive work in which meanings are clearly contested.	<b>Impressively assimilated</b> Exploration, which clearly demonstrates the skilful use of a range of relevant source material.
	31-35	Work at this level is <b>very good</b> .  Material is well organised and detailed and there is a concise and sustained use of a technical vocabulary.	<b>Offers a thorough and often analytical personal response</b> and knowledge is applied in a purposeful and fully integrated manner. The Investigation offers a close examination of the candidate's own identity and the Exploration develops a thorough and usually evaluative cultural debate. Across the readings there is evidence of critical thinking and assumptions/theoretical ideas are challenged.	Evidence of <b>some skill and discrimination</b> in the selection and assimilation of source materials. These materials make a significant contribution to the Exploration
4-				
3+	26-30	Work at this level is <b>good</b> and material is coherently organised and thorough and there is an informed and appropriate use of a technical vocabulary.	<b>Offers an informed personal response</b> , which uses knowledge and understanding to create own arguments. The Investigation offers a clear examination of the candidate's own identity and the Exploration establishes a secure and informed cultural debate. Very sound application of theory evident across the readings.	Makes <b>specific, detailed and appropriate</b> reference to a range of sources. These sources are used effectively in the Exploration.
	21-25	Work at this level has <b>elements of good</b> but can be uneven. Material is organised and appropriate. It incorporates a neat and purposeful use of a technical vocabulary, although this may not always be consistent or fully secure.	<b>Beginning to offer an informed personal response</b> , where ideas and arguments are actively used to provide 'readings'/interpretations of the candidate's own identity (Investigation) and a clearly defined cultural practice/product (Exploration). Generally sound application of theory in order to produce readings that demonstrate some good elements.	Makes <b>appropriate use of relevant sources</b> , although range and application may be limited. Some specific, if undeveloped, links are made between own opinions and the opinions of others.
3-				

Level	OVERALL MARKS	AO1: This tests the ability of the candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.	AO3: This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.	AO4: This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.
2+	16-20	Work at this level is <b>competent</b> . Material is presented in a way that is mainly accurate and communicative and there is some appropriate use of a subject-specific vocabulary.	<b>A competent personal response.</b> Applies knowledge in a straightforward way to say something about the issues at hand. In the Investigation there is a clear consideration of the candidate's own identity and the Exploration provides a secure overview of the chosen cultural practice/product. Some relevant application of theory across the readings.	<b>Competent use of source materials</b> to support work in a straightforward way. Some attempt to assimilate notes and secondary sources.
2–	11-15	Work at this level is <b>moving towards competent</b> , in that ideas are sometimes supported by explicit or implicit reference to a subject specific discourse and there is the occasional use of technical terms.  Some lapses in accuracy and clarity can reduce the effectiveness of the argument.	<b>Some personal response</b> , which attempts to engage with the material to provide an account of the candidate's personal identity (Investigation) and their chosen cultural practice/product (Exploration), though this might be highly descriptive, generalised and formulaic.	Some <b>evidence of relevant, if ineffective, use of source material</b> . Some attempt to offer links between own opinions and those of others.
1+	6-10	Work at this level is <b>basic</b> and frequent lapses in accuracy and clarity can impede meaning. Technical terms are often misunderstood or applied without relevance.	<b>Limited personal response.</b> Works in a non-theoretical way and the approach is not appropriate to the requirements of the task. Little or no evidence of the candidate meeting the challenge of AS.	<b>Limited awareness</b> that links are being made between own opinions and those of others. Other material is used insensitively.
1–	1-5	Work at this level is <b>inadequate</b> . There is limited or no evidence that a course of study has been undertaken.	<b>Very limited response.</b> Narrow or confused range of meanings asserted.	<b>Little or no evidence</b> of the use of other sources.

## Section B: Presentation

The presentation is marked in the same way irrespective of format.

Unit 2 coursework: Section B mark scheme:

Level	OVERALL MARKS	AO1: This tests the ability of the candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.	AO3: This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.	AO4: This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.
4+	36-40	<p>Work at this level is <b>impressive</b> and genuinely engaging.</p> <p>The material is fluently structured and the register of communication and culture is used with precision.</p> <p>The chosen medium is employed highly effectively and key concepts are precisely defined and fully embedded.</p>	<p><b>Offers an insightful and fully supported personal response</b>, which is precisely focused on the intersection of the personal and the cultural. There is a sustained and detailed exploration of the chosen focus and an appreciation of alternative readings. Confident and impressive work.</p>	<p><b>Impressively assimilated</b> presentation, which clearly demonstrates the skilful use of a range of relevant source material.</p>
	31-35	<p>Work at this level is <b>very good</b> and strongly appeals to the target audience.</p> <p>Material is well organised and detailed and there is a concise and sustained use of a technical vocabulary.</p> <p>The chosen medium is used well and key concepts are explicitly employed throughout.</p>	<p><b>Offers a thorough and often analytical personal response</b> and there is a strong focus on the intersection of the personal and the cultural. Knowledge is applied in a purposeful and fully integrated manner. There is evidence of critical thinking and assumptions/theoretical ideas are challenged. A very good presentation.</p>	<p>Evidence of <b>some skill and discrimination</b> in the selection and assimilation of source materials. These materials make a significant contribution to the presentation.</p>
4-				
3+	26-30	<p>Work at this level is <b>good</b> and clearly appeals to the target audience.</p> <p>Material is coherently organised and thorough and there is an informed and appropriate use of a technical vocabulary.</p> <p>The technical quality enhances the presentation of ideas and arguments and the chosen key concepts are explicitly used.</p>	<p><b>Offers an informed personal response</b>, which uses knowledge and understanding of concepts to create own arguments. Very sound application of theory evident in the consideration of how the personal and the cultural meet. A good presentation.</p>	<p>Makes <b>specific, detailed and appropriate</b> reference to a range of sources. These sources are used effectively in the presentation.</p>
	21-25	<p>Work at this level has <b>elements of good</b> but can be uneven.</p> <p>Material is organised and appropriate to the target audience. It incorporates a neat and purposeful use of a technical vocabulary, although this may not always be consistent or fully secure.</p> <p>The technical quality is sound and the chosen key concepts are clearly evident.</p>	<p><b>Beginning to offer an informed personal response</b>, where ideas and techniques are actively used to provide 'readings'/interpretations of the candidate's cultural experiences. Generally sound application of theory in order to produce a presentation that demonstrates some good elements.</p>	<p>Makes <b>appropriate use of relevant sources</b>, although range and application may be limited. Some specific, if undeveloped, links are made between own opinions and the opinions of others.</p>
3-				

Level	OVERALL MARKS	AO1: This tests the ability of the candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.	AO3: This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.	AO4: This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.
2+	16-20	<p>Work at this level is <b>competent</b> and shows some awareness of the target audience.</p> <p>Material is presented in a way that is mainly accurate and communicative and there is some appropriate use of a subject-specific vocabulary.</p> <p>Presentational devices are employed in a straightforward way and some use is made of the chosen key concepts.</p>	<p><b>A competent personal response.</b> Applies knowledge in a straightforward way to say something about the issue at hand. There is some awareness of the interaction between the individual and the broader cultural context, although competence may best be found in the specificity of the points being made to the candidate's own experience.</p>	<p><b>Competent use of source materials</b> to support work in a straightforward way. Some attempt to assimilate notes and secondary sources.</p>
	11-15	<p>Work at this level is <b>moving towards competent</b>, although there may be little awareness of the target audience.</p> <p>Ideas are sometimes supported by explicit or implicit reference to a subject specific discourse and there is the occasional use of technical terms.</p> <p>Presentational devices may be quite limited and the use of key concepts is minimal.</p>		
2-				
1+	6-10	<p>Work at this level is <b>basic</b> and there is no awareness of the target audience.</p> <p>Lapses in accuracy and clarity can impede meaning. Technical terms are often misunderstood or applied without relevance.</p> <p>The technical quality of the presentation is poor and there is no engagement with key concepts.</p>	<p><b>Limited personal response.</b> Works in a non-theoretical way and the approach is not appropriate to the requirements of the task. Little or no evidence of the candidate meeting the challenge of AS.</p>	<p><b>Limited awareness</b> that links are being made between own opinions and those of others. Other material is used insensitively.</p>
	1-5	<p>Work at this level is <b>inadequate</b>. There is limited or no evidence that a course of study has been undertaken.</p> <p>Technical quality is significantly below what might be expected for AS level.</p>		
1-				

## 3.3 Unit 3 COMM3 Communicating Culture

### Introduction

This synoptic unit builds upon the knowledge and understanding developed in Units 1 and 2 and also provides a conceptual underpinning for Unit 4.

### Assessment Objectives

- AO1 Demonstrate skills in the application of communication forms and both competence and creativity in applying the conventions of written and multimedia formats
- AO2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of concepts and critical debates relevant to the discipline of communication and culture
- AO3 Demonstrate analytical, comparative and interpretive skills in applying relevant concepts and perspectives to cultural products and cultural practices

### Content

There are three components:

- Theoretical Approaches
- Key Concepts
- Sites of Culture

### Theoretical Approaches

Candidates are required to demonstrate a broad awareness of contrasting theoretical approaches to the analysis and understanding of cultural production and consumption in contemporary society. This must include a study of **Market Liberal Approaches** to the understanding of culture. This understanding should include an investigation of the rationales for capitalism, globalisation and consumerism in relation to cultural products and practices.

Critical theories must also be studied.

These must include:

- Critical Social Theory (Marxism, neo-Marxism, Hegemony Theory)
- Feminism
- Postmodernism.

And at least one of the following:

- Postcolonialism
- Poststructuralism
- Queer Theory.

### Key Concepts

Candidates must be familiar with the implications of the key concepts for their chosen area of study. See page 5.

## Cultural Sites

- Spaces and Places
- Fictions
- Objects of Desire

Candidates will focus on a detailed study of one of the following Cultural Sites in order to explore and apply theoretical approaches and key concepts. Candidates will need to engage with the site using relevant key concepts and by taking a comparative approach to the use and application of theoretical approaches.

A close study of only one of these Cultural Sites is required, but some consideration of the chosen site in relation to the other two is needed in order to explore their inter-connectedness.

The Cultural Sites in Unit 3 are distinct from but complementary to the sites in Unit 4 (The Person and Cultural Practices).

### Spaces and Places

This site refers to the constructed environment, i.e. any environment whose meanings have been constructed in a cultural context. This may include 'natural' environments just as much as buildings and engineered artefacts.

### Fictions

This site focuses on the communication and transmission of culture through stories. In addition to traditional formulations such as fairy tales, novels, plays and films, candidates may investigate interactive narratives which invite us to participate actively in a narrative, e.g. video games.

### Objects of Desire

This site refers to cultural products; items that are invested with meaning in a cultural context. More specifically, these are the goods of consumer society, the items that we are encouraged to covet, to buy, to own and to cherish.

## Intersections between the Cultural Sites in Unit 3

### Spaces and Places/Objects of Desire

The property market. The association of desirable 'lifestyles' with particular buildings or places. The use of objects of desire to 'accessorise' places.

### Fictions/Objects of Desire

The association of desirable identities with objects in advertising and promotion. Product placement. 'Spin-offs' and merchandising based on fictional texts. The packaging of fictional texts (e.g. books, DVDs) as objects of desire in their own right.

### Fictions/Spaces and Places

Cyberspaces and imaginary worlds. Multiplayer on-line fantasy role playing games. Fictionalisations of place in exhibitions and displays, e.g. 'The Story of London'.

## Assessment

Externally examined written paper 80 Marks  
2 hour examination

### Section A (50% of total marks)

**One** compulsory question relating to Theoretical Approaches and Key Concepts. Candidates are given a stimulus material comprising written or written and visual material on some aspect of contemporary culture.

Candidates are required to analyse and evaluate the stimulus material using **at least three** relevant key concepts and comparative theoretical approaches.

### Section B (50% of total marks)

Candidates are to choose **one** question from a choice of five: two generic questions which may be answered by reference to any of the Cultural Sites and three specific questions, each relating to one of the Cultural Sites.

## 3.4 Unit 4 COMM4 Communication and Culture in Practice: Portfolio

### Introduction

This synoptic unit builds upon the knowledge and understanding developed in Units 1 and 2 and also provides a context for the application and personal exploration of conceptual material in Unit 3.

### Assessment Objectives

- AO1 Demonstrate skills in the application of communication forms and both competence and creativity in applying the conventions of written and multimedia formats
- AO2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of concepts and critical debates relevant to the discipline of communication and culture
- AO3 Demonstrate analytical, comparative and interpretive skills in applying relevant concepts and perspectives to cultural products and cultural practices
- AO4 Demonstrate the ability to identify and investigate primary and secondary material appropriate to the exploration of key concepts in communication and culture

### Content

As a synoptic unit, its content is:

- communication
- culture
- specified by topics that come from across the specification.

This unit requires candidates to undertake a major piece of independent work, the focus of which will be set each year by AQA as a series of alternative topics. These topics are in themselves selected from two Unit 4 sites (contexts) which have been chosen to reflect the broad mainstream concerns of the specification as a whole. These sites represent the key intersections of communication and culture: in ourselves and in our significant cultural activities.

### Sites

- The Person
- Cultural Practice

#### *The Person (Site A)*

This context is explicitly concerned with the construction and maintenance of our personal and social identities, and in the ways in which these are communicated. As such, it allows investigations into readings of the personal psychological aspects of these processes as well as the social and cultural issues surrounding ideas about 'the body' and 'the self'. Partly it is a matter of exploring the interactions of the personal/individual and the cultural/ideological in issues such as 'body image', 'masculinity/femininity', 'bodily adornment' and 'body modification'.

#### *Cultural Practice (Site B)*

This context relates to a central concern of this specification which is an exploration of the 'Meanings and Practices of Everyday Life'. Here, social and cultural 'rituals' are analysed for the understandings they offer of the society that has produced them. Whether it be religious/secular festivals, school prize days, a day out to the seaside or shopping, the essential thing is that these are seen as significant 'texts' to analyse and with which to engage.

### Topics

In April of the year preceding the June examination series, AQA will identify a new topic for each of the two sites (Site A: The Person and Site B: Cultural Practice). **The current COMM4 topics can be found on the Communication and Culture subject pages of the AQA website.**

Each topic will have a 'shelf life' of two years.

In addition, AQA will simultaneously publish a Topic Guide as each new topic is announced. The Topics and Topic Guides are available on the Communication and Culture pages of the AQA website. A key feature of the Topic Guide is a list of titles. From this list, each candidate chooses one issue upon which the A2 coursework is based. The chosen issue is explored in the development of a Case Study (2000 words) and a piece of Creative Work as described below.

Candidates must select one of the prescribed issues. There is no scope for the negotiation of alternative issues. However, each issue will leave considerable scope for personal autonomy. Independence of thought and expression are positively encouraged in the exploration of the chosen issue.

In developing their response to a chosen issue candidates are required to draw upon and apply the theoretical perspectives and key concepts of Unit 3 and Unit 1. The embedding of the issue within a title and a Cultural Site is designed to encourage this process.

### Assessment

Candidates are required to respond in the ways specified below to one of the prescribed topics. Each candidate will be:

- selecting a title and a prescribed issue related to the topic for their investigative work
- identifying a specific case study or studies through which this chosen issue can be addressed
- conducting primary and secondary research (field work and wider reading)
- applying selected Communication and Culture concepts and theories to their work.

There are two components:           Case Study  
  Creative Work

### Section A   Case Study (50% of total marks)

2000 word study (Prescribed title and issue chosen from either Site A or Site B)

This is a written component based on the candidates own investigation of source materials related to their chosen issue. Suitable material for inclusion:

- analysis of secondary sources
- identification of a specific focus within the frame of reference of the chosen title
- readings of relevant cultural practices and/or products
- response to the specific issue in terms of appropriate key concepts and relevant theoretical perspectives.

**Note:** Although candidates are certainly encouraged to display critical autonomy, the emphasis of the Case Study should be comparative, analytical and interpretive. The Case Study provides a foundation for the Creative Work in which the emphasis shifts to originality, polemical and rhetorical style and, of course, creativity.

### Section B   Creative Work (50% of total marks)

(Based on prescribed title and issue chosen for Case Study)

Candidates will draw on their Case Studies in order to develop an original and creative idea or argument in relation to their chosen issue. This must be designed for an audience of the candidate's peers in a form that is publishable to the web.

The creative work will consist of a web-based presentation. This will be in the form of either:

- a website (at least three pages\*)
- a multimedia or PowerPoint style presentation (at least twelve slides)
- a podcast (of three to seven minutes)

\*The intention is to establish a set of minimum requirements. What is required from the creative outputs is that they serve an average consumer (Communication and Culture A level student) with **ten minutes** worth of active consumption (viewing, reading, interpreting).

## Sample Topic Guide: Cinema-going

What follows is designed to inform, support and clarify what is required in Unit 4 around the topic 'cinema-going'. Topic Guides for Body Modification and Celebrity will be available on the AQA website from April 2009. It includes the prescribed titles and issues for this topic and a list of stimulus material which can be used as a starting point.

'Cinema-going' as a topic is not principally concerned with films (and especially not with films as texts) but rather with the social and cultural rituals of cinema, and through these to the implications of what the critic Raymond Williams called 'Drama in a dramatised society'. In other words it is interested in exploring where we watch films and why we do and the ways in which we ourselves are defined by these experiences.

Candidates choosing cinema-going as a topic area must select **one** of the issues listed below. They are all broad enough in themselves to allow many different 'takes' on the topic, but they are not infinitely malleable and will need to be addressed relevantly. The chosen issue and the 'take' on it should be negotiated between the teacher and the student.

### Prescribed Titles and Issues

Choose one from the list below:

- TITLE:** Explore ways in which the 'social ritual' of going to the cinema provides social and cultural information about a society, location or era.

**ISSUES:** Social and demographic contexts: the social 'rules' of cinema-going, significant demographic factors (gender, age, social class, ethnicity), the history of cinema and social change.
- TITLE:** Explore the meanings overtly and covertly communicated by the places in which we watch films.

**ISSUES:** Movie Palaces and multiplexes: the physical and imaginative contexts constructed by cinemas as 'places'.
- TITLE:** Explore the impact of film and cinema technology on 'everyday life'.

**ISSUES:** Film as social practice: redefining reality in relation to 'realisms', the dramatised society.
- TITLE:** Explore the implications of the dramatisation of our lives by films and cinema.

**ISSUES:** The technology of film and its implications: digitalisation, home movie formats (home cinema), 'sound'.
- TITLE:** Explore ways in which films are packaged as products/franchises and our experience of this.

**ISSUES:** Film as Event: the launch, marketing, merchandising of films.
- TITLE:** Explore the relationships between cinema-going and 'dating'.

**ISSUES:** Film and Courtship: the date movie, film and the ways we 'love'.

## Possible Stimulus Materials

Pauline Kael: *Trash, art and the Movies* in *I Lost it at the Movies*, (Little, Brown 1963) pp 87-89

Roger Manvell: *Film*, (Penguin 1944) pp114-115, pp125-131

Pearl and Dean advertisement: *Cinema Experience*

Mark Jancovich and Lucy Faire: 'The best place to see a film' in Stringer (Ed.) *Movie Blockbusters*

The Drifters: *Kissing in the back row of the movies* Lyric

Lipponen, Jefimova, Rebelo: 'The Notion of Cinema-going'

European Cinema Journal: *THE FUTURE OF CINEMA-GOING: Interview with John Fithian*

James Monaco: 'How to Read a Film': 3rd Edition (OUP 2000) pp558-561

**Note:** This is by no means an exhaustive list. Candidates will need to seek out their own material to supplement these extracts.

## Administration

This unit is internally assessed and externally moderated. For moderation procedures please see Section 7.

Centres should assess each of the elements for this unit in accordance with the given mark scheme for that element and record their marks for each element in the appropriate places on the Candidate Record Form (CRF), having ensured that an appropriate internal moderation process has taken place.

All sections of the CRF must be completed in full by the teacher. Additional annotation on the candidates work is no longer a requirement of this specification.

## Marking Grids

All coursework and examination responses are marked according to marking criteria generated by the four Assessment Objectives. An important first stage is to see how these map generically onto the four levels that form the basis of all marking within this specification.

## *Generic A2 Grid*

The A2 grid uses the same Assessment Objectives as the AS grid but there is an assumption, made explicit in the generic descriptors, that A2 is looking for evidence of the development of that AS knowledge and understanding and those AS skills. A2 therefore requires significantly more evidence of the subject specialism, which should have been established on the AS course.

## Generic A2 Grid

Level	<b>AO1:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.	<b>AO2:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to understand the content and concepts offered by the qualification.	<b>AO3:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.	<b>AO4:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.
	<i>This reflects the degree to which the candidate has extended their grasp of the discourse of the subject and/or produced effective communication in their chosen medium.</i>	<i>This reflects the degree to which the work provides evidence of further knowledge and understanding of the content and concepts of Communication and Culture.</i>	<i>This reflects the degree to which the content of the work manages to provide insightful analysis of more sophisticated texts and situations.</i>	<i>This reflects the degree to which the candidate has researched and assimilated the opinions of others.</i>
4	Highly technical in its register and/or creative and/or proficient in its use of the chosen format.	Knowledge and understanding will be very good in terms of its range of knowledge and/or depth of understanding.	Analysis will be exploratory and open and will offer insights into its chosen theme.	Source material will be challenging and skilfully assimilated.
3	Sound in terms of its range and control and good in terms of its effectiveness.	Level of knowledge and understanding will be secure and will evidence sound subject specialist knowledge.	Analysis will be good in the sense that it will offer a specific informed commentary on the candidate's cultural practices.	Use of source material is good but it lacks the skill of those in the level above.
2	Limited vocabulary, perhaps only partly understood, rising to a degree of competence evidenced by the effective use of a fairly narrow range of terms/concepts.	Evidence will range from a limited, largely non-specialist relevance through to a simple but competent grasp of Communication and Culture content.	Analysis will rise from being of limited use through to the establishing of competence.	Use of source material moves from 'limited use' to 'competent use'.
1	Basic, non-technical and unconvincing.	Evidence will be basic, non-specific and unconvincing.	Analysis will be ineffective or unduly derivative.	Very little (if any) reference to the opinions of others.

The generic grid should provide a useful general guide to the overall quality and value of any given piece of work. It is supplemented by the task-specific mark schemes which indicate just how marks should be allocated to candidates' work (and how many).

Remember that internal assessors are intended to apply a mark scheme consistently. This means, as far as possible, being able to accurately reflect the quality of a candidate's work within the context of others at your centre: rank order should be reflected in your final marks.

The A2 coursework is marked in the same way as the AS coursework, with 50% of the marks given to the 'Case Study' and the 'Creative Work' respectively. The marks are notionally divided between the four Assessment Objectives (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4).

## Section A: Case Study

Level	OVERALL MARKS	<b>AO1:</b> This tests the ability of the candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.	<b>AO2:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to understand the concept and concepts offered by the qualification.	<b>AO3:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.	<b>AO4:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.
4+	36-40	Work is impressive, fluent and articulate as well as academically specialist. Erudite.	An evaluative and sophisticated understanding of a wide range of disparate concepts is evident.	Perceptive, insightful work and manifests the complex in the conceptual and abstract. Focuses securely on cultural significance.	Skilful use of sources and references. Uses citations to develop arguments. Demonstrates that references can be disputed and/or used to counter arguments.
	31-35	Work reads very well. Fluent, coherent and well-controlled. A real sense of an academic register.	Well-integrated knowledge and understanding. Theory reads as part of the text, rather than separate from it.	Analytical and conceptual ideas are handled purposively throughout the argument. Recognises complexity and deals with it.	An interesting range of varied kinds of reference cleverly employed to further the arguments. Citations are well-integrated
4-					
3+	26-30	Clear control of the medium; register is sound enough to reflect an academic approach.	Good range of specialist ideas and concepts. Theory rather treated as a separate subject.	Some awareness of arguments as contested. Likely to read in a more fragmented, discontinuous way than Level 4.	Makes specific detailed, appropriate links between own opinions and opinions of others. Citations are well-integrated.
	21-25	Rather less secure than above. Language and register are feeling the strain.	Sound understanding of perspectives and approaches. Key concepts are employed with some success and illumination of the arguments. Generalisations appear.	Reads analytically on the whole. Arguments are pursued and developed, but may tend to be mediated through the personal, or are undeveloped.	Good, clear referencing which reinforces and develops own arguments.
3-					

Level	OVERALL MARKS	<b>AO1:</b> This tests the ability of the candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.	<b>AO2:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to understand the concept and concepts offered by the qualification.	<b>AO3:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.	<b>AO4:</b> This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.
2+	16-20	Solid clear writing, evidently organised, and ideas are effectively expressed. Assertions may well appear and impede development of arguments.	Competently handles ideas, but tends to describe rather than argue coherently. Assertions rather dominate arguments. AS level material is overly evident. Generalities dominate argument.	Assertions abound rather than discussion and argument. Positions are defined and adopted fairly rigidly. Descriptive rather than applied concepts.	Simple referencing using a solid but unadventurous range of resources.
	11-15	Reads awkwardly in too many places. Insecure handling of register. Very generalised discussion.	Basic levels of understanding evident through clumsy or less than precise explanations of positions	Fairly basic application of knowledge revealing a low order of understanding. Ideas are simply stated.	Limited range of references used as simple illustration of arguments.
2-					
1+	6-10	Basic Case Study treatment. Says the obvious in a clumsy way	Limited and patchy knowledge of perspectives and approaches.	Insecure application of concepts altogether.	Little evidence that references have any significance in the work.
	1-5	Very limited register.	Little evidence that a course has been studied.	Little evidence that candidate can handle the concepts and material being handled.	None, or few, references explicitly, or even implicitly.
1-					

## Section B: Creative Work

It is not the technical quality of the 'production' that is being assessed but rather the creative and intellectual use that is made of the format in order to articulate a response to the chosen topic and question within the context of the study of Communication and Culture.

Level	OVERALL MARKS	AO1:
		AO2:
		AO3:
		AO4:
		<b>This tests the ability of the candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.</b>
		<b>This tests the ability of candidates to understand the concept and concepts offered by the qualification.</b>
		<b>This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.</b>
		<b>This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.</b>
4+	36-40	Work at this level is exceptional and striking in its use of elements of design and composition and in its skilful use of the medium. It is sophisticated, complex, perceptive, challenging and substantial in its sense of purpose. It is illuminating, challenges assumptions and makes original insights in its pursuit of ideas with confident and clever use of a wide range of sources. Likely to use clever allusions.
	31-35	Work at this level is cleverly organised and communicates imaginatively employing a range of creative audio-visual skills and competencies. It uses a wide range of ideas, and handles them in some depth. It applies knowledge and ideas in an unexpected and challenging way to offer some real insight with skilful use of sources integrally used. Likely to be witty, entertaining, or even emotionally affective with regard to its audience.
4-		
3+	26-30	Work is coherently organised and communicates clearly through confident use of audio-visual techniques. It will be engaged and thoughtful, though perhaps worthy rather than exciting. Work is thorough, confident and comprehensive in the application of knowledge and understanding with very good conceptual awareness. Very good use of a range of interesting sources.
	21-25	Well organised, if a little pedestrian. Makes interesting use of audio-visual strategies with a degree of skill. Thorough-going, purposive, detailed and engaged. Interesting use of knowledge and understanding if rather mechanical at times. There is evidence that sources have been employed thoughtfully.
3-		
2+	16-20	Clear, direct communication of ideas; a genuine attempt to say something within limitations, making solid use of audio-visual competencies. Technically sound but predictable. Makes straightforward, obvious points effectively and has clearly made some effort to seek and use sources through which to make meanings. May well be patchy, demanding a 'sympathetic reading' by the audience to get the best of it..
	11-15	Basic and straightforward use of some audio-visual competencies. Basic understanding of concepts, limited in scope and range; some understanding of what's needed. Limited use of sources which tend to be implied or bypassed.
2-		
1+	6-10	Minimal use of audio-visual techniques, enough to register some competency, but disjointed. Demonstrates a limited conceptual grasp of what is required, and struggles to engage with the ideas at all. Limited use of sources.
	1-5	Inadequate construction of audio-visual meanings; weak and insubstantial with little evidence of any real understanding; ultimately – simplistic.
1-		

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# 4 Scheme of Assessment

## 4.1 Aims

AS and A Level courses based on this specification should encourage candidates to:

- recognise the importance of the relationship between theories, empirical enquiry, practices and policies related to the idea of communication and cultural studies for understanding contemporary society and individual lives
- reflect critically on everyday life experiences
- relate their studies to their particular needs, interests, circumstances
- develop competence in key transferable skills, which can be applied in a range of contexts
- realise their full potential.

In addition, at A2, candidates 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, economic, cultural, historical and political factors shape the creation of meanings and responses.

## 4.2 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

The Assessment Objectives are common to AS and A Level. The assessment units will assess the following Assessment Objectives in the context of the content and skills set out in Section 3 (Subject Content).

- AO1 This tests the ability of candidates to communicate in the register of communication and culture.  
Candidates are expected to: demonstrate skills in the application of communication forms, and both competence and creativity in applying the conventions of written and multimedia formats
- AO2 This tests the ability of candidates to understand the content and concepts offered by the qualification.  
Candidates are expected to: demonstrate knowledge and understanding of concepts and critical debates relevant to the discipline of communication and culture
- AO3 This tests the ability of candidates to apply knowledge.  
Candidates are expected to: demonstrate analytical, comparative and interpretive skills in applying relevant concepts and perspectives to cultural products and cultural practices
- AO4 This tests the ability of candidates to work with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.  
Candidates are expected to: demonstrate the ability to identify and investigate primary and secondary material appropriate to the exploration of key concepts in communication and culture

### Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

In GCE specifications which require candidates to produce written material in English, candidates must:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear
- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complex subject matter
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

In this specification QWC will be assessed in all units by means of AO1.

## Weighting of Assessment Objectives for AS

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)		Overall weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	
AO1	15	15	30
AO2	35	0	35
AO3	0	25	25
AO4	0	10	10
Overall weighting of units (%)	50	50	100

## Weighting of Assessment Objectives for A Level

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS and A2 units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)				Overall weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	
AO1	8	8	2	2	20
AO2	17	0	10	8	35
AO3	0	12	13	10	35
AO4	0	5	0	5	10
Overall weighting of units (%)	25	25	25	25	100

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## 4.3 National Criteria

This specification complies with the following:

- The Code of Practice for GCE
- The GCE AS and A Level Qualification Criteria
- The Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria

## 4.4 Prior learning

We recommend that candidates should have acquired the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE course or equivalent. It must be emphasised

that this is not a requirement for candidates wishing to study the course offered through this specification. Any requirements are set at the discretion of centres.

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## 4.5 Synoptic Assessment and Stretch and Challenge

Synoptic assessment is included within both A2 units for GCE Communication and Culture, requiring candidates to demonstrate that they have developed an understanding of the subject which is holistic. At A2, the questions have been designed to test understanding and connectivity and to require extended writing which will provide greater stretch and challenge for all candidates.

The specification has been designed to ensure that the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in all units are integrated and coherent. At A2, the themes that were introduced at AS are re-visited

and candidates are expected to have a deeper critical awareness and to be able to engage in more conceptually sophisticated discussions at A2 and with a more demanding set of source materials.

Within Unit 4, the topic areas relate directly to other areas of the specification and candidates will be able to draw on, develop and apply material from both the AS and A2 modules. Candidates are expected to use this knowledge as a springboard for wider discussion and engagement of issues, and apply their acquired knowledge to both the Case Study and Creative Work.

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## 4.6 Access to Assessment for disabled students

AS/A Levels often require assessment of a broader range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised AS/A Level qualification and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

Candidates who are still unable to access a significant part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award. They would be given a grade on the parts of the assessment they have taken and there would be an indication on their certificate that not all the competences had been addressed. This will be kept under review and may be amended in the future.

# 5 Administration

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## 5.1 Availability of Assessment Units and Certification

After June 2013, examinations and certification for this specification are available in June only.

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## 5.2 Entries

Please refer to the current version of Entry Procedures and Codes for up to date entry procedures. You should use the following entry codes for the units and for certification.

Unit 1 – COMM1

Unit 2 – COMM2

Unit 3 – COMM3

Unit 4 – COMM4

AS certification – 1626

A Level certification – 2626

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## 5.3 Private Candidates

This specification is not available to private candidates.

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## 5.4 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

We have taken note of equality and discrimination legislation and the interests of minority groups in developing and administering this specification.

We follow the guidelines in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document: *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications*. This is published on the JCQ website (<http://www.jcq.org.uk>) or you can follow the link from our website (<http://www.aqa.org.uk>).

### Access Arrangements

We can make arrangements so that candidates with disabilities can access the assessment. These arrangements must be made **before** the examination. For example, we can produce a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment.

### Special Consideration

We can give special consideration to candidates who have had a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the examination. Where we do this, it is given **after** the examination.

Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

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## 5.5 Language of Examinations

We will provide units for this specification in English only.

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## 5.6 Qualification Titles

Qualifications based on this specification are:

- AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Communication and Culture, and
- AQA Advanced Level GCE in Communication and Culture.

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## 5.7 Awarding Grades and Reporting Results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point grade scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A Level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A\*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A\*, candidates will need to achieve a grade A on the full A Level qualification and an A\* on the aggregate of the A2 units. For both qualifications candidates who fail

to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

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## 5.8 Re-sits and Shelf-life of Unit Results

Unit results remain available to count towards certification, whether or not they have already been used, as long as the specification is still valid.

Each unit is available in June only. Candidates may re-sit a unit any number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result for each unit will count towards the final qualification. Candidates

who wish to repeat a qualification may do so by re-taking one or more units. The appropriate subject award entry, as well as the unit entry/entries, must be submitted in order to be awarded a new subject grade.

Candidates will be graded on the basis of the work submitted for assessment.

# 6 Coursework Administration

The Head of Centre is responsible to AQA for ensuring that coursework/portfolio work is conducted in accordance with AQA's instructions and JCQ instructions.

## 6.1 Supervision and Authentication of Coursework

The Code of Practice for GCE requires:

- **candidates** to sign the Candidate Record Form (CRF) to confirm that the work submitted is their own, and
- **teachers/assessors** to confirm on the CRF that the work assessed is solely that of the candidate concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down by the specification.

The completed CRF for each candidate must be attached to his/her work. All teachers who have assessed the work of any candidate entered for each component must sign the declaration of authentication. Failure to sign the authentication statement may delay the processing of the candidates' results.

The teacher should be sufficiently aware of the candidate's standard and level of work to appreciate if the coursework submitted is beyond the talents of the candidate.

In most centres teachers are familiar with candidates' work through class and homework assignments. Where this is not the case, teachers should make sure that coursework is completed under direct supervision.

In all cases, some direct supervision is necessary to ensure that the coursework submitted can be confidently authenticated as the candidate's own.

If teachers/assessors have reservations about signing the authentication statements, the following points of guidance should be followed.

- If it is believed that a candidate has received additional assistance and this is acceptable within the guidelines for the relevant specification, the teacher/assessor should award a mark which represents the candidate's unaided achievement. The authentication statement should be signed and information given on the relevant form.
- If the teacher/assessor is unable to sign the authentication statement for a particular candidate, then the candidate's work cannot be accepted for assessment.
- If malpractice is suspected, the Examinations Officer should be consulted about the procedure to be followed.

## 6.2 Malpractice

Teachers should inform candidates of the AQA Regulations concerning malpractice.

Candidates must **not**:

- submit work which is not their own;
- lend work to other candidates;
- allow other candidates access to, or the use of, their own independently-sourced source material (this does not mean that candidates may not lend their books to another candidate, but candidates should be prevented from plagiarising other candidates' research);
- include work copied directly from books, the internet or other sources without acknowledgement or attribution;
- submit work typed or word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement.

These actions constitute malpractice, for which a penalty (eg disqualification from the examination) will be applied.

If malpractice is suspected, the Examinations Officer should be consulted about the procedure to be followed.

Where suspected malpractice in coursework/portfolios is identified by a centre after the candidate has signed the declaration of authentication, the Head of Centre must submit full details of the case to AQA at the earliest opportunity. The form JCQ/M1 should be used. Copies of the form can be found on the JCQ website (<http://www.jcq.org.uk/>).

Malpractice in coursework/portfolios discovered prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication need not be reported to AQA, but should be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures. AQA would expect centres to treat such cases very seriously. Details of any work which is not the candidate's own must be recorded on the coursework/portfolio cover sheet or other appropriate place.

## 6.3 Teacher Standardisation

We will hold annual standardising meetings for teachers, usually in the autumn term, for the coursework units. At these meetings we will provide support in developing appropriate coursework tasks and using the marking criteria.

If your centre is new to this specification, you must send a representative to one of the meetings. If you have told us you are a new centre, either by submitting an estimate of entry or by contacting the subject team, we will contact you to invite you to a meeting.

We will also contact centres to invite them to send a representative if:

- the moderation of coursework from the previous year has identified a serious misinterpretation of the coursework requirements,
- inappropriate tasks have been set, or
- a significant adjustment has been made to a centre's marks.

For all other centres, attendance is optional. If you are unable to attend and would like a copy of the materials used at the meeting, please contact the subject team at **commculture@aqa.org.uk**

## 6.4 Internal Standardisation of Marking

Centres must standardise marking within the centre to make sure that all candidates at the centre have been marked to the same standard. One person must be responsible for internal standardisation. This person should sign the Centre Declaration Sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation involves:

- all teachers marking some trial pieces of work and identifying differences in marking standards;

- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved in the assessment;
- referring to reference and archive material such as previous work or examples from AQA's teacher standardising meetings.

## 6.5 Annotation of Coursework

The Code of Practice for GCE states that the awarding body must require internal assessors to show clearly how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria defined in the specification and that the awarding body must provide guidance on how this is to be done.

The annotation will help the moderator to see as precisely as possible where the teacher considers that the candidates have met the criteria in the specification.

Work could be annotated by either of the following methods:

- key pieces of evidence flagged throughout the work by annotation either in the margin or in the text;
- summative comments on the work, referencing precise sections in the work.

## 6.6 Submitting Marks and Sample Work for Moderation

The total mark for each candidate must be submitted to AQA and the moderator on the mark forms provided or by Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) by

the specified date. Centres will be informed which candidates' work is required in the samples to be submitted to the moderator.

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## 6.7 Factors Affecting Individual Candidates

Teachers should be able to accommodate the occasional absence of candidates by ensuring that the opportunity is given for them to make up missed assessments.

If work is lost, AQA should be notified immediately of the date of the loss, how it occurred, and who was responsible for the loss. Centres should use the JCQ form JCQ/LCW to inform AQA Candidate Services of the circumstances.

Where special help which goes beyond normal learning support is given, AQA must be informed through comments on the CRF so that such help can be taken into account when moderation takes place.

Candidates who move from one centre to another during the course sometimes present a problem for a scheme of internal assessment. Possible courses of action depend on the stage at which the move takes place. If the move occurs early in the course the new centre should take responsibility for assessment.

If it occurs late in the course it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work through the 'Educated Elsewhere' procedure. Centres should contact AQA at the earliest possible stage for advice about appropriate arrangements in individual cases.

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## 6.8 Retaining Evidence and Re-using Marks

The centre must retain the work of all candidates, with CRFs attached, under secure conditions, from the time it is assessed, to allow for the possibility of an enquiry about results. The work may be returned

to candidates after the deadline for enquiries about results. If an enquiry about a result has been made, the work must remain under secure conditions in case it is required by AQA.

# 7 Moderation

## 7.1 Moderation Procedures

Moderation of the coursework is by inspection of a sample of candidates' work, sent by post or electronically from the centre to a moderator appointed by AQA. The centre marks must be submitted to AQA and to the moderator by the specified deadline. We will let centres know which candidates' work will be required in the sample to be submitted for moderation.

Following the re-marking of the sample work, the moderator's marks are compared with the centre marks to determine whether any adjustment is

needed in order to bring the centre's assessments into line with standards generally. In some cases it may be necessary for the moderator to call for the work of other candidates in the centre. In order to meet this possible request, centres must retain under secure conditions and have available the coursework and the CRF of every candidate entered for the examination and be prepared to submit it on demand. Mark adjustments will normally preserve the centre's order of merit but, where major discrepancies are found, we reserve the right to alter the order of merit.

## 7.2 Post-moderation Procedures

On publication of the AS/A level results, we will provide centres with details of the final marks for the coursework unit.

The candidates' work will be returned to the centre after the examination. The centre will receive a report giving feedback on the appropriateness of the tasks

set, the accuracy of the assessments made, and the reasons for any adjustments to the marks.

We may retain some candidates' work for archive or standardising purposes.

## A Performance Descriptions

These performance descriptions show the level of attainment characteristic of the grade boundaries at A Level. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at the A/B and E/U boundaries at AS and A2. These descriptions should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the Assessment Objectives (see Section 4) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

## AS Performance descriptions for Communication and Culture

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Assessment Objectives	<p>Candidates are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate skills in the application of communication forms and both competence and creativity in applying the conventions of written and multimedia formats</li> </ul>	<p>Candidates are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of concepts and critical debates relevant to the discipline of communication and culture</li> </ul>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate analytical, comparative and interpretive skills in applying relevant concepts and perspectives to cultural products and culture practices.</li> </ul>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to identify and investigate primary and secondary material appropriate to the exploration of key concepts in communication and culture.</li> </ul>
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate appropriately, coherently and accurately</p> <p>b) communicate in a highly technical register and/or with a wide-ranging technical vocabulary.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate very sound knowledge of the content and concepts offered by the qualification</p> <p>b) demonstrate very good understanding of the content and concepts by using them in their other work.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) apply, in a confident manner, knowledge of communication and culture concepts, conventions and theories</p> <p>b) analyse, in a detailed and specialist way, seen and unseen texts and given and selected situations.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) work effectively with relevant resources drawn from a range of sources.</p>
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate clearly if not entirely accurately</p> <p>b) use an appropriate technical vocabulary and register with limited range and/or understanding.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) describe and explain the content and concepts offered by the qualification with some accuracy</p> <p>b) demonstrate limited understanding of the content by using them in their other work.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) apply, in a limited way, knowledge of communication and culture concepts, conventions and theories</p> <p>b) analyse, at a basic level, seen and unseen texts and given and selected situations.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) work with a limited range of source materials and/or struggle to assimilate them.</p>

## A2 Performance descriptions for Communication and Culture

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Assessment Objectives	<p>Candidates are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate skills in the application of communication forms and both competence and creativity in applying the conventions of written and multimedia formats</li> </ul>	<p>Candidates are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of concepts and critical debates relevant to the discipline of communication and culture</li> </ul>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate analytical, comparative and interpretive skills in applying relevant concepts and perspectives to cultural products and culture practices.</li> </ul>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to identify and investigate primary and secondary material appropriate to the exploration of key concepts in communication and culture.</li> </ul>
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate appropriately, coherently and accurately</p> <p>b) communicate in a highly technical register and/or with a wide-ranging technical vocabulary.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) demonstrate very sound knowledge of the extended content and concepts offered by at A2</p> <p>b) demonstrate very good understanding of the content and concepts by using them in their other work.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) apply, in a confident manner, knowledge of communication and culture concepts, conventions and theories</p> <p>b) analyse, in a detailed and specialist way, seen and unseen texts and given and selected situations.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) work effectively with and evaluate relevant resources taken from a range of sources.</p>
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate clearly if not entirely accurately</p> <p>b) use an appropriate technical vocabulary and register with limited range and/or understanding.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) describe and explain the extended content and concepts offered at A2 with some accuracy</p> <p>b) demonstrate limited understanding of the content by using them in their other work.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) apply, in a limited way, knowledge of communication and culture concepts, conventions and theories</p> <p>b) analyse, at a basic level, seen and unseen texts and given and selected situations.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) work with a limited range of source materials and/or struggle to assimilate them.</p>

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## B Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and other Issues

### European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

### Avoidance of Bias

AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and specimen units to avoid bias of any kind.

### Environmental Education

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report "Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education" 1993 in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

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## C Overlaps with other qualifications

There are no overlaps with other qualifications.

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## D Key Skills

Key Skills qualifications have been phased out and replaced by Functional Skills qualifications in English, Mathematics and ICT from September 2010.



GCE Communication and Culture (2625) For exams from June 2014 onwards

Qualification Accreditation Number: AS 500/2243/X - A Level 500/2248/9

For updates and further information on any of our specifications, to find answers or to ask a question: register with ASK AQA at:

**<http://www.aqa.org.uk/help-and-contacts/ask-aqa>**

For information on courses and events please visit:

**<http://www.aqa.org.uk/professional-development>**

Every specification is assigned a discounting code indicating the subject area to which it belongs for performance measure purposes.

The discount codes for this specification are:

AS KA1

A Level 5310

The definitive version of our specification will always be the one on our website, this may differ from printed versions.

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