

2023 VCE Media external assessment report

General comments

In the 2023 Media examination students generally performed well, with many of them attempting all questions on the paper and demonstrating a good understanding of key knowledge and skills.

Students are advised to read each question carefully to ensure that all aspects of the question are addressed, as several students missed question prompts asking them to include a specific number of examples in their responses. They should also ensure that in questions that require reference to more than one example, they discuss them in a balanced way so that one is not written about in detail while the other is only briefly mentioned.

When responding to questions in Section A focusing on 'Narrative and ideology', students should explicitly signpost the codes and conventions they intend to discuss in the first sentence and avoid the tendency to write in broad rather than specific terms. It is advisable to write about specific moments, frames or sequences from narratives even if the question doesn't indicate this. Responses should also employ media language appropriate to the area of study.

In Question 1, a number of responses indicated that students were unsure about what constituted a characteristic and/or referenced it in a generalised manner.

In Question 2, a number of students struggled to understand what an institutional context was and seemed to confuse it with an ideological context.

In the 'Media production process' section of the examination several students either did not read the question requirements or did not know what is involved in each stage of the production process. Question 5 asked students to reference their production experiment, Question 6 their media production design and Question 7 the production and/or post-production processes. Quite a few students still wrote about the wrong stage of the production despite the questions clearly specifying which stage they were to write about. Students should always reference specific examples of how they worked in each stage of the production process.

When responding to questions in Section A focusing on 'Agency and control in and of the media', students needed to use specific examples and write about them in detail. Students should always reference specific audiences, explicitly explain the dynamic and changing relationship between the media and its audience, and identify issues and challenges for the regulation and control of the media when asked for in a question.

It is important to note that while this is the last examination in the current study design, there will still be many aspects of this report that will guide both students and teachers with the examination for the new study design in 2024 and beyond.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding, resulting in a total of more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A

Narrative and ideology

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	4	15	35	46	2.3

This question asked students to describe how a characteristic in one narrative reflected its style **or** genre. There is no definitive list of characteristics, so it is possible to have a very diverse range of characteristics described in the responses. For example, students could have discussed characteristics of the media form and/or narrative.

Characteristics could include how codes or conventions were employed. For example, a characteristic of a genre of horror could be the use of camera, with low-angled shots, Dutch tilts and tight close-ups to create a feeling of anxiety and fear. A characteristic of a particular style could be the use of colour, with colour grading used to create a vintage look for a film set in the past.

When referring to style, students could also have discussed the style of the narrative's creator, such as Wes Anderson's use of colour palettes. *The Grand Budapest Hotel* features a prominent colour palette with shades of pastel pinks and mauves, reflecting the hotel's eccentric and whimsical world, and contributing to the film's sense of nostalgia and fantasy.

The question asked students to discuss style or genre – not both. Higher-scoring responses described in some detail how a characteristic connected to a style or genre by using a specific aspect of a narrative to illustrate their example. Students should avoid general responses about how a characteristic reflects both genre **and** style, as the question asked them to discuss one or the other – in such cases only one part of the response would have been awarded grades.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The Stepford Wives (1975) directed by Brian Forbes, is a thriller film that uses its score, lighting and camera angles to reflect its genre. At the climax of the narrative Joanna is trapped in the Men's Association, on the run from Diz (the villain) and her robot counterpart. The film uses low light and close-ups of Joanna's face to build suspense and convey her fear to the audience, which in combination with the spooky, synth-like score meet the audience expectations and conventions of the thriller genre.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	6	17	28	25	14	5	3.3

This question required students to analyse the relationship between one media narrative that the students had studied in 2023, and its institutional context referring to two of the following dot points: production, distribution, consumption and reception.

Students could have addressed the stages in the following ways:

- How the institutional context impacted a narrative during **production** due to how funding for a film influences production choices. For example, *Mad Max: Fury Road* had a substantial budget. The film's large budget allowed for exceptionally high-quality production values, with the use of exotic locations, expensive practical effects and intricate stunts.
- How the institutional context impacted on a narrative during its **distribution** due to whether a film was released directly to cinema or to streaming services, or photographs to a gallery or online, and the timing of a film's release. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the global film industry with cinemas worldwide closing their doors, causing many film releases to be postponed or shifted to digital platforms. *Wonder Woman 1984* faced delays in distribution because of the pandemic. Alternatively, a narrative may have been altered for distribution due to regulatory or other considerations. For example, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* was altered to maintain a PG rating. While the content of the film was darker and more mature than its predecessors, adjustments were made to ensure a PG rating to maintain the broad family audience that the previous films had attracted.
- How the institutional context impacted a narrative during its **consumption** due to positive reviews and favourable recommendations boosting a film's reception, and negative reviews deterring potential audiences. How the mode of consumption, whether it was streamed, viewed in a cinema, at a festival or in a gallery, influenced audience experiences is relevant.
- How the institutional context impacted a narrative during its **reception**, including how audiences react to, understand, or connect with the narrative in different ways. For example, performances by the cast can enhance the audience's connection to the characters and the story. Critic reviews or awards may impact the reception of a narrative.

There were several students who wrote about the ideological context of the narrative rather than the institutional context. Lower-scoring responses focused solely on one of the stages or presented an uneven discussion, placing greater emphasis on one dot point over another. Some students incorrectly identified past or future audience consumption and reception of the narrative.

Higher-scoring responses included an analysis of two of the dot points in a balanced way and showed an understanding of the difference between ideological and institutional contexts. These responses demonstrated specific and causative links between the narrative and the two dot points and provided well-integrated and authoritative examples to substantiate these links. Links between the narrative and the dot point were explicitly identified and analysed.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The production of Parasite was influenced greatly by its \$5.5 million budget with the production company Branston E/A, because it allowed for Parasite to be shot with expensive cameras such as the Alexa 65, as well as perfectly edit the film. The use of the Alexa 65 camera allowed for extremely wide length shots which is important to the film, which uses wide length shots to capture the dirty, South Korean slums or even make the Kim family seem so small in shots, that they mimic small insects or parasites. The consumption and reception of the film was greatly impacted by Bong Joon Ho, as many audiences had knowledge of his past films such as the 2013 Snowpiercer, which highlighted a class conflict. This prior knowledge of Bong Joon Ho's work impacts on the consumption, as the audience are coming into their

viewings with the expectations of Joon Ho to critique the social and class hierarchy as the overarching ideology of anti-classicism and anti-capitalism can be seen throughout his films this in turn impacts the reception because audiences are more likely to read into all aspects of the film as a critique on class structure.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	2	9	32	28	20	9	2.8

This question asked students to discuss how a specific audience was engaged by one media narrative that they had studied in 2023 through its codes and conventions.

Responses could include a specific audience from a particular period of time or context, such as an audience viewing a film at its original cinematic release or a contemporary audience consuming an older narrative. It could include different audiences within a specific time, such as women or black Americans. It could also be a specific context in which an audience consumed a media product, such as an audience in lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic or fans of a particular genre or media creator. Students were also required to identify a specific audience and discuss how codes and conventions of one media narrative were employed in relation to the audience engagement.

Higher-scoring responses considered specific aspects of the narrative rather than discussing it generally. This allowed for a more focused discussion around the explicit use of codes and conventions to engage a specific audience.

For example, an audience who are fans of Christopher Nolan would be engaged by his film *Dunkirk* (2017), due to his characteristic use of codes and conventions meeting audience expectations about his films. This can be seen with his use of composer Hans Zimmer, with his recognisable dramatic score and the non-diegetic sound of a ticking watch. Like other Nolan films, the music builds tension, amplifies the emotional stakes, and adds intensity for the audience. The ticking sound is a constant presence in the film, making the audience feel the pressure and drama of the narrative, as time appears to be running out for a successful resolution. The film also features a non-linear narrative, with three interwoven storylines depicting the evacuation of Dunkirk from land, sea and air. The editing of these storylines creates a heightened sense of tension and urgency for the audience. The converging of these timelines builds suspense, engaging the audience as they try to piece together the chronology of events.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Gil Junger's audience for Ten Things I Hate About You was engaged through the use of the technical code of sound, in particular through the soundtrack of the film. In Ten Things I Hate About You the specific audience was teenage girls who enjoy romantic comedies and especially those attuned to the third wave feminist movement. Such as Gil Junger's choice of soundtrack for the film through the female punk rock band's 'Letters to Cleo' supported the films feminist undertones throughout the film. Especially in the moments when the female protagonist Kat Stratford (Julia Stiles) would exert power over those around her, the grungy 'Letters to Cleo' song would backtrack the scene, thus instilling a sense of female liberation and power into Styles character. This code was connected with the genre conventions of teenage romantic comedies with the use of character stereotypes, in particular Kat who fit the genre stereotype as a rebellious, recluse bad girl. The exploration of this genre convention through Kat's dark dishevelled costumes, punk bedroom set design and her scene soundtracks of 'Letters to Cleo' predominantly reinforce her character in the trope of the films rebellious character. The use of the technical code of sound combined with the genre convention of character stereotypes, engage the young female audience through presenting a powerful dominant female protagonist which emulated the feminist ideologies underpinned in the third wave feminist movements of the 1990s.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	2	3	9	26	30	21	9	3.8

This question required students to analyse how two media codes work together to convey meaning in a specific moment, frame or sequence of a narrative. Students were asked to analyse a different narrative from the one discussed in Question 3.

Students could write about technical, written and/or symbolic codes. Responses could include the way acting and camera combine to convey meaning in the opening sequence of a film narrative, or the way lighting and visual composition combine in a particular photograph to convey an idea.

Students should avoid analysing the narrative in a broad manner. Instead, they should focus on a specific moment, frame or sequence. Codes and conventions should not be discussed in a generalised way, or with only limited appropriate media language.

In higher-scoring responses, two codes were identified as being present in a specific moment, frame or sequence of a media narrative and the combined effect of these codes was analysed in relation to conveying meaning to audiences in a sophisticated way. These responses also used specialised media language related to codes and conventions.

For example, in *Blade Runner* (1982), the combination of lighting and mise en scene in the scene where the antagonist Roy Batty dies, conveys to the audience the decay of the future world and emotional depth of his character. The low-key lighting intensifies the sombre mood of the scene, while the grim urban setting with the derelict buildings reinforces the idea that the world is in decline. Also, the emotionality of Rutger Hauer's performance, with his intense facial expressions, combined with the sombre lighting and dilapidated mise en scene, creates empathy for his character as it demonstrates to the audience that he is a victim of a decaying world and that he possesses humanity, despite being an artificial being.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The technical code of camera and the symbolic code of colour are used concurrently in Trey Shults film Waves (2019) to emulate the demise of the film's protagonist, Tyler Williams (Kelvin Harrison) at the film's climax. At the conclusion of Act 1, Tyler is pictured in a prolonged single shot, being driven in a police car following his murder of his girlfriend, Alexis. Camera is utilised in this moment of high emotional duress, through a close-up shot of Tyler's face. The use of the close-up reveals the immense anguish that he is feeling in this moment, as the audience is in close proximity with his tear-filled eyes and quivering lips, as the character reflects on his outburst. The prolonged four-minute close-up shot is combined with the symbolic code of colour, which is actualised in the strobing blue and red lights which is centred upon Tyler's face. The red and blue colour combination denote the presence of a crime occurring as they are synonymous with the implication of the police. Secondly, the use of red symbolises Tyler's pent-up anger with his own ability to control his emotions, while the blue symbolises a moment of realisation of what Tyler has done. The use of these codes concurrently reveals the dire consequences of unchecked masculinity, leading to atrocities as a result of masculine rage and violence.

Media production process

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	11	21	33	24	9	2.9

The responses to this question referred to the documentation and evaluation, the exploration and the development of skills in the use of media technologies in **one** production experiment that was completed as part of Unit 3 Outcome 2 (Media production design). Responses that focused on different aspects of the media production design or on another outcome (e.g. production or post-production) lost valuable marks. Responses that simply described production experiments and not documentation methods were unable to score highly.

Methods used to document the exploration and development of technical skills could include, but are not limited to, written and/or visual notes, spreadsheets, timelines, journals reflecting on tutorials or workshops completed, annotated frames or photographs, proof sheets, screen shots, video and audio recordings and edited footage.

Methods used to evaluate the exploration and development of technical skills could include, but are not limited to:

- appraisal of the level of technical proficiency demonstrated in the experiment by critically reviewing aspects such as camera work, lighting, sound, editing etc.
- evaluation of how well technical challenges were addressed and overcome
- judgement of whether the chosen technology and/or equipment was suitable for achieving the goals of the experiment
- review of multiple takes/shots and comparison of their effectiveness.

Higher-scoring responses discussed more than one method and used precise examples, research and/or supporting detail of the way that these methods allowed for both documentation (i.e. capturing, recording, providing a written or digital record of exploration) and evaluation (i.e. making judgements, considering the capabilities, strengths and limitations).

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

I used a production experiment journal to document what I learned from my production experiments. For example, I wanted to emulate the use of high tempo, tonal montages in films such as Ilya Naishuller's 2021 film Nobody, which develops a specific theme or idea. Therefore, for my production experiment I created a short 60 second montage of a week in my sister's life, experimenting with different transitions (match cut, hard cut, and whip pan) and camera (tripod versus handheld, versus Gimbal) to see which combination produced a digestible sequence that conveyed a sense of monotony and repetitiveness. I answered a series of questions in my journal such as, 'Which one was easiest to understand?' 'Why?' and also posed three questions to my teacher and classmates whom I showed the production experiment for feedback. I concluded that using match cuts with locked off (tripod) shots was ideal, since when there was too much camera movement, the montage was disorientating for the audience.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	22	34	28	10	2.2

A wide range of aspects of the production design could be referenced for this question; however, the response needed to focus specifically on **one** aspect of the media production design that was completed at the preproduction stage. Responses should not have focused on another part of the production process (for example, production or post-production).

Responses that included multiple aspects of the production design were unable to score highly. Responses needed to show a strong connection between a proposed, specific audience and an aspect of the production design.

Higher-scoring responses used appropriate media language and wrote about one aspect of the media production design. They identified specific audiences and how their behaviours, interests, demographics and psychographics informed an aspect of the production design, including aspects such as storyboards, character design, development/revision of scripts, print layout and mock-ups. These responses identified how their understanding of the audience explicitly assisted them with the design of their media product in the planning stage and how this helped them to respond to audience needs and engagement. Higher-scoring responses also included the kinds of research (for example, surveys, interviews, questionnaires or data) that was conducted to better understand a specific audience and inform the planning stage.

Lower-scoring responses did not address just one aspect of the planning stage of the production, instead discussing multiple aspects of the production design, or they wrote very generally, rather than specifically about how their media production design was shaped by their understanding of their proposed audience.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The script writing aspect of my Media production design was inherently informed and shaped by my understanding of my proposed audience. My target audience included children and young adults who either are currently experiencing or have experienced the inevitable turbulent time that is exploring and navigating ones identity and their place in the world. Because of this, I endeavoured to include dialogue in my script that reflected my protagonist personal thoughts and feelings about this experience, which I felt would allow my audience to connect with, relate to and subsequently engage with this character and thus the narrative of my media product.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	4	15	31	24	17	5	3.4

Responses to this question required an explanation of the way codes and/or conventions relevant to a selected media form were employed to target a specific audience and realise a final media product. Responses needed to focus specifically on Unit 4 Outcome 1, area of study 1 (production and/or post-production) and not on other stages of production. For example, students could explain how the convention of character was employed in combination with codes of camera and lighting to realise a coming-of-age drama, set in an outback town targeted at teenagers. In the post-production stage students could write about colour grading and voiceover and explain how these were used to realise the media product for this target audience. Students could also write about how a combination of production and/or post-production processes helped target an audience and realise a media product.

Higher-scoring responses showed a strong understanding of how codes and/or conventions were employed in either production or post-production processes or a combination of both, with a strong connection to the

chosen media form and specified audience. These responses included how particular media codes and conventions relevant to the media form were realised in specific production and/or post-production processes. They also demonstrated how media forms and target audiences connected to each other and used specialised media language relevant to production and/or post-production processes.

Lower-scoring responses did not identify a specific target audience. Students may have assumed that this would carry across from the previous question where a target audience may have been identified. A target audience should have been included, as each question is assessed individually. These lower-scoring responses explained generally how production and post-production codes and conventions were used but may not have included how they helped target an audience and/or realise a final product. They also made limited use of media language.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

In my documentary film, with my target audience of those interested in cooking, I utilised the production process of filming to create a visually aesthetic film that will engage the audience. In filming I employed slow steady tracking camera movements in order to create the dynamic visuals which will engage my audience, helping me realise my product of creating a high-quality documentary about a Japanese restaurant. I also employed mise en scene of visually appealing food being prepared, combined with close-up camera composition thus appealing to my target audience. Additionally, I used character establishment, establishing the owners of the restaurant to be friendly and likable through the use of filming interview sequences in the production stage. This will make the audience relate to the characters, thus engaging them and causing them to consider that my documentary is high quality therefore realising my media product. In post-production I used editing to have a slow rhythm and slow pace in order to enhance the realism of the film, making my audience more engaged leading them to understanding of my product's narrative better, therefore meaning my media product has been realised.

Agency and control in and of the media

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	8	18	31	43	2.1

This question required students to describe one example of how a specific media audience exerted influence in the modern media landscape. Examples needed to be from the contemporary media landscape (post broadcast, Web 2.0, present day). Students could have included specific audiences including individuals using social media to influence media organisations such as film studios, television stations, streaming services, or news outlets through social media posts (e.g. 'Snyder Cut' for *Justice League*, *Brooklyn 99*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *The Right to be Forgotten*). They could also have included how an audience using social media can influence social and political movements (e.g. #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, storming of Capitol Hill). Responses could also consider how technology and social media platforms allow contemporary audiences to create and distribute content and how individuals interact with it (e.g. social media influencers).

Higher-scoring responses identified a particular audience and provided a detailed and specific example of their influence with the use of appropriate language. Lower-scoring responses did not identify a specific audience and/or example, but instead wrote very broadly or briefly on how an audience exerted influence. Some responses incorrectly discussed media rather than audience influence.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Subsequent to the death of Mahsa Amini in Iran in 2022, at the hands of police brutality, the young Iranian TikTok audience exercised both their individual and collective agency through the spreading of relevant information about the protests in Iran, exerting their influence across the contemporary, global

media landscape through utilising social media to unite the Iranian diaspora across the globe, allowing exiled protesters to connect with women in Iran and motivating people to join their protest against the strictly Islamic and authoritarian state of Iran that dictates and abuses the rights of women.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	13	26	27	23	11	2.0

There were two parts to this question. Firstly, it asked the student to identify **one** example of self-regulation by media institutions in the Australian media landscape, and then describe a justification for this regulation. It is a requirement of the question that students write about media institutions that are applicable to the Australian media landscape and that they discuss self-regulation by media institutions, not personal self-regulation. Clear examples of self-regulation should have been used, but several responses chose ambiguous examples. Media regulation is complex, so using a very definitive example ensured that the question was answered appropriately.

Appropriate examples of self-regulation could include:

- codes of ethics and charters/regulations by the Advertising Council of Australia, Free TV, the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, the Digital Industry Group Inc. (DIGI), and streaming services
- journalist codes of ethics, the Voluntary Industry Code of Conduct on Body Image, global institutions' codes of practice and their responses to content deemed inappropriate, inaccurate or offensive to community standards.
- Rationales for self-regulation could include: the protection of vulnerable audiences from harmful or offensive material, the protection/preservation of cultural beliefs and values, and restrictions on the spread of disinformation.

A significant number of students seemed confused about what constitutes media institution self-regulation and wrote about government bodies such as the Australian Classification Board. There are instances where industry organisations co-regulate with government bodies, and these were accepted as valid responses, provided the institution or industry mentioned regulates itself as per the premise of self-regulation. For example, the Netflix Tool classifies content in line with government regulations by providing warnings/information aligned to the ACB on their products. When discussed in this context, the regulation was considered an example of self-regulation. However, if films and video games removed content under regulation from the ACB, this was considered government regulation.

Higher-scoring responses identified, using precise media language, a specific example of self-regulation and described a rationale for its employment using supporting detail and elaboration. These responses demonstrated a thorough understanding of the role of self-regulation and the role of regulatory bodies in the Australian media landscape.

Lower-scoring responses either incorrectly identified an example of self-regulation as governmental or personal and/or did not provide a rationale for the regulation. These responses may have discussed more than one example.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

In the self-regulation industry in Australia, the Digital Industry Group Incorporated (DIGI) has endeavoured to mitigate the potential harm of misinformation and disinformation. As a form of regulation for the rationale of protecting vulnerable audiences, as evidence by their code against misinformation and disinformation. All signatories to the code must implement 'a range of scalable measures' to monitor, prevent and abate the potential harms of misinformation and disinformation to vulnerable audiences and collective audiences. This was especially pivotable during the Covid-19 global pandemic in which the ambiguity of disinformation against Asian Australians as a result of the virus's origins posed an immense

threat to their well-being, health and safety, making them a vulnerable audience in need of protection by these aforementioned 'scalable measures' as established and implemented by DIGI's code of conduct.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	5	13	27	28	17	6	3.4

This question required students to discuss the impact that one legal or ethical issue has had on the distribution of media products in the contemporary media landscape (post broadcast, Web 2.0, present day). Responses needed to discuss **one**, not both legal and ethical issues. Responses that attempted to discuss both issues were not able to discuss one issue with an adequate amount of detail and precision in their evidence/examples. Responses needed to include how the legal or ethical issue specifically impacted on distribution of media products. Students could use multiple examples to discuss one issue. Responses could relate to issues of regulation in the distribution of media content but did not necessarily need to focus on regulation issues.

Examples of legal or ethical issues and their impacts could include, but are not limited to:

- **Piracy** Unauthorised distribution of copyrighted content through piracy could affect the revenue of creators and distributors. For example, torrenting websites and illegal streaming platforms can lead to widespread distribution of copyrighted material without compensation to the content creators.
- **Data harvesting and/or selling of personal information** The unauthorised collection and misuse of data during the distribution of media products raises ethical and legal concerns. For example, social media platforms and streaming services have faced scrutiny for mismanagement of user data.
- **Misinformation, disinformation and/or misrepresentation** The dissemination of false or misleading information through media products can have ethical consequences, impacting public opinion and trust. For example, the distribution of misinformation through social media platforms, especially during elections or public health crises, has prompted calls for increased regulation and content verification.
- **Availability of harmful or offensive content** Content that is harmful or offensive, especially towards specific demographics, raises ethical concerns, such as when social media platforms distribute inappropriate content. They will then need to remove or regulate material to bring them into line with ethical standards or legal requirements.
- **Challenges with international regulation issues** Varying legal or ethical standards across different countries pose challenges for global distribution, as compliance with different regional regulations is complex. For example, streaming services may need to adapt their content to comply with varying classification laws.

Higher-scoring responses discussed one legal or ethical issue and how it related to the distribution of media products, linking the issue with an impact in a coherent and well-articulated way. They employed highly relevant and precise examples to illustrate the nature of the impact on distribution in the contemporary media landscape and used specialised media language relevant to all aspects of the question.

Lower-scoring responses described rather than discussed a legal or ethical issue (or both) and used broad examples to demonstrate only a general understanding of the impact that the issue had on the distribution of a media product. Some referenced a legal or ethical issue but did not include examples of its impact on distribution.

The following is a sample of a student response.

An ethical issue is the alleged used of shadow banning to sensor user content on platforms like TikTok. Shadow banning is a form of 'stealth censorship' according to Daniel Reynolds from The Advocate in which user content remains online, but it's not searchable by others. A 2020 Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) report found that TikTok had restricted several hashtags surrounding BLM and LGBTQIT

movements globally. This suggests TikTok is using algorithms that enable shadow banning to censor ideological content in order to influence their users. Since TikTok is Chinese owned, co-author of the ASPI report Fergus Ryan speculates controlling ideological content is an attempt by TikTok 'to conform to core socialist values'. TikTok's use of deep fakes to sensor user content without notifying users impedes on the ability for TikTok users to distribute media products, which is unethical. This has caused many users to lose trust in TikTok and favour American platforms like YouTube and Facebook since they are less likely to restrict ideological content unless it's criminal or they are motivated by profit rather than ideology.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	6	4	11	25	25	19	8	3	3.7

This question required students to consider the impact of the contemporary media landscape (post broadcast, Web 2.0, present day) on new modes of **both** production and consumption of media products. The response also required students to integrate some reference to the changing relationship between the media and its audience into their analysis. Examples that could have been cited included greater audience choice and influence, capacity for audiences to create their own media content, ability for audiences to consume media products across multiple platforms and devices and the dynamic nature of the relationship between the media and its audience. The same or different examples could be used to analyse production and consumption.

Impacts on production could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The shift from analogue to digital technologies has revolutionised content creation. Digital cameras, editing software and special effects tools have democratised the production process, making it more accessible and cost-effective for individuals to produce their own media products.
- The growth of social media platforms, such as YouTube and TikTok, have facilitated the rise of the 'prosumer' and 'produser' and empowered them to create and share content with limited or no input from 'traditional' production organisations such as film studios or traditional broadcast services.
- Streaming platforms such as Netflix, Stan and Amazon Prime are now major content producers. These platforms invest heavily in content that is exclusively driven by audience preferences and viewing habits. Smaller feedback loops impact on production, as shows are created with very specific audiences in mind, providing more niche products.

Impacts on distribution could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The rise of streaming services allows audiences to access content on-demand, altering viewing habits. Traditional TV schedules are becoming obsolete as viewers prefer the flexibility of personalised content consumption. With mobile devices becoming the primary screens, audiences can now consume content on smartphones and tablets, changing the context and locations of media consumption.
- The role social media platforms play in content distribution and audience engagement. Trends, discussions and recommendations on social media platforms heavily influence consumption.
- The use of algorithms by streaming platforms to analyse viewing habits and provide personalised recommendations. This influences consumer choices and can introduce audiences to a broader range of content.
- The active participation of audiences in content creation. Fandoms contribute to the consumption and success of media products through fan fiction, fan art and social media activism.

Students should avoid allocating too much of their response towards the history of the changing relationship between the media and its audience at the expense of how the contemporary media landscape has enabled new modes of production and consumption. Students were required to analyse rather than describe new modes of production and/or consumption and the contemporary media landscape, and the links between the

two needed to be clearly articulated. Production and consumption should have also been discussed in a balanced way.

Higher-scoring responses analysed specific and detailed examples to highlight the new modes of both production and consumption, in a balanced way, with well-articulated and causative links between the two. They analysed the relationship between the contemporary media landscape and new modes with well-integrated reference to the changing relationship between the media and its audience, and highly effective use of precise examples to support this analysis.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The contemporary media landscape has enabled increased production and consumption of content through globalised media institutions such as TikTok, permeating the effect of increased audience agency. Increased consumption of content following accessibility of social media and on demand content by the use of Web 2.0 has exhibited an increase capacity for audiences to exert their agency online. TikTok has over 1 billion users (Wallaroo Media August 2023) and over 83% of users have capitalised on their agency and posted a video of their own. This contrasts the traditional notion of production, given the westernised accessibility of content has dramatically decreased to linear programming, where only 43.2% of Australian audiences still consume (Roy Morgan 2016). The consumption of content has arguably become more reliant on an individual's agency, as a conscious decision is made in consuming TikTok, for example through the perpetuation of "doom scrolling" per the algorithmic influence of online streams of content has been perpetuated the over stimulation of dopamine, creating an increased desire to consume content. The consumerist tendencies of companies such as TikTok to capitalise on this phenomenon through the presentation of a "For You Page" which presents content dependent on what most likely to keep users on platform instead of ethical considerations of the content of said videos. Thus, the contemporary media landscape has seen distinct shifts in the form of production and consumption through the specific example of TikTok as a globalised media institution.

Section B

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	5	2	4	8	13	17	20	15	10	4	2	5.3

The question prompted students to analyse the relationship between media narratives and ideologies, emphasising how codes and conventions were employed in the construction of a narrative to convey meaning. While the introductory statement encouraged students to consider the reciprocal nature of this relationship, explicit reference to the statement was not mandatory; however, stronger responses were expected to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how narratives and ideologies interact drawing on the prompt for the question. It was important that students supported and illustrated their analysis of relationship between media narratives and ideologies with close reference to the construction of **one** media narrative. Responses could have referred to more than one ideology; however, only the analysis of **one** media narrative is applicable.

Students could have included:

- how the construction of the narrative explicitly or implicitly reflects an ideology at the time of production, perhaps through the representation of characters or the way the narrative is resolved
- how the construction of the narrative and the meaning it conveys may in turn develop or challenge an ideology (for example, through the way it presents a group, idea or event).

For example, *Get Out* explores ideologies surrounding race, privilege and cultural appropriation. This is constructed using codes and conventions in the following ways:

- Camera is employed with tight framing and close-ups during moments of racial tension, emphasising the discomfort and microaggressions experienced by the protagonist. This use of camera serves to convey the impact of racist ideologies on an individual level.
- The setting, an isolated and affluent suburban estate, becomes an effective backdrop to reinforce the racist ideologies present at the time.
- The mise en scene, including the meticulously manicured lawns and opulent interiors, serves as a code for the facade of post-racial harmony.
- The lighting in the 'sunken place' sequence uses contrasting colours to symbolise the protagonist's entrapment and powerlessness, conveying the ideological message about systemic racism.

Responses for this question were assessed using the relevant assessment criteria as set out in the following examination specifications:

- explanation of the characteristics and the construction of media narratives
- analysis of media codes and conventions in conveying meaning
- analysis and/or discussion of the relationships between media narratives, ideologies and institutional contexts
- use of appropriate media language.

Higher-scoring responses analysed the ways in which narratives are shaped by ideologies but also included how they had the capacity to develop ideologies in society. They used specialised media language to logically analyse the relationship between media narratives and ideologies by including a strong analysis of this two-way relationship. They clearly identified how one or more ideologies impacted the way a media narrative was constructed, by providing very specific examples and analysis of the way in which codes and/or conventions were used to convey meaning in specific aspects of a media narrative.

Lower-scoring responses either discussed ideology well but did not link it to explicit codes and conventions, or they discussed codes and conventions but did not link them to ideologies. Discussion of ideology was often simplistic and only summarised in one or two sentences, so it did not show in a lot of depth how the ideology was explicitly presented or shaped the product. Although they were not restricted, students who discussed more than one ideology were not able to analyse how the use of codes and conventions created meaning or how the ideology was represented in a scene/frame in adequate depth. These responses also focused more heavily on one direction of this relationship (e.g. the way that media products are shaped by ideologies **or** how ideologies are developed by the distribution and reception of media products) rather than the two-way nature of the relationship.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Within the independent drama Waves (Shults, 2019) the ideology of fourth wave feminism and the challenges caused by the issues of Toxic Masculinity are underlined within this film. Toxic Masculinity is defined by traits such as risk taking, dominance and hierarchal power over women. Specifically, at the time of production Trump and other prominent figures who embodies traits such as these could possibly influence some young men to embody toxic masculine ideals especially due to being in a time of competitive industries, rising unemployment and economic hardship. Due to Waves being produced by the independent studio A24, Shults was able to produce a film that discusses some of the issues with traditional masculine roles.

Within the opening act of the film, within the 'Diner Scene' Shults establishes the characters of the protagonist, Tyler, and his surrounding family as representing some toxic masculine traits, in conjunction with the technical code of camera. Through the camera's shallow depth of field, the male protagonist, Tyler, and his father, Ronald are placed in focus at the front of the shot with Tyler's mother and sister blurred behind them. This represents typical toxic masculine ideals which present the male individuals as dominant and above the women. Furthermore, after Tyler and Ronald accidentally speak at the same

time, there is a tracking shot as the two men engage in an arm-wrestle to exemplify their dominance. The camera frantically dodges between the two men as if searching for an apex predator, creating the meaning that Tyler is attempting to usurp Ronald's long held position as the leader of the household. This additionally reflects the feminist ideology that would denigrate Tyler's consistent fight for dominance. This establishes Tyler as a character continually driving for power, with Emily, his sister, forcibly placed in a background role, in the shadow of his brother.

After establishing the character's motivations, the pivotal climax at the end of act 1 and Shults use of an unconventional 2-act structure lament his denouncement of toxic masculine ideals. Within this critical scene, Tyler punches and kills his girlfriend, a representation of how his strive for power and risk-taking had led to an outburst of violence that caused the death of a loved one who will be affected forever. Through the characteristic of a 2-act structure, with the second act being in the point-of-view of his sister, Shults justifies the need for Tyler's removal from society in the form of him going to prison and argues that he deserves a separation from the movie as well due to his actions. Instead, the second act of the film focuses on the effects and consequences that one person's actions can cause, a lamentation on how widespread an individual diligently following the toxic masculine ideals can cause.

Thus, Media narratives are intrinsically linked to their ideologies with Waves detailing the negative consequences Toxic masculinity can cause, as an ultimate support to feminism that believes in equality between genders.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	7	3	5	10	16	18	18	12	8	3	1	4.9

This question required students to demonstrate an understanding of the dynamic and changing relationship between the media and its audience and how this poses issues and challenges in relation to the regulation and control of the media. Students were required to discuss specific implications for regulation and control by governments and/or media institutions, which could include self-regulation and regulation by media organisations themselves (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube). Responses could refer to worldwide case studies. Students should avoid allocating too much of their response towards the history of the changing relationship between the media and its audience at the expense of how this relationship between the media and its audience poses issues and challenges for the regulation and control of the media.

Students could include the following examples:

- **Challenge** The digital media and online platforms have led to a broadening of media consumption habits. Audiences now have access to a wide choice of information sources, making it challenging for traditional regulation to cover all platforms effectively.
- **Impact** Governmental and institutional regulations are struggling to keep up with the rapid changes in media consumption, leading to difficulties in enforcing regulation across diverse platforms.
- **Challenge** The rise of user-generated content has created a decentralised space where information spreads fast. This poses challenges for the adherence to legal requirements and ethical standards.
- **Impact** Regulating user-generated content have become very complex, as platforms are subject to different legal jurisdictions. Traditional regulations are not effective in these decentralised spaces.
- **Challenge** Many online platforms operate globally, transcending national boundaries. This challenges the effectiveness of nationally based regulations.
- **Impact** Governments are finding it difficult to regulate content that originates from across multiple jurisdictions.
- **Challenge** Protecting cultural identity and local industry with the expansion of content quotas to include global media institutions such as streaming platforms.

- **Impact** Regulators are struggling with compliance, especially when streaming services operate in multiple countries with varying regulatory requirements. Implementing effective regulations for global platforms is very difficult to achieve.
- **Challenge** Keeping current media ownership laws in Australia up to date with the changing relationship between media and audiences.
- **Impact** The rise of online media and digital platforms has reduced the effectiveness of existing regulations which were originally designed for traditional media forms. Regulators face challenges in adapting existing ownership laws to cover digital media outlets, including news websites, streaming services and social media platforms.

Responses for this question were assessed using the following assessment criteria as set out in the examination specifications and published on page 20 of the examination paper:

- analysis and/or discussion of the relationships between the media and its audience
- analysis and/or evaluation of issues and/or challenges in the media
- use of media language.

Higher-scoring responses used very specific and relevant examples and clearly articulated, using specialised media language, the link between the issues/challenges and the dynamic and changing relationship between the media and its audience. These responses demonstrated comprehensive analysis of the ways the media is regulated by governments and/or media and the relevant issues and/or challenges for the regulation and control of the media with strong connections made to the dynamic and changing relationship between the media and its audience.

Lower-scoring responses used generalised discussions about the dynamic and changing relationship between the media and its audience and/or the issues and challenges it poses for the regulation and control of the media. These responses identified examples but did not analyse them. Much of the discussion revolved around how the media landscape had changed. However, it did not connect this to regulation or the challenges that it faced. The connection between the dynamic and changing relationship between the media and its audience and the issues and/or challenges faced in the regulation and control of the media was often very insubstantial.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The dynamic and changing relationship between media and audiences poses various challenges for the regulation of media in the modern zeitgeist. Audiences and media institutions have a complex relationship in which a modern understanding sees as not entirely controlling by the media as once thought under the hypodermic needle theory, however, it is clear that media has a strong impact on audiences regardless which leads to the need to regulate and control the media. Due to the changing nature of audiences and media products, seen by Jenkins' concept of the 'produser', in which any audience member is able to produce their own media on social media sites, it is becoming increasingly challenging to regulate media products. This can be seen on social media platforms such as Twitter which as a private company have the ability and legal right to self-regulate their platform, this can cause challenges when sites such as Kick.com decide to have incredibly lax self-regulation, allowing for the live streaming of pornography and gambling to arguably targeted audiences of children as no government can properly regulate how people may interact with sites such as Kick in the same way that they can with what is broadcasted on free to air local television.

Additionally, on sites such as Twitter or Facebook, given that any individual can produce media it is near impossible to individually regulate the billions of products that exist. This leads to issues such as the live streaming of the Christchurch massacre from New Zealand (2019) on Facebook, where even though Facebook reportedly took down 'millions' of instances of the massacre, there were so many that they simply could not, with it taking weeks before all instances were removed from the site. There is also the issue of determining which media is worthy of being censored, as the line between free speech and hate speech can be seen as entirely subjective. This is highlighted through Twitter, in which accounts that

were previously suspended for hate speech and inciting violence such as Donald Trump were later unbanned simply by the ownership shift into the hands Elon Musk, meaning that the regulation of media can now essentially be bought by the highest bidder in a way never before possible. This issue extends outside of social media, as seen when a Chemist Warehouse advertisement was brought into question by Australian regulatory bodies for being disrespectful in its depiction of women, which was then determined to be acceptable. On top of this, given that social media is international and therefore bypasses many countries regulatory bodies, Australia's regulation of a 55% Australian content quota can no longer be implemented effectively given the fact that the Australian government has no control over what is posted to social media sites such as YouTube for example, as this new relationship between audiences and media is one in which audiences have such agency that Australian regulatory bodies cannot ensure 55% of content accessible is produced locally. This relationship between audiences and media in which audiences have more agency and control than ever before also leads to difficulties in regulating copyright, as copyrighted material can be posted by any individual with little repercussion. Relationship between audiences and media, audiences now have more agency than before, being able to create their own content (producers), governments are now less equipped to control media as social medias are international and used by billions of users rather than a limited number of institutions.