GCE

Chief Examiner's Report
Moving Image Arts

Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Education (GCE) in Moving Image Arts for this series.

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

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCE MOVING IMAGE ARTS

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit AS 1 Realist and Formalist Techniques and the Classical Hollywood Style: Foundation Portfolio

The following report outlines the main points arising from this year's moderation process. These are:

• Positive outcomes from the Summer 2017 series;

• Suggestions for improving learning and teaching;

• Teacher assessment; and

• Submission of work for moderation.

Positive Outcomes from the Summer 2017 Series

The introduction of any new specification is challenging in the opening year of its delivery and assessment. Whilst there are certainly a number of recommendations to be taken on board, the team would like to extend a wholehearted congratulations to those of you who have clearly worked extremely hard with your students to produce visually and conceptually complex work, often with numerous impressive results evidenced.

The work produced by many candidates demonstrated high production values, in-depth knowledge and understanding of film language and the production process, as well as clarity of creative purpose. It is vital that we as teaching practitioners continue to push concepts and ideas as much as we do students' efforts to achieve high production values in order to ensure that candidates, from the very outset of their AS year, challenge themselves creatively and use film as an important visual medium for narrative storytelling. In a number of cases, candidates illustrated mature understanding not only of film classics and other art forms, but also of the possibilities film offers to make a statement about contemporary Western society and their individual experience of it. Others used film deliberately and effectively to subvert a more serious approach, to instead incite a humorous response.

It was clearly apparent on many occasions that the whole production process was considered during the teaching and delivery of the subject with effective interweaving of elements informing the next stage of the process. This resulted is some highly sophisticated work with a distinctive, mature quality which was highly commendable considering this was the first year of the revised specification and for many candidates, a completely new subject. Finally, the influence of the Classical Hollywood style with a stylistic, expressive focus on realist and/or formalist techniques was very apparent in much of the work received, and the accompanying CCEA and INTO Film support resources now available have clearly had a definite impact in helping candidates to determine their direction and focus.

Teacher Assessment

Coursework Elements and Assessment Objectives

The standard of work produced by this year's candidates showed a full embracing of the subject's creative ethos with the production of some interesting and really dynamic portfolios. However, the main challenge experienced was in the assessment of this work with the introduction of new elements, reduction in the number of levels available and simply due to the fact that it was the first year of a new specification where level exemplars were not available. This lead to a large majority of centres having marks either amended or adjusted, which was to be expected. In this section, advice will be provided on how improvements could be made in the production of individual elements of the coursework and in the assessment of these.

1   **AO3 – Statement of Intention (including the Synopsis and Evaluation)**

The marking of AO3 entitled 'Statement of Intention', now reflects the mark awarded to the production of a Synopsis, Statement of Intention and Evaluation, with all three elements considered under this one assessment objective. Due to this change within the new specification, it is important to refer closely to the descriptors in the mark grid as the weighting given to the Statement of Intention (including the Synopsis) and Evaluation is not equal. The Statement of Intention has two descriptors allocated to it in the mark grid for AO3 whereas the Evaluation has one descriptor dedicated to it; the remaining descriptor relates to Quality of Written Communication. In the event of a candidate producing an uneven document in terms of a difference in the quality of these two elements, this difference in weighting needs to be taken into consideration. In other words, two thirds of the mark relates to the Statement of Intention whereas one third relates to the Evaluation. This should also be taken into consideration in terms of word count i.e. for the Statement of Intention (including the Synopsis; 1200 – 1750 words); for the Evaluation (600 – 900 words).

The mainly high standard of work produced for this assessment objective reflected the good practice that has developed over the years in the production of Statements of Intention and Evaluations for the legacy specification. Centres should be commended for the evident and continued improvement of candidates' abilities to demonstrate sound knowledge of filmic techniques through clear analysis and evaluation of the creative film-making approaches adopted both in the work of others and subsequently their own productions.

For the purpose of clarity, the two elements of this assessment objective are discussed separately in further detail below.

Statement of Intention (including the Synopsis)

The Statement of Intention clarifies each candidate's overall approach to their Foundation Portfolio. Firstly, candidates must clearly outline their idea for their narrative film sequence in the form of a synopsis. Then, candidates move on to analyse and evaluate the Classical Hollywood Style and/or Realist/Formalist filmic techniques they intend to use in their narrative film sequence through investigation and discussion of these techniques as they have been applied in the work of others. Finally, candidates outline their personal creative goals in light of their investigation into the work of others, and explicitly discuss the specific emotional response they hope to achieve upon their intended audience and how they hope to achieve it.

It was acknowledged in the previous specification that the selection of filmic techniques and inspirations is indeed a challenge. This year, for the majority of candidates, it did not appear to be so much of a difficulty, with the introduction

of additional support addressing this particular issue now provided in the new specification's AS1 Foundation Portfolio booklet. This booklet details Classical Hollywood Style, Realist and/or Formalist techniques across all five film language areas, also providing specific examples of where these techniques can be observed. In addition, many of these clip exemplars are included in the Into Film powerpoint resources which can be used to assist in the teaching of the various techniques. However, candidates should be discouraged from discussing these given exemplars within their own Statement of Intentions, and rather choose genre or stylistically appropriate exemplars that demonstrate the use of a technique to generate a particular emotional response from the audience and which relate directly and specifically to their own creative outcomes. Choice of exemplars is therefore important and needs to be well considered. Some candidates used exemplars taken from episodic television, which were relatively limited in terms of their use of film language. It is important that exemplars that are chosen are sufficiently representative of a suitable range and depth of film language usage.

Candidates who gain marks in the highest level for this AO demonstrate the following attributes. To begin with, a succinct synopsis is provided with potentially a more detailed synopsis produced for AO2b if desired (though this is not specifically necessary). For the main body of the Statement of Intention, well chosen (and suitably compressed) clip exemplars and/or screen shots for each film language area are clearly evident, which reflect the chosen genre and style and also the mood the candidate wishes to create in their narrative film sequence. These will also aim to evoke the particular emotional response which the candidate intends to generate. These clip exemplars and/or screen shots are then accompanied by perceptive analysis of those techniques, which are of key interest in the clip/image provided, and the more able students are able to do this in a concise manner, which is purposeful and focused. Finally, candidates in the highest mark band outline carefully considered personal creative goals through attention given to all five film language areas and make insightful links with the work of others including discussion about the specific emotional response they hope to achieve upon their intended audience.

At the lower end of the marking scale, candidates do not tend to analyse filmic techniques and instead engage in a superficial manner with the material, using objective and descriptive language, with their own creative intentions remaining unclear. In some cases, candidates do produce competent analysis but this may only have tenuous connections to their own intentions, which are not coherent. On the other hand, portfolios may have evidence of coherent personal goals but these are then not related successfully to an analysis of the work of others. It is difficult to award marks beyond a low Level 3 in these cases.

Candidates who have truly invested time and higher order thinking in this element consequently, on the whole, produce work of an impressive level as their own creative intentions are informed by the analysis of the work of others which greatly assists in the selection of stylistic conventions and techniques to be experimented with and produced in their Director's Notebooks. In addition, it helps to inform their analysis of how successfully they have been able to achieve their intentions when completing their final evaluation.

A number of centres made excellent use of subheadings throughout the Statement of Intention to help ensure candidates were addressing all areas of film language. Formatting the document in this manner might assist those candidates who find composing lengthier, analytical pieces of writing challenging and may also help to ensure all five film language areas under Classical Hollywood style with a stylistic, expressive focus of realist and/or formalist techniques are in fact discussed.

On the whole, there was much less focus on biographical information observed in the production of this element this year, which is to be commended. This is not a requirement of any assessment objective within the production of the AS Portfolio. However, overuse of third party source material continues to be an issue. This is a particularly unhelpful approach when the material referenced contains pre-packaged analysis, which the candidate has evidently not performed themselves. Referencing was also an issue and lead to malpractice investigations in a number of cases. Research and reading around candidates' chosen directors and techniques is of course necessary to allow more perceptive and knowledgeable discussion when composing the Statement of Intention, however, full referencing is required in the form of quotation marks where direct quotations have been used in the body of the document and finally a bibliography at the end needs to be included.

Ethics and representation was another area, which the team noted could be addressed more. Where appropriate and valid, candidates should be encouraged to consider issues of ethics and representation where, for example, they are choosing to either reinforce and replicate stereotypical portrayals of characters or indeed on the other hand, challenge these stereotypes through subversion. Little evidence of this learning outcome was evidenced in this year's submission, however candidates' attention should be brought to this issue to help develop and increase understanding of how directors exercise control over the intended portrayal of characters' traits and the message this conveys to their anticipated audiences.

Evaluation

Centres should be commended for the evident work and effort that has been made to help candidates to develop their self-evaluation skills and their appreciation of the importance of audience response. The majority of candidates in this year's submission demonstrated a competent ability to evaluate their own work and reflect technically on the successes of their own practice.

The connection between the Statement of Intention and Evaluation is now firmly established in the new specification, with one relating directly to the other. Therefore in those instances where there is little analysis of the work of others in the Statement of Intention, this is similarly reflected in the Evaluation, as little reference to original intentions is then observed.

Those candidates who produce Evaluations which achieve marks in the highest level of the Assessment Objective (AO3) tend to reflect back on their stated intentions and the techniques observed in the work of others, often presenting a direct visual comparison. This is accompanied by a written evaluation of the techniques they originally intended to use and how effective these ended up being in the final film. Furthermore, stronger candidates are able to discuss in a perceptive manner the effect they feel they have achieved on the audience through using the techniques. Such candidates typically gain feedback after the screening of their film to gauge audience response and to compare whether this correlates with the expectations of mood/atmosphere that they originally outlined in their Statement of Intention. In addition, some act on the feedback given to further improve their film sequence prior to submission. Some candidates include evidence of this first-hand feedback through questionnaire sheets they have specifically developed, demonstrating a clear understanding of the importance of this part of the process.

Candidates at this level reflect honestly on the technical success of their film with coherent suggestions made regarding the improvements that could be made. It has also been observed that some candidates at this level have attempted to overcome the problems they have identified, if circumstances have permitted this, and have made creative decisions that allowed them to make amendments in a proactive manner. In some cases, photographs detailing the technical set ups and effort made to prepare locations have been included to inform the evaluation.

Though observed with much less frequency then in previous exam series, there were still instances this year where candidates wrote their Evaluation in a descriptive manner, concentrating only on the process or focusing only on the problems experienced (e.g. faulty equipment, weather issues, unreliability of actors) as a series of reasons why perhaps their films were not as successful. These types of Evaluations are unlikely to achieve marks in the higher mark bands.

It was also noted this series that the Evaluation has tended to be the element that is rushed or not given the same level of consideration as the rest of the portfolio, leading to the production of an uneven document in terms of quality. In such instances, it is important to note that the Evaluation is worth a third of the marks for this assessment objective, as discussed above.

2 AO2a – Creative Pre-production

AO2a requires candidates to 'apply creative and technical knowledge and skill in the pre-production of moving image products'. There are three distinct elements required for the assessment:

- a Script,

- a Storyboard; and

- a Shot List.

The amount of time, skill and effort in the production of these three documents has previously been acknowledged but was felt to be under rewarded in the legacy specification. Now with the introduction of the new specification considerably more marks are available, with each element given a specific descriptor within the mark grid for Creative Pre-production (AO2a).

As the production of these documents was a familiar requirement from the previous specification, this aspect of the assessment criteria was more readily accessible for the majority of centres. However, with all three elements (script, storyboard and shot list) now a specific necessity, and the number of marks available increased, the new specification now requires marginally more rigour in terms of candidate performance in these areas, and many centres therefore applied the marks available leniently. For example, without submitting all three elements, candidates' marks could not move beyond the bottom of Level 3. There was also evidence at times of preproduction materials that had been clearly created retrospectively. These are planning documents and if minor changes occur during the production they can be mentioned and justified in the Evaluation. It is encouraged that candidates annotate their planning materials as the production of their narrative film sequence progresses as this will provide further evidence that these documents are a continual work in progress, as ideas develop and challenges are overcome.

Scripts

The scripts in most cases were correctly formatted and had been created using an appropriate script writing software (e.g. Celtx). When scripts are correctly formatted, i.e. with correct indentation, Courier font, scene descriptions, transitions, parentheticals, character notes and dialogue cues, they serve as a purposeful

document in helping candidates plan for duration (typically one page of correctly formatted script equates to one minute of screen time). Even where films do not include dialogue, a screenplay is essential. There were also a number of candidates who submitted scripts that only included dialogue and no scene descriptions or directions for performance. It is important that centres advise candidates how to format their scripts correctly, as it is the blueprint of their intended narrative film sequence.

Storyboards

The storyboards submitted this year were generally of a good standard and demonstrated a good understanding of composition including shot type and camera angle. However, there were many that lacked essential annotations or where annotations were too faint or illegible to read. More accomplished storyboards will give an indication, through annotation, of character/camera movement and will indicate sound cues and other important information that is not made obvious through the visuals. Storyboards should also give consideration to the aspect ratio of the film. A number of storyboards were produced in a square format, which restricted the candidate's ability to accurately compose using the rule of thirds.

Storyboards provide candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of continuity editing and the Classical Hollywood Style, however care needs to be exercised in the labelling of shots to ensure they correspond correctly with the framing of the drawn or photographed image. Although the use of storyboarding apps can assist weaker pupils in terms of presentation, some of them evidently hindered students due to the apps' limitations regarding camera angles and shot types. Please note that storyboards can also be photographic but should not be screengrabs from the final film. Finally, storyboards must be clearly and sequentially numbered in order to correspond with the accompanying shot list, and it is important that candidates ensure their storyboards are clear with dark lines used to produce drawings, which must be scanned in correctly so that it they are easily viewed during moderation.

Shot Lists

Shot lists varied in detail this year with some candidates submitting only a list of shots that were not referenced or linked to the submitted storyboard. At the very least, a shot list should include the scene title or number, shot description (camera angle, movement and shot type) and description of action. The more detailed and highly competent shot lists submitted this year gave indication of sound cues, character movement and director's notes. On a number of occasions, candidates who demonstrated a sustained and highly competent ability to organise the production process, used colour coding in the production of their Shot Lists to clearly indicate the various locations they intended filming in.

3   AO2b – Planning, Design and Organisation

The Director's Notebook is the portfolio element that is completely new to the GCE Moving Image Arts Specification. Whilst it has been a requirement of Component 3 in the revised GCSE MIA Specification since its introduction three years ago, this element has proved to be the most challenging for centres at AS this year, both regarding the content to be included and the marking of the material.

The main purpose of this portfolio element is to evidence candidates' ability to plan, design and organise in preparation for filming. Primarily, it should contain purposeful first hand evidence of candidates attempt to try out the filmic techniques they have written about in their Statement of Intention. This enables candidates to then make suitable, well-considered judgements about the effectiveness of these creative

techniques rather than leaving this until the final filming of their narrative sequence, by which stage the pressure of time will make it difficult to change or correct issues experienced. The emphasis therefore is on the application of knowledge and skill through essentially visual evidence of candidates own planning, organising, designing and management of resources, rather than either repeating the analysis of visual influences already explored in their Statement of Intention (AO3) or using the Director's Notebook as an extension of AO3 with further analysis of clips or screen shots.

Candidates should be encouraged to select purposeful influences and creative techniques, perhaps already covered in their Statement of Intention, and then present evidence of how they have tried out relevant and specific techniques or experimented with the photography of a particular visual style alongside the secondary screen shot or clip included. In this case, candidates should clearly label their secondary source and then their first hand evidence so that the moderator can easily recognise the distinction.

Candidates who attained marks in the highest mark band also provided commentary on the success of these trial exercises and the changes they implemented regarding their planning for their narrative film sequence as a result. Such candidates also ensured that the knowledge and skills demonstrated were related explicitly to their own intentions for their narrative film sequence rather than producing more generic material, which was not related to their intended visual style or genre. Examples of experimenting with editing, camera or sound techniques can be submitted alongside the PDF of the written material, where the separately compressed .mov files are labelled carefully to correspond with the page in the PDF that the work relates to (e.g. 71000_1234_pg12).

Further evidence of work produced by those candidates who achieved high marks in this element included: photographs (or sketches if doing animation) assessing the suitability of locations for filming audio and video; examples of ideas for costume, make-up trials and character design; experimentation (photographic, audio and visual) with stylistic conventions; management of the proposed film shoot in accordance with health and safety considerations; and/or use of written materials such as call sheets and shooting schedules to manage time, people and resources.

It must be noted that it is not a requirement for all of these resources to be evidenced as undoubtedly this would lead to candidates producing Director's Notebooks that far exceed the 10-20 pages requirement. But instead candidates need to be discerning in the material included within this element to ensure it is purposeful and well-considered in relation to the knowledge and skill required to allow them to successfully plan for the production of their own narrative film sequence.

Whilst, on a number of occasions, there was a pleasing variety in the presentation of the Director's Notebooks, some candidates who achieved marks in the lower mark bands submitted detailed biographical research into the life and works of various film practitioners. Such information is not a requirement of any Assessment Objective within the Foundation Portfolio. Many candidates' Director's Notebooks were dominated by secondary source material, which was not accompanied by primary investigation. This demonstrated limited evidence of visual and contingency planning with regard to the candidate's own intended narrative film sequence and therefore brought marks down.

Finally, candidates should be made aware that this portfolio element should be completed in advance of filming and editing their narrative film sequence to enhance the quality of their final product.

4 AO2a – Creative Production and Post-production

The revised specification requires candidates to focus on the use of specific filmic techniques to produce a narrative sequence that creates atmosphere, character emotion and an intended audience response. In the majority of centres, these elements were fully embraced, with some fascinating and highly commendable results. The emphasis on production values, creative purpose and technical control continue to be paramount in the marking of this assessment objective and narrative is now also an essential and explicit consideration in the new specification.

The main difficulty experienced in the marking of this portfolio element was adjusting to the reduction from five mark bands to four – which has meant in general terms that each level has now moved down one. In other words, the old Level 5 is now the new Level 4; the old Level 4 is now the new Level 3; the old Level 3 is now the new Level 2; and finally the old Levels 1 and 2 are now the new Level 1. Some centres found it challenging to reflect this adjustment in the marks applied leading to many candidates being generously marked across different areas of the portfolio, including the film. It is hoped, in the longer term, that the smaller mark range will ultimately assist in increased accuracy of marking (compared to the very large mark range in the previous specification). This will be further supported by detailed exemplar material provided at Agreement Trial, where candidate work will be clearly placed at the top, middle or bottom of each level and can be referred to during marking.

In the work submitted for this element, it is clear that the application of Classical Hollywood style and the stylistic influence of formalist and/or realist techniques has been encouraged and promoted. Centres are to be highly commended in their approach to this new facet within the first year of the new specification. Some centres produced highly stylised and expressive work, where others focused on more realist techniques and discreet visual storytelling. The quality of work produced mainly showed consideration of a wide range of themes and genres provoking a variety of intended audience responses with evidence of a progressive approach to the teaching of this subject. A variety of filmic styles and directors were referenced and, at their best, final film projects often showed mature creative thinking and high technical accomplishment. There were some fabulous examples of animations demonstrating high technical control and ability in a range of animation skills such as 2D, 3D, clay animation and pixilation products, though, as in previous years, the number of animations submitted continues to reduce and be significantly smaller than the number of live action productions.

The sophistication of the work produced by many centres is to be commended as seen through the excellent understanding of film language techniques, creative work and skilled technical control. There was clear evidence again that candidates in most centres had engaged with work from a wide variety of genres resulting in the continued selection of auteur film-makers and cinematographers such as Alfred Hitchcock, Roger Deakins, Quentin Tarantino etc. Such breadth in terms of influences and visual styles adopted in the creation of a narrative film sequence is to be very much encouraged and serves to illustrate the endless creative possibilities offered in the production of moving image arts products. Sound understanding of the complexity of film language was often most evident in the expressive framing of shots where some beautiful focus control was demonstrated with intentional variation in the depth of field.

Clear consideration of settings and mise-en-scéne by many candidates is also to be commended, and it is an aspect of candidates' visual storytelling and creativity which is improving year on year at AS. Please note, that candidates should be discouraged from filming in school unless the school setting is directly relevant, or unless sufficient effort has been made to create credible and realistic mise-en-scéne. A limited choice

of location can bring down the overall quality of the final film.

In the stronger final products, evidence of effective use of multi-layered sound and detailed consideration of lighting for expressive purposes were demonstrated to enhance mood and meaning. For a significant number of candidates, there were instances of some very beautiful and thoughtful cinematography where the production values had been very carefully considered leading to visually exciting and imaginative final films. The use of additional lighting would have benefited some candidates, for although they discussed employing low-key lighting in AO3, it was at times extremely difficult to see the action on screen. Perhaps this is an area which could be focused on during pre-production in the Director's Notebook in order to trial such techniques. Candidates who appropriately considered, planned and designed sound as a key element of film language usually accessed the higher mark bands. This is also an especially important area in the production of animations. Diegetic sound lends atmosphere and life to film products and is an essential component for engaging an audience. In the production of live action films, it is rarely advisable for all diegetic sound to be stripped from the final product and replaced with a single music track.

Some candidates are favouring more and more complex plots by often exploring recurring themes of self-esteem, steroid abuse, suicide and domestic violence; some of which rely heavily on dialogue rather than visual storytelling. This can diminish the production values of their work, especially when the casting of characters or choices regarding locations have not been well-considered. In addition, there is a high level of cinematic and technical skill particularly in the recording and editing of sound, which is of paramount importance when choosing to include significant amounts of dialogue.

More often, a clearer, straightforward narrative helps to create a more accessible final product with an emphasis on employing visual storytelling techniques that allow for technical and creative skill to be shown thoroughly throughout. On the other hand, some higher achieving candidates successfully presented non-linear narratives, with flashbacks, voiceovers and twist endings that allowed them to expressively communicate their creative intentions. However, centres are discouraged from adopting formulaic approaches to the structure of candidates' films, which could make the assessment of creativity challenging. House styles and themes only serve to limit candidates' own creativity.

Editing is a vital component of film-making and skilful editing can have a great impact on the success of the final piece. Candidates who achieved grades towards the lower end of the mark range often demonstrated a lack of understanding of continuity editing (or its deliberate subversion for specific effect); pace and timing of shots; and their effect on the audience. In addition, centres should also advise students to properly match footage formats to editing sequence formats. There was evidence to suggest that some candidates may have made their editing harder by not following correct sequence setting instructions.

Finally, the increased access to DLSRs and further advanced editing tools continues to be apparent, leading to a rise in the technical and aesthetic quality of many film products. However, the moderation team are very careful to ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged through lack of access to high-end equipment.

5   AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding of Film Language (whole portfolio)

The mark for this portfolio element is applied at the end of the marking process when the rest of the portfolio has been marked. It is to award candidates' marks for the knowledge and understanding they have shown of film language, styles, practices, techniques, movements and contexts across the full portfolio.

This mark should be applied holistically, taking into account the levels it achieves in each individual portfolio element and then agreeing a final, representative mark/level for the whole portfolio. A simple formula, used as a starting point, can help you find an average overall mark.

Add up the marks given to the other assessment objectives (i.e. AO3 (Statement of Intention); AO2a (Script, Storyboard and Shot List); AO2b (Director's Notebook); and AO2a (Narrative Film Sequence) and divide by their total (110), then multiply by the total AO1 mark (x 10).

AO3: Level 3 (11)

AO2a: Level 4 (16)

AO2b: Level 2 (4)

AO2a: Level 3 (13/39)

Total: 70 ÷ 110 = 0.63 x 10 = 6 marks for AO1 (Level 3)

With the mark provided by the formula as a starting point, use the AO1 mark band descriptors to inform and finalise your mark decision.

This portfolio element is a further new feature of the revised specification and, on the whole, centres applied the marks fairly accurately. On occasion, leniency was applied where marks in the highest level were applied when perceptive knowledge and understanding of Classical Hollywood Style, Realist and/or Formalist conventions and techniques had not been demonstrated across the rest of the portfolio. Through use of the quick mathematical formula outlined above, this should be easily addressed for the next examination series.

Submission of Work for Moderation

For the successful submission of coursework, it should be formatted, saved and compressed according to CCEA instructions to centres and submitted, at the latest, by the final coursework deadline. One pen drive containing the coursework for each centre/consortium should be submitted for each assessment unit/GCE Level. Each student's folder should be named with their student number, centre number, and should contain four files:

1 AO3 (Statement of Intention and Evaluation)

These two essays should be combined and submitted as one single PDF document. Candidates may also wish to submit a Keynote/Powerpoint version of their essay if they have included film/sound clips. The file size of each one should be no more than 300Mb.

2 AO2a (Script, Shot List, Storyboard)

All 3 elements should be compressed as one single PDF document. Word/Pages documents are not acceptable as they can cause formatting issues.

3 AO2b (Director's Notebook)

Candidates should submit their notebook as a single .PDF file. Where the candidate wishes to include short film clips (or experiments), each one should be correctly compressed and labelled to correspond with the page in the PDF that the .mov file relates to e.g. (71000_1234_pg12).

4 AO2a (Narrative Film Sequence)

Please refer to the CCEA Moving Image Arts microsite for compression settings. Candidates should submit 1 single film file (.mov or .mp4).

All coursework should be submitted in the appropriate, correctly compressed format as outlined in the Instructions to Teachers guidance, which is available from the CCEA Moving Image Arts microsite in January each year.

In conclusion – thank you.

Moving Image Arts undoubtedly continues to be a uniquely multi-faceted school subject, offering inimitable avenues for self-learning, time-management, teamwork and also, importantly, self-expression. Its challenges for candidates are considerable, ranging from the purely logistical to the management of conceptual, technical and emotive content. Evidence of this can be seen in the quality of much of the work submitted by candidates this year, which once again demonstrated the opportunities this subject presents to achieve remarkable visual, creative and conceptual standards.

Thank you very much to each and every one of you who continue to work so hard in enabling our young people to access this incomparable subject and in helping them to develop a range of creative, technical and personal skills which will benefit them for years to come.

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit AS 2 Critical Response

The new format of the revised AS examination presented a number of challenges to candidates. With a few exceptions, time management or length of answer did not seem to be an issue with the majority of candidates managing their time correctly between the recall questions (Question 1 and Question 3), where several short paragraphs suffice and the scene analysis (Question 2 and Question 4), where a more in depth response is required.

With recall questions featuring on the AS examination for the first time, it was perhaps to be expected that these would present the most challenge to candidates.

Section A

Alfred Hitchcock and the Classical Hollywood Style

Q1   There were a number of issues with candidate responses to Question 1 though overall, the cohort performed well here.

When answering this question, candidates need to distinguish between elements of film language and specific conventions of the Classical Hollywood Style. Too many candidates choose to discuss general elements of film language such as sound, cinematography, editing and mise-en-scene, rather than conventions of the continuity style specifically. These candidates recorded a low score in Question 1 as marks could only be awarded for knowledge demonstrated of specific conventions of the Classical Hollywood Style.

In the following example of a Question 1 response, the candidate is discussing film language – editing and mise-en-scene, rather the conventions of the continuity style.

"Editing - the pace of editing in film can set the tone for the action of a scene or the entirety of the film. Action movies tend to have fast editing with many cuts, whereas a drama might have slower cuts until tension builds.

Mise-en-scene - the mise-en-scene of any film is important because it gives a look into what the scene entails or is used to create an atmosphere. Certain little things or props can be the distinguishing feature to the audience so it is important that it is included in a position that it will be seen."

Only the stylistic conventions of the continuity style are relevant to this question. The response below, for example, does not refer to these;

"Another convention of classical hollywood was the use of star power. As the films success usually relied a lot on who directed or acted in the film acted as an endoresement to the fans. This is related to the french film critics thoery of the auteur."

Another common misinterpretation of Question 1 was candidates' approach to shot types. Some candidates chose to discuss the use of the close-up and establishing shot as two separate conventions of the Classical Hollywood Style. This cannot be permitted as the question requires candidates to show knowledge and understanding of a range of conventions of the continuity style. If candidates choose to discuss three shot types, then this shows a very narrow range of knowledge. In future, camera framing, composition or shot types will only be accepted as a single convention. Candidates can then discuss either a range of different shot types or one single shot type in more detail to reflect their knowledge of that convention.

Many candidates were not able to provide accurate explanations of three conventions of the Classical Hollywood Style, as in this example;

> "Another convention of the classical Hollywood style would be continuity editing. The purpose of this editing style and classical Hollywood style is to make a film seen as if that it was shot in one long continious shot, this is done by small invisible cuts. One final convention of the classical Hollywood style would be the use of non-digetic sound. This is when sounds that only occur in the film would be used and the purpose of this is to make the audience feel as if they are in the film."

Candidates must ensure that they are familiar with the conventions of the continuity style and can provide accurate descriptions of each convention selected. The 180 degree rule was a convention that many candidates failed to provide an accurate explanation for. There were many examples of partial explanations that prevented candidates gaining full marks, as in the following example;

> "The third convention of the Classical Hollywood Style is the use of the 30 degree rule in which the camera must not cut to a position within 30 degrees of the previous shot. This is used to keep continuity between between shots as 2 shots within 30 degrees of each other look very similar to a jump cut which is a means of breaking continuity and allowing the audience to realise they are watching a movie."

Question 1 required candidates to identify and explain the creative purpose of each of the three selected conventions of the Classical Hollywood Style. For the following candidate, it was the purpose of the tracking shot that needed to be explained, rather than the technical reason for employing a dolly;

> "A second convention of the Classical Hollywood Style is use of dollys for tracking shots. These dollys help create a smooth movement for the camera and help keep the audience unaware of the shakiness of the camera. This helps keep the audinece emersed in the film and not realise it is a film. These are used within a majority of Hitchcocks films such as some of the tracking shots in "Psycho"."

The following candidate provided two incorrect explanations of the establishing shot and cross-cutting and chose a third element which is not a convention of the Classical Hollywood Style;

> "One convention of the Classical Hollywood style is the establishing shot. The establishing shot is used in the Classical Hollywood style in order for the shots to run smooth and seamless throughout which creates a nice effect towards the audience as the scene plays out. The establishing shot is commonly used in Classical Hollywood films as it makes the audience not distracted by an overwhelming use of shots, therefore they can stay focused on the action of the scene.
>
> Another convention of the Classical Hollywood style in the use of crosscutting. Crosscutting is used in order to make the audience see both perspectives of each of the characters whcih makes them feel more involved. Crosscutting is used in Classical Hollywood films such as Psycho, by Alfred Hitchcock. In the shower scene within Psycho, there is crosscutting between the perspective of the killer and the woman in the shower, which adds to the tension within the scene.
>
> Another convention of the Classical Hollywood Style is location shooting. Location shooting is used in order for the scene look much more realistic and natural, not distracting from the ongoing scene. The location shooting also does not only make the scene more realsitic, but in makes it much more interesting and aesthetically pleasing for the audience to see, giving them a better

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understanding to what is going on within the scene."

As in the above example, some candidates chose to discuss Hitchcock's techniques, rather than more conventional techniques of the continuity style. This can cause problems, as in this example.

> "Seemless continuety is another prominant technique in the Classical Hollywood style, whether that be through the use of editing or that be in the style that it is filmed in. An example of this comes from the movie rope which is created by Hitchcok. This movie was filmed in one take, as a result the movie flows effertlessly through the use of camer techniques such as transition through a fade by covering the chracter by an object.

> Alfred Hitchcock used montage in some of his films the reason for this is to create a dramatic effect on the audience, building up tension and anxiety. An example of where Hitchcock used montage is within the shower scene in Phsyco (1960). In this scene rapid montage is used to intercut between the killer Norman and the victum. Each intercut is used to match the stabbing of the knife, the killer raises the knife the camera intercuts to the vicum as the knife comes down."

Montage editing as Hitchcock employed it in Psycho was not a common convention of the continuity style. Future candidates should be advised that this question requires them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the common conventions of the Classical Hollywood Style as used by directors throughout the Hollywood Studio System.

Some candidates discussed Pure Cinema as a convention of the Classical Hollywood Style, as in this example:

> "Pure cinema - With pure cinema it means dialogue is not needed or not important. Diretors like Hitchcock would rather used comes to tell their story. Hitchcock believe that dialogue was a step backwards for movie making. He would much more perfer to use music instead to convey emtion or to ttory. Hitchcock believe that dialouge was a step backwards for movie making. He would much more perfer to use music instead to convey emtion or tell the story."

Pure Cinema is Hitchcock's personal approach to film-making, rather than a convention of the Classical Hollywood Style.

Another misinterpretation of Question 1 by several candidates was the decision to discuss realist conventions of the continuity style, as in the following example.

> "One convention of classical hollywood style is the long take. This descirbes one contiunous shot that is in progess without a cut. The purpose of this shot is to allow the viewer to take in as much information as possible as it gives them more time to capture what is happening on screen, it also provides the scene with a greater sense of realism as the audience is found unaware of the camera techniques being us. Almost as though the actions on screen are being captured by some unseen observer.

> Another convention of the classical hollywood style is the technique of the hand-held camera. This style of shooting makes the shot appear shakey while giving it a more intimate feels as it gives a better sense of reality to the viewer.

> Another convention of the classical hollywood style is the use of CCTV cameras. Using footage filmed from a cctv camera helps enhance the sense of realism in the scene, in aprtiuclar it provides the audience with news footage alowing the scene to become a better imitation of reality."

While the long take was employed under the studio system by directors such as Orson Welles, it was not a mainstream convention of the Classical Hollywood Style. The use of hand-held camera technique and CCTV camera footage did not arrive until much later and are part of the visual style of contemporary Hollywood, not the classical period. Future candidates should avoid discussing realist conventions, unless specifically asked to do so in the question.

Q2 The majority of candidates were able to correctly interpret the question and demonstrate solid knowledge and understanding of key elements of Hitchcock's visual style. Some candidates were able to draw on their study of Hitchcock's use of high angle framing or the evocative music of composer Bernard Hermann.

There was a disappointing number of candidates, however, who could not identify the use of POV shots in the sequence. A very common mistake was for candidates to wrongly identify POV shots as eyeline matches or shot reverse shots, as in the following examples;

> "Hitchcock uses eyeline matches throughout the beginning of the scene as to allow the audience to take in the scene of the house."

> "Hitchcock uses shot reverse shot which is a form of realism, to show the detective standing at the front door, looking at the top of the stairs, back to him, looking down the hall, back to him and looking at a door next the the bottom of the stairs then back to him…."

> "…when the character entires the scene we can see the camera move from a mid shot to an eyeline match, this is used to let the audience know what the character is looking at, in this scene we can see him looking at the staircase."

> "The camera then uses an eyeline match to intercut to what the character is looking at."

These are all descriptions of Hitchcock's use of the POV shot. Candidates need to be employing the correct terminology if they are to be rewarded for their knowledge of Hitchcock's stylistic techniques.

Editing was by far the weakest area of analysis with many candidates failing to discuss the pace of editing throughout the sequence or the dynamic cutting at the climax of the sequence. Most candidates failed to mention one of the key moments of dynamic editing in the sequence when Hitchcock cuts suddenly from a high angle, bird's eye view of the staircase and hallway to a close-up of the detective's face.

There were a number of instances of candidates wrongly employing the term cross-cutting in their analysis of editing. For example,

> "Crosscutting is used throughout the beginning of the seqeunce first showing the character in shot and then the point of view of the character."

Inaccurate descriptions of camera and editing technique continued to cost candidates marks.

> "We then see the camera cut…"

> "The camera intercuts…"

These inaccuracies are easily avoided if the candidate substitutes the word 'director' or 'shot' for camera.

Section B

Formalism: Early European Cinema and American Expressionism

Q3 The majority of candidates performed better in this recall question than in Question 1, demonstrating good knowledge and understanding of noir techniques such as chiaroscuro lighting and archetypes such as the femme fatale. Many candidates were able to refer to classic noirs such as Double Indemnity in an informed and relevant manner.

Candidates were not always accurate in the elements of Film Noir that they chose to discuss. There were several instances of candidates choosing to discuss expressionist lighting as one element of Film Noir and shadows and silhouettes as a second element. For example;

> "Film Noir uses hard, low key, high contrasting lighting through a large proportion of their films. This is used to help create dramatic shadows on characters faces as to help either hide the characters identity or to show emotion on the characters faces. This type of lighting is known as chiarascuro lighting.

> Film Noir is also very famous for the character of a femme fatale which is a female character, often very beautiful as to seduct the main character, often a detective and manipulate him into doing her bidding. A prime example of this type of character is the cartoon in the red dress from 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit'.

> The last element of Film Noir is the use of silhouettes, these shadows help create a sense of mystery to a character and often cam make them much more threatening. These silhouettes are ofte used to either keep a character's identity a mystery or just before their identity is revealed. A great example of this is in Tim Burton's "Batman" in which Batman is cast in silhouette before beating up the antagonists and then his identity is revealed. Batman is a very heavily Film Noir (Neo-Noir) inspired movie due to the low key lighting and the mysterious crime fighter narrative."

Chiaroscuro lighting and shadows and silhouettes are in fact one element of the visual style of Film Noir, not two, and therefore can only be counted once.

Candidates also dropped marks by choosing to discuss elements that are not unique to Film Noir such as costumes or the use of black and white cinematography. For example;

> "Black and White to show a high contrasting set and image quality. The use of the black and white filming was used to post war, (world war 2) and made film making inexpensive and known to be one of the classic effects within that period of time or any film noir inspired films."

> "Costumes played a huge role within the Film Noir movies as they identified the characters. Below are the different characters and their costumes so that the audience could easily identify them.

> Detectives' wore a fedora hat, trench coat, and suit like attire. These roles were mostly played by male actors.

> Femfetals' wore red lipstick and a glamourous dress that exposed some skin. These were the characters that could manipulate men. These roles were played by female actresses.

Gang members' wore a suit and lots of jewerly including gold rings. Playing cards, alcohol and cigarrets could be seen arounf them also. These characters were mostly playedby the mae gender. However in most film noir movies all of the lead characters may been seen smoking."

Q4 The majority of candidates were able to draw upon their knowledge and understanding of Expressionism making the stylistic link to silent classics of Weimar cinema such as The Cabinet of Dr Caligari and Nosferatu. Many candidates were already familiar with the film or were able to make the connection with Tim Burton's expressionist style. There was also confident knowledge demonstrated of the horror genre and horror archetypes such as the vampires and ghosts.

One of the key challenges for candidates in Question 4 was to achieve a balance across the three areas of film language referenced in the question. Some candidates lost marks by discussing the musical score and limiting the time that they had to analyse camera technique, lighting and mise-en-scène.

While most candidates were able to discuss key elements of the mise-en-scene and camera technique, many candidates did not provide enough detail on the spatial distortion, skewed perspectives, off-centre framing and unbalanced compositions – all the hallmarks of Expressionism that are employed extensively throughout the sequence.

While all candidates commented on the spooky and ghoulish mood, only a minority of candidates discussed the dark humour and mock fright featured throughout the sequence. There were some fine examples of independent thinking regarding camera technique. For example;

"The camera flows throught the set as though the audience are ghosts."

"Tim Burton employs this fluid camera technique to emulate the feeling of walking into an unknown world and beginning an adventurous journey."

A number of candidates also compared the swirling motion of the forward tracking camera to a rollercoaster ride or ghost train.

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