This report is provided for the first year of implementation of this study and is based on the coursework audit and Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) statistical data.

**UNIT 3**  
**GENERAL COMMENTS**

2012 saw the introduction of the revised VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016 and a new approach to the Coursework audit in Media.


The audit collected a large sample of school documentation, teacher resources, and assessment tasks. Student handouts and examples of student work were submitted from an extended number of schools across the state. All work was reviewed and feedback provided to schools as appropriate. Generally the documentation demonstrated a thorough understanding of and engagement with the revised study design for 2012–2016. However it was apparent that teachers at some schools may have noted the similarities with the previous study design at the expense of appreciating the differences located in the VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016.

Teachers are advised to read the study design not only in terms of what is familiar but also in terms of the subtle changes and developments from the previous study that are reflected in the refinement of key knowledge and skills. The ‘Advice for teachers’ section of the study design, the assessment handbook, administrative advice for school-based assessment, responses to frequently asked questions and list of resources support the current study and provide teachers with information to assist implementation and assessment. The sample examination paper, specifications and VCE Media examinations and reports from 2012 are also valuable resources that can provide insight into the specificities and breadth of learning required when addressing school assessment, coursework and tasks.

The most important shift in emphasis now featuring in the current study design VCE Media 2012–2016 is the explicit embedding of notions of audience in each area of study. Whilst audience is naturally at the heart of every aspect of media, consideration of this centrality in relation to the impact of technologies, production, distribution, consumption and reading(s) within society on audience expectations and experience of media has broadened.

It is important to note that the area of study introduction for each unit sets the context for the preceding outcome statements, key knowledge and key skills. This is valuable information in determining the direction and scope for each outcome. The area of study introduction provides breadth and depth and serves to frame the key knowledge and skills specified in dot points.
In audit and review it was evident that some schools continue to select media texts for study that may not fully provide for students to fully address all key knowledge and skills required by Unit 3 Area of Study 1 – Narrative and Unit 4 – Area of Study 2 – Media texts and society’s values. VCE Media study 2012–2016 may require schools to consider new texts and support materials. In the case of Unit 3, Outcome 1, Narrative; texts should be selected that allow students to demonstrate knowledge of the relationships between the text, its audiences; consumption and reception, and a study of how audiences read and are engaged by fictional narratives. For Unit 4, Outcome 2, Media texts and society’s values; the selected idea, value attitude or discourse will determine the most appropriate range of texts suitable for study. For this area of study, the selection of texts will be primarily based on how well they can demonstrate the idea, value, attitude or discourse selected for study. This includes a consideration for how representations are constructed and distributed within the texts. The selected texts must provide students with the opportunity to analyse, compare and contrast representations. In Unit 4, Outcome 3, Media Influence; students should study theories of audience, their relationship with communication theories and models, and the application of media theory to a variety of media forms and texts.

Some texts will be more suitable than others and teachers should carefully consider the needs and interests of their school environment to support selection. The independent subject association Australian Teachers of Media can provide feedback from experienced teachers to assist text selection. All teachers should measure final selection against the requirements of the study design.


The audit and review program identified that many schools were able to provide adequate class time for the School-assessed Task with some further supervised access time outside of regular teaching. Teachers were able to demonstrate the authentication of their students’ progress in the School-assessed Task through regular annotation and note taking recorded on the Authentication Record Form, located in the 2012 Administrative advice for school-based assessment. Unfortunately, it was evident from the material provided that some teachers had allowed students to have media products printed externally. This is not appropriate, the study states on page 23 of VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016, that ‘…digital images and print productions must be photographed and/or scanned, manipulated and printed by the student.’ and on page 26 continues to reference student printing, ‘…on the equipment available to them at the school.’ Students who have media products produced externally are in breach of the study and unable to adequately address assessment criteria, in particular, criterion 5; Skill in the operation of equipment and use of materials and processes appropriate to the selected media form.

Furthermore teachers must be accountable to the authentication record form that provides a record of the monitoring of student work in process to ensure that the work is the student’s own. Evidence collected also identified a concern for the misinterpretation of the relationship between the design plan and the production process demonstrated in some student work samples that diarised the making of a product and reorganised the plan post production. This approach is incorrect. The study requires students to produce a media production design plan in Unit 3 that has been informed by completed media production exercises. The design plan records the preproduction process and must be completed and assessed as satisfactory prior to undertaking the production and postproduction stages of the media product in Unit 4.
Resources

Media is well served by a range of high quality resources that schools may use in the construction and administration of their teaching and learning programs. These resources vary in their approach, quality and depth.

The audit and review did identify a number of schools had used commercially available assessment tasks to address assessment requirements. Unfortunately not all tasks presented addressed the specific key knowledge and skills required for each outcome. The VCE Media Assessment Handbook 2012–2016 is located at; www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/media/mediaindex.aspx#H2N10064

The handbook offers important information to support the development and/or review of appropriate assessment tasks for each outcome.

Schools using publications and resources from different sources other than the VCAA should consider the range available and carefully select with a clear reference to the VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016.

Assessment and task development

In terms of assessment of School-assessed Coursework, schools audited generally chose to assess students with structured short and/or extended answer questions administered and supervised under exam conditions. Many tasks referenced past VCE Media examination papers, drawing upon questions to inform both formative and summative assessment. Whilst the structure of past exam questions may provide students with an experience of the language and form of assessment aligned with the November examination, the content and direction differ from previous years and is not fully comprehensive of the requirements for VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016.

Some tasks presented by schools measured students’ ability to apply their knowledge and skills to previously unseen material. These types of questions encourage students to comprehend the study of Media as one of application, interpretation and analysis rather than simply memory. Assessment task questions should provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate higher order thinking. Appropriate assessment tasks should not add unduly to student workload and should be conducted as part of the teaching and learning program. Schools need to ensure that no student is disadvantaged; therefore assessment tasks must allow all students to have the opportunity to demonstrate the highest level of performance. Coursework tasks must be designed around and be compliant with the VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016.

When developing appropriate and robust assessment tasks teachers should review the following checklist;

- Is task type correct?(as specified in the study design)
- Have all important aspects of the outcome, key knowledge and key skills been included?
- Can all students access the language employed in the task?
- Does the task reflect the language and terminology of the study?
- Does the task over or under assess the students? For example are students required to present too many/too few examples for too many/too few marks?
- Does the task require students to draw on essential knowledge? (typically a task should not focus on a narrow set of key knowledge)
- Is measurement of skills and knowledge appropriate? Will the task overly assist the student?
- Does the task allow for differentiation between student performance levels?
- Can the task provide opportunity for students to achieve a high level of performance? (tasks should include lower, medium and higher order thinking questions)
- Is the time and location adequate for the task?
• Is the task conducted under appropriate conditions?
• Has all appropriate information, including, an outline of the task, requirements, assessment conditions and criteria been made available to the student in the appropriate time for preparation to address the task?

In the work presented for the audit review program, questions in assessment tasks generally assessed content rather than skill. This was particularly the case when short answer form questions were used. Such questions are reassuringly simple for students to understand and easy to mark but provide fewer opportunities for demonstrating the ability to apply knowledge in a range of situations. Both short answer and extended response type questions should allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skill at the highest level. Extended response questions should be scaffolded for students through the provision of a range of dot points to be covered in their responses. Students should be given the opportunity over the course of the assessment program to apply their knowledge and skill using the full range of instructional verbs they will find in the study design and past exam papers.

One way to develop and test students’ deeper knowledge and skill is to set questions using previously unseen material or material from texts that have not been covered in class but are similar to those that have. For example, in Unit 3 Outcome 1 an analysis of stills from a film or a short segment of video could be used as a prompt for both formative and summative assessment task questions to test whether students can analyse, apply and synthesise their knowledge. In Unit 4 Outcome 2 students could be asked to compare a segment from a text that has not been previously seen but is representative of the discourse studied in class. In Unit 4 Outcome 3 students could be provided with a piece of evidence about media influence and be asked to analyse its underlying assumptions.

When devising assessment tasks teachers should create an assessment guide that links the requirements of each question with the marks allocated. The guide is useful when marking student responses to ensure that all work is marked equitably and also forms a valuable tool for providing specific advice to students about their performance and how to develop knowledge and skills for the November examination.

It is apparent that there is some confusion between the nature and function of formative and summative assessment. Formative assessments are the assessment tasks or exercises which occur during the teaching activities and are continuous. The student's performances on these tasks are used by the teacher to make decisions about where the teaching needs to go next in order to assist that student's learning. It is part of the teaching cycle and not part of grading.

Schools should provide a range of formative assessment opportunities during the teaching and learning phase of an outcome to develop students’ understanding of their knowledge and skills. Formative assessment allows students and teachers to identify areas where further attention to skill and knowledge development is required. It is a valuable tool for evaluating and adjusting the teaching program to develop deeper learning and address shortcomings. Research reveals that student achievement is enhanced by frequent and varied formal and informal formative assessment with rapid and personalised feedback as a regular part of the teaching and learning program (Hattie, 2010, 2012).

Summative assessment is the product of 'on-balance' judgment based on an accumulated range of assessment sources to determine what the student has achieved and learnt at the end of a unit of study. Summative assessment is based upon the accumulated learning that has taken place over a period of time and can also be diagnostic in nature.

Assessing performance and providing feedback
Students should be provided with the criteria that will be used to assess their performance during the teaching and learning phase for each outcome. Assessment criteria should be made explicit to students. The work presented for review revealed that not all students were aware of the specific criteria on which they were to be assessed.
A range of approaches to the creation of assessment rubrics and reporting on performance was evident in the work presented for review. Successful techniques included adapting VCAA performance descriptors to create a rubric that links key knowledge and skills to levels of performance.

Performance descriptors for each outcome in Units 3 and 4 are published in the Assessment Handbook [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/media/mediaindex.aspx](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/media/mediaindex.aspx) to assist teachers in making an ‘on balance’ judgment about a student’s level of performance on an outcome. This is different to the satisfactory or unsatisfactory address of the outcome. A student’s address of assessment criteria will identify the level of achievement a student has attained. Teachers are advised to use these performance descriptors to create a rubric or other marking scheme. For each aspect of knowledge and skill a range of terms are used to describe the various levels of performance. These can be used to form the basis of a marking scheme. For example, the identification and analysis of production and story elements in fictional media texts can be described as:

- Insightful
- Informed
- Relevant
- General
- Limited
- Not shown

Performance descriptors need to be broken down to be of use to students who may, for example, demonstrate a relevant identification of production elements, an insightful identification of story elements and a general analysis of each.

It is not useful to provide performance descriptors to students without an explanation of each term together with advice on what would be expected at each level of performance and including information about how to develop the knowledge and skills needed to perform at the highest level.

Students must be scored on criteria that are aligned to that of the VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016. It is not appropriate to add criteria for spelling and expression, meeting due dates and the like. Administration of penalties for punctuality, are a whole school administrative matter and should be directed to the VCE coordinator and accountable to school policy.

Feedback to students is a major function of School-assessed coursework. It should be personalised, timely, note the strengths and weaknesses evident in student responses and provide suggestions for further study in order for students to improve their knowledge, skills and performance in readiness for the November examination. Suggestions should include how to develop the knowledge and skills appropriate to an outcome and how to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the time and form required by assessment task and examination conditions. The single provision of numerical levels of achievement against questions or responses constitutes summative but not formative feedback and is of little use to students seeking to improve their performance.

An important part of both formative and summative assessment is feedback to students that allows them to consider the following questions:

- What level is my knowledge and skill at this time?
- What do I aim to achieve and what areas do I need to develop?
- What do I need to do to improve? And how can I do this?

Feedback should be provided in a range of forms: orally and in writing to individual students and groups. Feedback should be provided to students as soon as practicable after an assessment task.
Media terminology

The work presented by schools for audit and review demonstrated that schools are modelling the language of media in written documentation. This practice is generally sound. Although student work submitted was too often less polished in the use of appropriate media language and terminology. Teachers should make use of written feedback to correct imprecision and to model the language students are required to use.

Some schools presented tasks and notes to students that used language from the previous. This is most unhelpful to students as key knowledge and skill to be addressed across both Units 3 and 4 acknowledges the use and application of appropriate media language and terminology. It is important that students understand and use all terms in the VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016. One way to facilitate this is to create a glossary of all terms and their definitions. Students can then provide examples of each to test their understanding of each term.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Media Unit 3 Coursework

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the nature and function of production and story elements in narrative media texts, and discuss the impact of these elements on audience engagement.

This outcome will contribute 40 possible marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3. It will be assessed by one or more tasks, which will contribute to a maximum total of 40 marks.

Schools could choose from the following assessment task types:

• a written report
• an essay
• short responses
• structured questions
• annotated visual report
• an oral report.

In designing assessment tasks for this area of study the VCE Media Assessment Handbook 2012–2016 advises that teachers should develop assessment tasks that allow the student to:

• study at least two different fictional narrative media texts
• identify and discuss the nature and function of production and story elements in fictional narrative media texts
• compare and contrast the function of and interrelationship between production and story elements across different fictional media texts
• analyse how production and story elements are read by audiences and contribute to narrative organisation and meaning
• discuss the relationship between texts and the genre/s, styles and techniques they may reference
• discuss the relationships between a text, its audiences, its consumption and reception, including how audiences read and are engaged by fictional narratives
• use appropriate media language and terminology
• have the opportunity to demonstrate the highest level of performance.
It is important to note that Outcome 1 has a changed focus from the previous study specifically in relation to the role of audience. In VCE Media 2102–2016 students must analyse how audiences read and interpret narrative texts.

In the work audited and reviewed the fictional narrative texts selected for study were entirely drawn from the area of feature film. Films were generally from the USA and it is apparent that the unofficial canon of texts that has existed for many years in this area of study is diminishing which is to the advantage of students. Some schools, however, continue to study classic films from the 1950s and 60s exclusively. Many of these iconic films are excellent texts but it should be noted that reliance on classics as the sole texts selected for study, although effective for teaching the nature and function of story and production elements, may not allow students to demonstrate the highest level of performance when discussing the relationship between a text, its audiences, its consumption and reception, including how audiences read and are engaged by fictional narratives. Notions of audience and role of audience readings and interpretation of texts is a significant shift in emphasis in this area of study, which should be considered when selecting texts and specifically addressed when teaching narrative.

To meet Unit 3 Outcome 1 VCE Media students are required to:

• identify and discuss the nature and function of production and story elements
• compare and contrast the function of and interrelationship between production and story elements across different fictional media texts
• analyse how production and story elements are read by audiences and contribute to narrative organisation and meaning
• use appropriate media language and terminology.

It was clear from the tasks and student responses provided to the audit and review that students were generally able to identify and describe the nature and function of story and production elements. However, some tasks presented fewer opportunities for students to analyse the interrelationship of these elements in the construction and in the interpretation of narrative texts. This was particularly apparent when students were asked to compare and contrast the use and effect of elements within and between texts. These skills are integral to the demonstration of this outcome. It is important that students be given opportunities to develop the skills to discuss, compare and contrast and to analyse how narrative elements are interrelated within and between texts.

School-assessed Task
The work submitted for review in 2012 mainly consisted of teacher instructions and documentation for students. This documentation was generally satisfactory. Students were given clear instructions and the scope of task was well defined. For further information teachers are referred to Media School-assessed Task reports at:

These reports are very comprehensive but teachers should be mindful they refer to the scope and specifications of the previous study.

Whilst many teachers revealed a clear understanding of the organisation and recording of information to support the production process, the audit of materials revealed some concerns. Student work included diaries that documented completed processes using screen captures of thinking and development of both concepts and ideas. This is an incorrect interpretation of the study. The supporting information must link the product with the design plan. Students are not expected to detail every step of development. Students produce a media production design plan, informed by media production exercises undertaken in Unit 3. The design plan records the preproduction process and must be completed and assessed as satisfactory prior to undertaking the production and post-production stages of the media product in Unit 4. During the production and post-production students are required to focus on the link between the design and the product not design development leading to the product. Students who complete
all or part of their design plans retrospectively have undermined the integrity of the study. A design plan must present the information available to produce the product in a selected media form and for a specified audience. The plan must demonstrate the key knowledge and skills outlined in Area of Study 3. During Unit 4 the student follows the plan to produce the product. Minor variations to the plan that come about in production such as, the re casting of an actor identified in the plan who is no longer available for the film production should be documented on the plan. Another acceptable variation may be the changing of identified paper stock for a print production to better suit the ink saturation of the school printer. The variation in stock may also address the aesthetic interest of the selected audience for whom the product is developed for. Documentation should be brief notes on the plan itself. It should be clear that the notes have been made throughout the production and post-production. There should be clear evidence the plan has been used in production. Evidence presented for audit identified that some students had created annotated visual diaries detailing every step of the process. This approach is incorrect and does not authentically demonstrate the use of a media plan to inform and guide the production of the media product. In addition, students should not produce nor be assessed on a statement of evaluation of the production process or the product.

UNIT 4
GENERAL COMMENTS

Outcome 2
On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss and analyse the construction, distribution and interpretation of society’s values as represented in media texts.

Key knowledge
• the nature and form of an idea, a value, an attitude or a discourse evident in selected media texts
• the construction of representations in media texts and how these reflect values in society
• values held in society as represented and distributed through media texts
• the relationship between dominant, oppositional and emerging values represented in media texts
• the relationship between discourses or social issues and media texts
• appropriate media language and terminology.

Key skills
• describe a social issue or discourse that is constructed, represented and distributed through media texts
• identify, compare and contrast representations in media texts
• analyse the relationships between dominant, oppositional and emerging values in society and media texts
• discuss and analyse the relationship between a discourse or issue, society’s values and media texts
• apply and use appropriate media language and terminology.

This area of the current study is different from the previous study design and now focuses on the study of the relationship between society and media texts. This is evident in the requirement that students study one idea, value, attitude or discourse and its relationship with representations in media texts rather than studying the range of values that was previously required. This outcome is no longer about how social values shape the content of media texts but about the relationship between an idea, value, attitude or discourse, media texts and society.

The work presented for review reveals that many schools have not sufficiently addressed changes to this area of study. Schools have taught a range of values rather than an idea, value,
attitude or discourse. There has been some confusion between the terms idea, value, attitude or discourse with schools erroneously using these terms interchangeably. They are not synonyms for each other. The wording of the outcome, key knowledge and skills for this area of study has been chosen to broaden the range of approaches that schools may employ.

Evidence provided demonstrated some teachers are confused about what constitutes a discourse. Discourse refers to the creation of meaning through the interrelationship of texts, audiences and media organisations in society. A discourse can be thought of as an ongoing discussion in society about an idea or social issue. Participants in a discourse will be subject to and express values that will influence their reading of the discourse. Media texts will contain representations of values that inform the discourse. For example, students studying the discourse of gender in contemporary Australian society will identify, describe and analyse representations of a range of values about the role of women and men in the texts they have studied. Students should be encouraged to describe the discourse they studied in a phrase or sentence. They should also identify whether the discourse is specific to time and place or whether it crosses one or both of these aspects.

This area of study represents a significant shift in emphasis from a study of texts to one where the texts are selected to represent the idea, value, attitude or discourse selected as the focus of study. It is clear that many schools have not yet fully demonstrated an understanding of this shift in emphasis and have focused on textual study. Students are no longer required to analyse a media text in detail but to identify and analyse representations of the idea, value, attitude or discourse selected for study in a number of media texts. It is not a requirement that students study a text in its entirety. In most cases a better practice is to select excerpts from a range of texts across media forms to demonstrate the key knowledge and skills associated with this outcome.

Some schools selected two feature films for study, which may disadvantage students understanding of the relationship between an idea, value, attitude or discourse, representations in media texts and society. It is unlikely that an idea or discourse is conducted entirely within two texts in the same form and whilst it is possible to describe the texts as representative of an idea students may be better served by analysis of texts across forms.

It was disappointing to see language from the previous study design in the work presented for review including the use of questions from past examination papers that no longer reflect the requirements of this area of study. Use of terms including ‘social values’, ‘supports and/or challenges’ and ‘oppositional values’. Schools should ensure that all materials presented to students are representative of the requirements of the current VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016.

Schools could choose from the following assessment task types:

• a written report
• an essay
• short responses
• structured questions
• an annotated visual report
• an oral report

All schools reviewed assessed this outcome using short response structured questions or an essay. Schools are encouraged to embrace other options for assessment. For this area of study an annotated visual report or oral report may allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills at the highest level.
Outcome 3
On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and present arguments about the nature and extent of media influence.

Key knowledge
• communication theories and models and their application to media forms and texts
• theories of audience, their relationship with communication theories and models, and application to media forms and texts
• arguments and evidence about media influence on audiences and the broader society
• arguments surrounding the rationale for and regulation of the media
• appropriate media language and terminology.

Key skills
• identify, compare and contrast communication theories and models
• apply communication theories and models to media forms and texts
• substantiate arguments about media influence
• discuss the relationship between audiences and media forms and texts
• analyse the rationale for and arguments about the regulation of the media
• use and apply appropriate media language and terminology.

The VCE Media Study Design 2012–2016 has seen a revision of this area of study to represent developments in current academic approaches to notions of media influence within society, especially in terms of the relationship between the media and its audiences.

The work presented for review demonstrated evidence of an attempt to retrofit the content of the previous study design to suit the current approach. Whilst there is much in common between the two, teachers should be aware that learning and assessment activities should focus on the skillful application of knowledge. Memorisation of material should only be used to support its application through comparison, contrast, analysis and discussion of theories, arguments, issues and regulation in terms of the relationship between media forms, texts, audiences and the wider society. Students should be encouraged to interact with the material studied and to critically apply their learning across a range of media forms and texts.

This area of study also emphasises the centrality of audience as the core concept of media study. Students should understand that audiences vary in their relationships with the media and that a number of factors will influence this relationship.

Students are drawn to early communication theories because they are often simple compared with more recent approaches. To concentrate on theories from the mid twentieth century disadvantages students in their ability to explain the complex nature of the relationship between the media and its audiences. Similarly, there is a huge range of evidence about the nature and extent of media influence available to students. This area of study is developing rapidly, to rely on outdated research such as Bandura’s Bobo doll studies does not equip students to analyse contemporary examples of influence. Students should be encouraged to understand the nature and extent of media influence as fluid and subject to a range of variables including the underlying socio-political beliefs of those identifying the influence and the audience, events in society and the influence of stakeholders.

Assessment
Schools could choose from the following assessment task types:
• a written report
• an essay
• short responses
• structured questions
• an annotated visual report
• an oral report

All schools reviewed assessed this outcome using either short response structured questions or an essay. Schools are encouraged to embrace other options for assessment. The form selected should allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills at the highest level through the application of knowledge to a range of issues, media forms and texts that allow students to analyse the relationship of claims of media influence to audiences and the wider society.