

The NEA Caps Checklist

AQA GCSE Media Studies 8572/C: the marking rules that decide whether your marks survive moderation

Almost half of centres mark the NEA outside AQA's tolerance, and unapplied caps are the single biggest reason. These rules come from the specification and four years of moderators' reports, paraphrased. Check them before you mark a single folder.

The three caps that pull centres out of tolerance

Found material caps Effectiveness at 8/20. Any found image, footage or copied text anywhere in the product, including stock images added inside design apps (a library photo of fruit in Canva counts). Moderators check digitally; check the same way.

Unlisted participants: the same cap. Anyone who appears in the product or operated equipment must be on the CRF with what they did and how the student directed them. Almost every student has someone to record. A missing record costs the same 12 marks.

AI: never for text, rarely for images. No AI text anywhere, including the Statement of Intent. AI imagery only where photography would be unreasonable or unsafe, with the generator and prompts declared on the CRF. If the student could have photographed it, they can't be credited for decisions an AI made.

The ten-point pre-submission check (per student)

1. Statement of Intent: 300 words or fewer, written as intentions not evaluation, covers media language *and* representation, matches the brief's audience and focus.
2. Every minimum requirement in the brief ticked against the product: word counts, image counts, durations, named inclusions.
3. Any found image, footage or text anywhere? If yes, apply the 8/20 cap.
4. AI used? Only the defensible cases, never text; generator and prompts on the CRF.
5. Unassessed participants listed with roles and how they were directed.
6. Correct orientation and format for the medium (landscape for TV briefs).
7. Files exported to PDF/JPEG or standard playable formats, clearly named.
8. CRF commentary written: bespoke, pointing at specific evidence per strand, not copied descriptors.
9. Cohort rank order sense-checked, and marks compared against standardisation examples.
10. Production: Effectiveness marked *first*, so brief-compliance issues aren't double-counted in the other strands.

**These caps come straight from the specification and moderators' reports.
Check every folder against them before you submit your marks.**