



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2012**

**Art and Design (Graphic
Communication)**

ARTC4

(Specification 2200)

Unit 4: Externally Set Assignment

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

GCE Art and Design - General

Work seen by moderators covered a wide range of traditional and contemporary approaches and the different demands of each unit were generally understood. Students engaged with a diverse range of ideas and themes. Where appropriate, many undertook fieldwork to obtain relevant source materials. Others worked directly from a selection objects or specimens. Some students were creative in the ways that they investigated and responded to images, artefacts and other materials they had found. Students often demonstrated an awareness of, and personal feelings about, important issues.

In the coursework portfolio, students developed a sound basis for working practice. In many schools and colleges, teachers provided courses in which there was a clear emphasis on exploring different approaches, materials, processes and techniques. The development of skills during the AS year was an important foundation for students' work at A2. High levels of drawing and observational skill were evident in the more successful work.

In many schools and colleges, an introductory project at the beginning of the AS year enabled students to develop greater understanding, confidence and independence as the course progressed. Students are required to produce an extended personal project in the Portfolio. Most students responded to a starting point, theme or brief provided by their teachers. Some students produced more than one project and many students included additional materials such as work produced in workshops or on gallery visits.

Where chosen contextual materials were appropriate and had been understood, they informed students' work in many different ways. When looking at works of a particular artist, or a range of work by several artists, students considered the ways in which the subject, theme or idea had been interpreted, how formal elements were used, how elements of composition, layout or design were manipulated and how media and techniques were used. In the work of some students references were made to examples of music, poetry, literature, architecture and cultural artefacts from different times and places.

Sketchbooks and workbooks continued to be used by many students. However, their content varied considerably in quality. The most successful were lively, thoughtful and well considered and clearly recorded the development of ideas. Some students presented their work on mounted sheets and carefully considered connections between images. Some students presented electronic sketchbooks.

Many students produced large quantities of work but did not develop their ideas in sufficient depth. Students should consider the level of skill and understanding they have demonstrated in response to each of the Assessment Objectives and how well they have realised their intentions.

Successful students provided evidence of a coherent journey, revealing clear engagement with source materials and ideas. Their work was focused and sustained and had a real sense of purpose. Less successful work was often fragmented and poorly executed revealing a lack of understanding and skill.

Many students chose to annotate their work and these often provided insights into their ideas and decisions. They also made clear the connections between different aspects of the work. Sometimes, annotations, statements of intent and evaluations were used to help students focus their ideas and their investigations. However, some students wrote copious notes that often provided little in the way of insights and merely repeated what was already evident in the work.

Many students used some form of ICT, either in resourcing their work or in the process of producing it. Many students have access to digital cameras or camera phones and these were often used confidently to record observations and to source contextual material. In Graphic Communication digital and electronic media were often used extensively. Adobe Photoshop was widely used by students to develop their ideas. The Internet was used to access the work of artists, designers and craftspeople.

Administration, marking and moderation

Many moderators reported improvements in administration. In the majority of schools and colleges, mark sheets were correctly completed and deadlines were met. Problems occurred when Candidate Record Forms (CRFs) and Centre Declaration Sheets (CDSs) were not completed prior to the moderation visit. Detailed comments on the CRFs were often helpful and informative.

Teachers are reminded to send both pink and yellow copies of the centre mark forms or EDI print outs to the moderator. One copy will be returned to the school or college with the samples required for the visit indicated on it.

Preparation for moderation visits was generally good and samples were organised in an exhibition or as a collection of folders. In the majority of cases, labelling was very helpful and clear. Maps indicating exactly where samples might be found, were particularly useful. Most provided a quiet, non-public space for the moderation process to take place which is essential. Many moderators commented on the warm reception they received but there were occasions when they felt under pressure to reveal marks which they cannot do. General feedback was well received and thought to be helpful.

An understanding of the assessment objectives resulted in accurate marking in the majority of schools and colleges. Problems generally occurred when teachers awarded their best student maximum marks when a lower mark was more appropriate.

Many teachers and lecturers commented on the value of standardisation meetings where examples of work at different levels can be seen. Erratic marking was often linked to non-attendance at these meetings.

Assessment Objectives

AO1

The ability to develop ideas in a coherent and sustained manner was a key feature of the most successful work. Successful students provided sound evidence of learning from contextual materials and developed their own, personal visual language. Evidence of analytical and critical understanding was provided in different ways. Written materials often provided insights into students' knowledge and understanding and explained decisions made when developing their work. Less successful work was fragmented and intentions were not always clear.

AO2

An introductory project at the beginning of the AS year, often gave students opportunities to experiment with media and to develop a good basic understanding of a range of materials, processes and techniques. Students were then more able to develop their skills when responding to a starting point, idea or theme. The development of skills and understanding of handling materials enabled students to refine their ideas as their work developed. The least successful work was lacking the development of basic skills which made it difficult for students to explore ideas confidently and to demonstrate understanding in the development of their work.

AO3

Ideas, observations and insights were recorded in many different ways, for different purposes and at different stages of the work. Digital cameras were used as a valuable sketchbook tool

and proved to be particularly useful in obtaining source materials. Drawings and colour studies often included analytical work that was detailed, considered and closely observed. They also included drawings that were vigorous, loose and expressive. Some studies were small, fine and delicate whilst others were of a much larger scale. Initial ideas and alternative ideas for compositions or layouts were often recorded in thumbnail sketches. Contact prints, printouts of computer generated materials and textile samplers also provided evidence of recording observations and ideas. Students provided evidence of reflecting on their work and progress both visually and in written materials. Some of the least successful students provided large amounts of collected images and annotations added little to understanding.

AO4

In AS, many students focused on developing their technical skills and established a good working practice that enabled them to successfully develop their ideas. The development of a personal visual language was much more evident in A2 work. Confidence and maturity was also evident in much of the A2 work. Critical understanding was clear in the choices and decisions made by students and they were able to successfully realise their intentions. Many students realised their intentions at various stages and produced a rich diversity of responses. Many students made some connections between different elements of their work as it progressed. In the least successful work, little attempt was made to link the written element to the practical work.

Externally Set Assignment

The range of starting points provided flexibility for students of all abilities to respond in their preferred area of study. Many students responded to this question paper in ways that were resourceful and imaginative. Sustained and focused study applied to the development and refinement of ideas often resulted in work that demonstrated maturity, understanding and confidence.

Rocking Horses

This starting point elicited some refined and accomplished illustrations using a range of media. Students' own photography was often an important element in the design process. Contextual materials clearly informed the development of ideas and outcomes included designs for book covers, double-page spreads and graphics for exhibitions and television programmes.

Spark 66

Imaginative and well-researched responses were seen in which students realised their intentions in a range of interpretations and formats. Approaches included branding, designs for print and packaging design. Some interesting examples of motion graphics were also seen.

Voluntary Emergency Services

Responses to this starting point included designs for posters, brochures, information packs, web-pages and graphics for television. A wide range of contextual material was used to inform the development of ideas.

'Music to Live'

Students responded to the starting point with designs for promotional graphics, CD covers, packaging and graphics for film, television and web pages. Some students developed ideas based on a particular 'period' or genre of music. Others related their work to bands they were associated with.

Words with Impact

In-depth exploration of typography was seen in response to this starting point and students carefully considered ways of expressing the ethos and identity of a company. Some students had used photography in developing designs for promotional materials and combined image and typography in interesting and inventive ways.

‘Through the Looking Glass’

Strong drawing, painting and photographic skills were evident in response to this starting point. Students appeared to enjoy the challenges associated with designing promotional playing cards. The work of John Tenniel and Peter Blake was often used to inform students’ ideas.

Heritage and Tradition

Responses included designs based on traditions in food, drink and fashion. References were made to contextual material given in the starting point and many also considered examples of branding, packaging design and labelling. Many students’ investigations were extremely thorough.

Tetradel

Many of the responses seen were fresh and exciting. Students demonstrated their abilities to investigate and develop ideas in-depth, exploiting the open-ended nature of the starting point.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available at www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion