Moderator's Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Applied Art & Design (Single Award: 8711)/(Double Award: 8712)

Pearson Edexcel Advanced GCE in Applied Art & Design (Single Award: 9711)/(Double Award: 9712)

Pearson Edexcel Advanced GCE with Advanced Subsidiary (Additional) in Applied Art & Design (9713)

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General Comments

The report that follows is a compilation of feedback evidence from the Moderation Team on the 2016 series.

This Unit is delivered through the externally set Summative Project. It provides the opportunity for candidates to work on a vocational focused brief. They are required to respond to a set theme given by Pearson Edexcel which is published on the website in September. This year the theme was Series, Serial and Sequence. Overall, this appears to have been well received by the majority of centres.

The candidates have to demonstrate the ability to plan, research and develop ideas to a prototype stage in response to the theme for a chosen client. The candidates are required to research and analyse a range of primary and secondary sources. From these they are required to generate a range of visual ideas by exploring a variety of different materials, techniques and processes. This should allow the opportunity to explore further a range of formal elements and a variety of media and methods. Candidates also need to consider the visual communication of their work and trying to establish meanings and messages that are aimed at a specific audience. They are required to select their most successful idea and develop it to the prototype stage.

Throughout the whole process, the candidate needs to reflect on their work. Their ideas need to be supported with some written annotation to explain, as well as clarify, their working methods, changes in direction as well as evaluate the strength and weaknesses of their work.

The Summative Project

6906 UNIT 6: DEVELOP SET IDEAS

This unit is delivered through the externally set Summative Project. It provides the opportunity for candidates to work on a vocational focused, externally set brief. The externally set summative project is presented in a set format that has remained largely unchanged. The vocational aspect was addressed by the inclusion of a client list from which candidates select the most appropriate for their chosen area of study.

Delivered along with the paper was the Project Brief Outline sheet requiring details of the candidates' chosen subject, client, and consideration of constraints. The Project Brief Outline is a requirement of the unit and has to be presented to the Moderator, alongside the work, at Moderation.

The 2016 paper was comparable with earlier papers, having a similar format but a new theme; 'Series, Serial, Sequence'. The externally set paper had enabled centres to devise appropriate methods of delivery that provided candidates with opportunities to address all of the assessment criteria through individually devised brief outlines.

The theme of 'Series, Serial, Sequence' had been very well received by both centres and candidates. The responses were very varied, with candidates able to focus on the exploration of a format for their work whilst pursuing quite individual subject matter. The theme was explored in a variety of ways, either as separate elements (this was allowed) or linked processes. The project title had encouraged exploration as varied as: variations on a theme, the production of a series of outcomes rather than a single image or object, storytelling using a range of different approaches, the repetition of elements to name but a few.

There was evidence of working from both Primary and Secondary source material and the theme had encouraged quite a wide range of exploration of individual and personal ideas, which was refreshing to see. In the best practice, the range of self-directed visual research contributed directly to the development of individual project work.

There was evidence of relevant critical and contextual referencing that was carefully selected to explore the theme. Interestingly, it seems that the theme of 'Series, Serial, Sequence' had encouraged research into the work of others' that was more closely linked to the theme, so references exploring a sequence of outcomes, or were part of a series of artworks etc, were investigated.

Evaluations in the higher marked portfolios were very detailed this year, a result of more focused Moderator reporting last year. Some candidates had produced detailed costs for this work and Health and Safety evidence was well covered in most cases.

As in previous years, the evaluations of lower achieving candidates tended to describe and comment on the process, rather than make analytical judgments.

a. Research and analyse primary and secondary sources

The candidates are required to research and analyse a range of primary and secondary sources. Moderators commented again that there was a reliance on photography as a means to produce primary evidence at the expense of drawing and this was seen also in earlier units. Research of primary sources can engage candidates in a variety of recording skills and photography can be one of them, but drawing can be an effective way of analysing source material and should be encouraged so that skills are developed and maintained.

Often the photographs were used with inconsistency, with candidates evidencing poor quality, blurred and uncropped images. Some candidates also spent time copying the photograph, as opposed to using it as a springboard for drawing development.

Moderators commented that more primary research could be afforded to create breadth and the investigation of other possible ideas. Assessment of this strand often did not consider the dual aspect – primary and secondary sources – of the criteria.

b. Generating a range of visual ideas using formal elements, materials, techniques and processes

The candidates are expected to generate a range of initial ideas, using the relevant visual research information they have gathered. The emphasis is on the generation of ideas with an exploration of a variety of ideas using drawing, experiments with media and other appropriate methods. It was good to see that the development of ideas was more extensive this year, possibly as a result of the breadth offered by the theme.

Some candidates took the opportunity to employ all the materials, methods and approaches explored in the previous units to help them develop ideas for this project. This resulted in some well resolved and consolidated ideas. In some centres, there were some very good examples of well-formulated ideas with close adherence to the theme.

c. Develop visual ideas to prototype, using skills in material, techniques and processes

As has been mentioned before, the ongoing concern with the Double Award candidate is that without a recognisable prototype(s), it is difficult to differentiate between this assessment decision and the one that is targeted for Unit 7 assessment strand (b). The better examples seemed to be when candidates had produced a wide range of prototypes to justify the decisions they had made using specialist media, materials and techniques in the production of a final outcome. Purely producing a smaller version of the final

outcome is often misinterpreted as being highly effective and often incorrectly assessed in the higher Mark bands.

d. Evaluation

Candidates are encouraged to comment and reflect on their work throughout the process and this work can be submitted in various formats; visual, verbal and written. When all the aspects of evaluation, written, visual and spoken are evidenced, the assessment decisions tended to be more accurate. However, where this was little or no evidence of written evidence, some leniency in the assessment occurred. Centres need to encourage and support candidates with self-critical appraisal, recognition of the strengths and weaknesses in their use of visual language and the need to reflect back on the original intention of the brief.

6907 UNIT 7: PRODUCE SET IDEAS

a. How to plan to produce a final outcome

It was clear that the quality and effectiveness of the candidates' response was closely linked to the thoroughness with which the initial project brief outline had been written, and the planning methods used.

Where practical action plans, log books or diaries had been used candidates showed better organisation of their time and resources. A growing awareness of the importance of planning to achieve a successful outcome within time constraints was also evident and this aspect of the unit improves every year. It has been better supported in order to help candidates understand the needs of the vocational brief; the planning required for the design cycle and the ability to work to a timeframe. Evidence showed both written planning documentation in the form of diaries, planning sheets, week-by-week progress sheets, Gannt charts etc, and well annotated and considered sequential, visual evidence through drawings and illustrative means (evidence of the importance of confident drawing skills to show ideas).

It was clear that effective project management schemes had encouraged a more confident and successful realisation of ideas. In many cases video work and witness statements were presented to evidence presentations.

b. Use specialist materials, techniques and processes to produce a final outcome

Many candidates had successfully grasped the concept behind the project theme that artwork is often produced in a series of works or resolved via a sequence of images, objects or artefacts.

Moderators reported seeing a diverse range of responses from traditional painting and sculpture to installation, video and animation work. The use of photography was extended this year with candidates seeing the endless possibilities of photography to address this theme. The moderators reported some really innovative work this year and because the theme did not state a 'subject' as such, candidates responded with very individual and personal ideas using the theme as a way to explore these ideas in a variety of formats.

c. Present and evaluate a final outcome

There were some very professional presentations showing good skill and awareness of the importance of this aspect of a vocational project. There were other instances where bad presentation let down the whole project and resulted in moderators finding assessment for this strand lenient, largely due to a lack of awareness of the dual criteria, presentation and evaluation. The quality and depth of evaluation varied, from the low achievers making basic descriptive comments to some high achievers producing very good detailed evaluations.

Again, those candidates with a good understanding of the vocational aspect of the work with all its constraints, made the most focused evaluations, and by doing so, in an analytical, judgmental and critical manner, as opposed to merely providing anecdotal descriptions of what was done, secured some of the highest marks we have seen.

6901 UNIT 1: 2D AND 3D VISUAL LANGUAGE

The evidence for Unit 1: 2D and 3D Visual Language was clearly identified. As has been the standard practice since the beginning of the qualification, this is delivered in combination with Unit 2: Materials, Techniques and Processes.

In undertaking the Portfolio Units, centres employ an established range of introductory projects and tasks. Natural forms/structures, landscape, man-made objects (tools, machinery, utensils), along with the local environment and architecture serve as the main topics. These themes were suitable for candidates of all abilities as well as effectively fitting the unit and assessment criteria.

2D visual language, for the most part, is delivered with confidence and assurance. This is mainly evidenced through drawing, painting, digital photography, printmaking and digital processes, especially Photoshop. Traditional observational drawing is predominantly initiated at the start of the year and for the majority of centres at the beginning of a project, but is then only sustained and developed further by some candidates.

There is considerably more extensive development work and outcomes in 2D than in 3D. As the work in 3D still remains less prevalent in centres, it still continues to restrict the mark potential for the unit. Where this imbalance was seen, the moderation team have addressed this in their reports to centres.

In the exploration of 3D visual language and formal elements, centres had continued to employ accessible 3D materials. Paper, card/cardboard, wire and plaster moulds are still predominantly utilised. Some centres also promote ceramics and other centres textiles, with a sculptural application with interesting results.

Some centres had continued to extend their 2D and/or 3D provision by offering workshops delivered by either a local gallery, as one centre did, or employ external practitioners to supplement project work. This had helped to enhance the learners' experience and understanding, as well as increase the mark potential for assessment strands (b) and (c).

Team projects focused on 3D visual language had also been instigated and where these were well documented and recorded, it was clear each individual's contribution, such as witness statements, generated interesting and creative work. However, any failure to either record these thoroughly or identify individual contributions meant it was not always easy to ascertain the merits of an individual candidate's 3D visual language skills, knowledge and understanding.

Assessment was reported to have been fairly accurate overall. Concerns remain that the lack of 3D investigations and explorations were again not accurately reflected in assessment decisions, impeding the mark potential

for assessment strands (b) and (c). This led to centres assessing with leniency, most noticeably with middle to low achievers.

(a) How to use a range of primary and secondary sources and how to describe others' use of visual language

Traditional observation drawing from a primary source tends to be introduced right at the start of the course. However, these are rarely sustained or developed over time.

Digital photography was the principle means of generating primary sources in many centres. Low scoring candidates tend to rely solely on this approach as a means of producing primary evidence. Many candidates copy from these photographs, which meant they had not recognised the formal qualities of this source material as a means to inform or inspire their own work. This technique of recording and copying photographs was particularly prevalent this year, not only amongst the weaker candidates but also the higher scoring ones. Another trend that emerged this year, especially among the weaker learners, was painting over the top of photographs that again only demonstrates a competent way of working at best.

Moderators still report that centres had tried to bypass the need for drawing and used processes, such as decorative printmaking and rudimentary Photoshop. More creative evidence was when a candidate used both drawing and digital photography with high levels of skill and used them creatively and imaginatively to extend the development of the work.

The best evidence included primary and relevant secondary sources that were used to identify starting points for creating and developing ideas. As with last year, an over reliance of secondary sources, at the expense of effective primary recording, was noted by the moderation team. The Internet acts as the main provider of these sources. Accessing and focusing solely on websites such as *Pinterest* tend to allow weaker candidates a quick and narrow fix in terms of generating and/or developing an idea.
Nearly all the candidates make connections with the work of others'. Some good examples were found where candidates not only cited their influences but began to question the wider issues as well as their ideas, intentions and meanings and messages. The impact of this manifested itself in experimental approaches to creating diverse outcomes revealing exciting potential as well as helping to yield good evidence for this assessment strand and supporting evidence for Unit 3: Visual Communication.

(b) Use a combination of formal elements, mark-making and object making techniques to develop ideas and intentions

This was the most leniently marked assessment strand in Unit 1. It is appreciated that this can be the most demanding stage of the creative process, hence the reason this strand attracts the most marks.
There is still a notable lack of 3D visual language, combinations of formal elements and object making in comparison with 2D visual language; this impeded the mark potential of this strand and often resulted in lenient assessment decisions.

The best evidence showed exciting combinations of formal elements used selectively and creatively to develop ideas in project work. The most successful work showed systematic study and progression through visual language development and the design process. This was usually delivered through a well-structured program of both 2D and 3D project work.

(c) Use visual language to communicate (mark-making and object-making techniques and technologies) to develop ideas

Image manipulation is used extensively as a means of extending 2D idea development. Whilst it is very encouraging to see modern, digital manipulated imagery being used as a tool to explore ideas, an overly cosmetic use of Photoshop (especially the application of numerous effects and/or filters) can prevent the depth of idea generation to warrant the awarding of high marks.

Not enough is made of drawing as a means of developing ideas. Weaker candidates tend to rely solely on photography and/or image manipulation as a means of extending ideas and do not pursue drawing with enough confidence or consistency. Photography was often used but discounting the formal elements of light and form often limited consideration for composition. At the lower mark range, there was often limited drawing work in the stage of development between the original idea and the final outcome, when it could have been creatively extended and employed. In these cases, the lack of development work inhibited the generation of innovative final ideas.

3D development work, in the form of producing smaller 3D models and maquettes was sometimes not explored very extensively. When seen to a high level, it is exciting and invigorating, as it is obvious the learner is trying to formulate their ideas visually and creatively. Most 3D solutions were developed via some drawings but the quality of these drawings tended to be weak. Software packages such as *Goggle Sketch up* were utilised, especially by centres that worked on 3D architectural projects. When worked in conjunction with confident making skills, the outcomes were valid and enhanced. However, when worked in isolation or removed from any making skills, it lost its legitimacy and value.

(d) Evaluation – the use of visual language in your own work and how others' work has influenced your ideas

All centres employ the use of contextual references. The emphasis still seems to be rooted in investigating contemporary artists. Investigations into art, craft or design before the 20th century are rare. The Internet provides the main resource for accessing information about the work of others. In some centres, this is the sole source for their learners. Very few centres extend the range into pre 20th century designers and craftspeople; especially those who work in 3D. Any non-western civilisation investigations tend to be drawn from Africa, Japan (especially manga) and Australia (notably Aboriginal Art).

The higher scoring candidates were able to evaluate how others' work had influenced their own and make fluent connections. Stronger candidates, in their on-going annotations, also expressed analysis and evaluation of own and others' use of formal elements and visual language. Weaker candidates tended to provide mainly biographical information (often taken from *Wikipedia*). They did not explain their work in relation to the work of others', limiting their understanding merely through visual clues in the work itself. Visual evidence was used but this is not sufficient to justify placements in Mark bands 3 and 4 where very little or, sometimes, no written evidence was presented.

Consideration of the QWC had not always been taken into account in assessment decisions. In light of the CIF, centres are trying to encourage their learners to build on their literacy skills. However, work at the lower end lacked sufficient depth of understanding and demonstrated only a basic use of vocabulary. Where centres had developed teaching materials that supported and directed the students in how to analyse and describe others' use of visual language, and most importantly, value their individual responses, the coverage of this strand was good and assessment more accurate. One centre effectively encouraged their learners to produce a Venn diagram when analysing the work of two artists that identifies differences in the outer circles and where they interconnect to identify the similarities.

6902 UNIT 2: MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES

Evidence was usually clearly identified and presented as a combined submission with Unit 1: 2D and 3D Visual Language. The themes mentioned in the Unit 1 section of this report work well. Their choice is appropriate for candidates of all abilities, as well as sufficiently fitting the unit and assessment criteria.

Evidence showed more extensive work in 2D, compared to 3D. As reported in Unit 1, the work with 3D materials, techniques and processes remains less dominant in many centres. This continues to inhibit the mark potential for the unit. Where this imbalance occurred, the moderation team addressed this in their reports to centres.

As mentioned in the Unit 1 commentary, team 3D projects made it difficult to evidence individual 3D skill. Some centres had failed to record such activities that again made some of the assessment decisions appear lenient. Centres that provide additional 3D focused qualifications are also able to provide a more extensive range of materials, techniques and processes. As well as having good resources, there is often the staff expertise to provide candidates with a greater acquisition of 3D knowledge, understanding and skills.

Providing good quality photographic documentation, especially in 3D object making, can be highly beneficial as supporting evidence and develops skills for the production of e-portfolios. Insufficient (often out of focus or against a poor choice of background) quality photography of 3D samples and

outcomes, were seen again in some centres. Despite digital technology, some centres need to encourage their learners to make simple decisions (in focus and against a neutral/clutter free backdrop) to improve the photographs they take when documenting work.

Assessment was reported to have been slightly lenient overall in this unit and most commonly in relation to assessment strand (b).

(a) Investigate working with a range of materials and techniques exploring the characteristics and properties of materials

The best 2D evidence was found in centres that had covered an extensive range of 2D techniques and processes in drawing, painting, printmaking, photography and digital. Some printed textiles work had been employed effectively in centres.

The use of digital photography and computer-manipulated imagery is now commonplace. If used effectively, work as an important creative tool. However, employing Photoshop purely by applying decorative effects and filters can result in purely cosmetic responses. Weaker candidates tend to employ this technique and some centres are not rigorous enough in putting the emphasis on their candidates analysing their results, instead submitting quantity over quality. However, students are becoming more confident using digital processes and along with the evolution and popularity of Apps, much of the mystique surrounding complex image manipulation has been removed.

The range of 3D is to some extent dependent on the centre's provision of 3D making facilities and resources. Most centres will employ paper, card and cardboard to enhance the experience of learners when working in 3D. The other main materials used are wire and metal. Plaster moulding has also risen in popularity. Some centres offer ceramics and if the process has been thoroughly delivered (firing and glazing the outcomes) the results tend to be better. The use of papier-mâché, modroc and textiles are also offered and developed. However, it is rare to see work produced that employ wood, glass or stone object-making techniques.

3D evidence was sometimes narrowed to only one project. This limited the opportunity for exploration of the formal elements in 3D. The best evidence showed a range of 3D investigations in the formal elements running alongside the 2D investigations. Many projects and themes appear to offer the opportunity to do this. Successful themes include natural forms, still-life/objects, structures, surfaces, and architecture/architectural details and these lend themselves to both 2D and 3D investigation and exploration.

(b) Explore the potential for using materials and techniques or combinations of materials and techniques to develop ideas

Like its Unit 1 counterpart, this is where the most marks reside and therefore where the most leniencies in the assessment decisions occur. There were good levels of development in the use of 2D materials,

techniques and processes in nearly all the centres; however, there was still an imbalance with the use of 3D materials, techniques and processes. Moderator reports indicated that the 2D exploration was very good in many centres. Combinations were very strong where the initial work on the formal elements had shown breadth of experimentation. This was reported as being particularly strong in 2D Fine Art, photography, surface pattern and textiles work. The potential though, once explored, was not always realised through the development and outcome stage. This sometimes hindered achievement.

Only a few centres are encouraging their candidates to explore and develop combinations of 3D formal elements in any depth. The employment of certain 3D techniques are not being fully realised with substantial 3D development work and/or outcomes.

Despite allocating the correct Mark band for their candidates, most centres marks tend to be awarded too high, especially for middle to low achievers. Greater recognition of these candidates' level of competence or confidence needed to be accurately reflected in the marks awarded.

(c) Use materials, techniques and technology safely in creating and developing finished work

Health and Safety evidence was less documented than in previous years. For candidates to access the higher marks within this strand, there is still a need to show an individual appreciation, knowledge and understanding of good health and safety practice. Learners should present relevant information in the form of written on-going annotations and also in any final evaluations related to their own creative activities, in order to fully address the health and safety aspect of this strand and merit higher marks. The better centres recognised the importance of this and ensured their learners made any health and safety commentary explicit. Weaker candidates had only presented the health and safety handouts/booklet provided by the centre. Regrettably, moderators reported that health and safety was, by some learners, completely overlooked and did not get mentioned in any annotations or final evaluations.

It is important that assessors authenticate learner work and provide evidence that they have achieved a certain level of performance. The use of witness statements is now common practice and these often form the evidence that show understanding of how to work safely in creating and developing finished work.

(d) The analysis and evaluation of the creative potential and limitations of your use of materials, techniques and technology

Moderation reports still indicate that evidence of analysis and evaluation was limited in some centres. In a few centres, other than in the Summative Project, there had be no requirement for candidates to produce written evidence of the creative potential and limitations of materials, techniques and technology.

The best evidence was drawn from students who had engaged in more formal, ongoing exercises, guided and supported by the centre. The candidates were able to express themselves in the form of ongoing annotations and a final written evaluation. The best evidence was analytical, where the learner had been able to explain reasons behind their work, as opposed to just proving a lengthy anecdotal description of what was done.

Consideration of the QWC requirement had not always been taken into account in assessment decisions. It is important to assess the candidates' ability to use the correct terminology and specialist vocabulary accurately and in depth. This is an important development, essential for all vocational learners.

6903 UNIT 3: VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND MEANING

The best practice for Unit 3 is to embed it across the whole AS portfolio and nearly all the centres successfully deliver it in this way. Evidence predominantly comes in the form of art and design written notes and should be evident in all the projects. The best practice is where the learner's investigations and analysis of the work of others' connects directly with the development of a project and is done continually rather than something that is done at the start of a project and then isn't extended or developed further.

Having a recognisable client had offered an extended opportunity to address the needs of the audience for strand (b). Evidence for this only became an issue of lenient marking if the centre avoids or the candidate loses sight of the applied aspect of the qualification. Well-written project briefs help to ensure that a specific 'audience' was addressed. Centres that had a real client and learners were working on a 'live' brief, also provided direct evidence for this strand.

Bad choices of topic/task are themes that are too broad or heavily conceptual, as the lower performing candidates struggle to understand the meaning or messages they intend to communicate. This had an impact on the marks for assessment strand (d), where commonly, learner evidence often failed to show understanding developed via personal critical analysis.

(a) Analyse visual communication in the work of others

Contextual referencing is standard practice from all candidates. However, the quality of analysis varies considerably. Weaker students still only regurgitate information that has sourced off the Internet with little analysis of the visual language, use of materials, techniques and processes or, which as a requirement for this unit, that shows an understanding of the visual communication and how or why it connects with their own work.

The majority of contextual references are from Fine Art with some design and, on occasion, craft references. It would be refreshing to see source material that extends beyond the usual range of investigations. Some candidates have predictable investigations into 20th century modern art

whereas others reference contemporary and lesser-known artists who populate the Internet on websites such as *Pinterest*. The latter, whilst providing a platform for stimulating imagery, is rarely supported by any explanation as to the visual communication, and links tend to be more aesthetic than conceptual.

The identification of the use of the formal elements as a means to visual communication in others' work has not been covered in sufficient depth in some centres. Consequently, this impedes how learners can understand for themselves how they can communicate their ideas using the formal elements and visual language in their own work. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on how the formal elements have been used as the means to visual communication and expression, to merit the awarding of marks in the higher Mark bands.

(b) Identify an intended meaning or message for a specific 'audience'

It remains evident that the identification of the 'audience' was better in centres where 'live' or well-written briefs have been used. Providing the candidates with a more vocationally orientated brief(s) allows the opportunity to identify and consider the needs of the audience. The Summative Project provides the opportunity to identify an intended meaning or message for a specific 'audience', but in weaker candidates' evidence, this can be overlooked beyond the initial Project Brief Outline and is rarely addressed during the development stage and final evaluation.

(c) Use visual communication to develop your own work

The evidence for this is now fully integrated into all sketchbooks, design sheets, trials, 3D models and maquettes for a range of project work.

The success of the development of ideas for project work was dependent on the quality of the brief that had been issued. It was also dependant on the work of the previous two strands. The ability of students to apply their developing understanding of visual communication to their own work was variable and dependant on the aforementioned issues.

(d) Evaluate how effectively you have used visual communication in your work

Leniency in assessment decisions was noted where there was very limited evidence of recording and evaluating ideas throughout the creative process and especially with gathering others' responses/feedback to the work.

Evaluations tended to assess overall success of the work, and did not fully address how the outcomes communicated meaning and message. Weaker candidates had a tendency to describe rather than explain processes that hampered the mark potential for this assessment strand. Candidates who did not produce any written conclusions to their work significantly hindered their chances of securing more marks in this strand.

The reported best evidence was provided both visually and with sound supporting ongoing written evaluations with a final written evaluation that would bring an activity or project to a realised conclusion. Illustrated evaluations were particularly effective and demonstrated the candidate was able to express the visual communication behind their work with high levels of understanding and fluency. Using the Units 6 and 7 Summative Project, some candidates had an extended opportunity to provide supporting evidence for this assessment strand, especially if their evaluation recognised the aims of the brief, needs of the client and explained how their work was fit for purpose.

Optional Units - Unit 4: Working in 2D and Unit 5: Working in 3D

General Comments

The majority of AS Double Award students are entered for Unit 4: Working in 2D at the expense of Unit 5: Working in 3D. This year the number of candidates taking Unit 5 was offered to a very small number of candidates. This reflects the issues that have been highlighted in Unit 1 and Unit 2, that centres are more assured and the candidates more confident in producing 2D, as opposed to 3D work.

For the most part, centres deliver Unit 4 with confidence. The wide range of materials, approaches and techniques that are offered by centres result in effective outcomes. Presentation styles range from sketchbooks, journals and design boards to installations, blogs and websites.

The best evidence for this unit was when there had been significant development from the work undertaken in Units 1 and 2, where candidates had been encouraged to tackle the unit as a separate entity in its own right and develop new 'solutions' to new 'problems.' This allowed the candidates to build on their earlier experiences to develop ideas alongside practical skills.

Some centres had introduced new and additional approaches to the development of 2D and 3D visual language. Within 2D, these included; traditional photography, life drawing, specialist printmaking (lino, drypoint, collagraph, screen), graphic design, textiles and digital processes. For 3D, it included ceramics, metalwork and found object sculptures. Small architectural structures, such as designs for bus stops, kiosks/information centres and proposals for public sculptures were considered, supported by digital software, such as *Google Sketch Up*.

Only a small number of centres chose these units to work with a 'live brief', or to devise a 'live brief' in collaboration with a local company.

Moderation reported lenient assessment decisions across the strands where the evidence was only drawn from limited evidence and where centres had only used Units 6 & 7 to provide the evidence.

6904 UNIT 4: WORKING IN 2D

Whereas the focus of Unit 1 and Unit 2 is to develop visual language skills and to explore, experiment and understand the use of a wide range of specialist 2D and 3D materials, techniques and processes, Unit 4 requires candidates to 'develop 2D skills through one or more specialist areas' and to 'analyse, refine and present 2D work.'

The best evidence for this unit was when separate projects were delivered which extended and developed the work undertaken for Unit 1 and Unit 2. The more discrete evidence resulted in greater consideration of the unit specification, resulting in more accurate assessment. Some centres had

produced briefs that encouraged new work that developed effectively from the introductory work of the earlier units. However, other centres still tend to bypass this Unit and extract evidence from Units 6 and 7 Summative Project, meaning the coverage of the unit is very thin.

The best practice is when there is a wide range of 2D media tackled with high levels of knowledge and understanding. High achieving work showed a deeper level of visual enquiry and extensive creative and technically competent experimentation; this was developed and extended by a successful outcome and supported by clear reflective skills and critical analysis of candidates' own and others' work.

(a) A range of 2D investigative techniques – sources and contexts

The unit was normally delivered through a project or series of projects and exercises with a more challenging focus. Some candidates immersed themselves in the experimentation and cross fertilisation of materials and techniques, using both conventional and unconventional sources and contexts; when this research was highly experimental and supported by drawing, it led to more innovative and creative developments.

(b) Ability to develop a range of 2D ideas

There was, in most cases, clear development from work carried out for Unit 1 and Unit 2, but sometimes this needed better identification where this evidence was located via the annotated assessment grids.

There was usually a range of experimentation and investigation of 2D ideas. Moderators express that many candidates tend to systematically copy from their own digital photographs without extending them into further idea development. In response to a Unit 4 set brief, high performing learners were able to produce a series of developmental studies from a range of source materials; this allowed them to refine their ideas and led to more accomplished outcomes.

(c) Ability to produce a 2D outcome using and exploring the potential of media, materials and processes

In many cases, the 2D work for this unit was incorporated in a body of work that developed from initial studies in the formal elements through to a range of projects or mini briefs, designed to apply or to develop further skills in the formal elements and refine ideas to produce a final 2D outcome.

Finished work included painting, printmaking, photography, mixed media work, textiles and graphic design with emphasis on the exploration of the potential of media, materials and processes. Many centres still tend to rely heavily on the resolved outcome from the Units 6 & 7 Summative Project for this assessment strand as a means of justifying assessing a candidate in a higher Mark band. Sometimes, this was not entirely merited and resulted in leniency with the assessment decisions.

(d) Ability to analyse, refine and present 2D work

Many examples of improved analysis were reported; perhaps reflecting the more independent and individual work presented. As mentioned with the previous units, improved analysis and evaluations tended to offer an analytical assessment and judgement of the work produced rather than merely describing the processes undertaken.

6905 UNIT 5: WORKING IN 3D

There were hardly any submissions for this unit in the final year of the AS GCE in Applied Art and Design qualification. The little work produced for this unit included a range of approaches with a mix of 3D sculpture and 3D design based work seen during moderation.

(a) A range of 3D investigative techniques – sources and contexts

The work produced for this unit was dependent on centre resources and staff expertise. Generally, this unit was chosen if there was a specialist 3D teacher teaching on the programme or available to deliver it.

The centres that did offer it had clearly developed their teaching and learning to support this unit and extended the experimentation of 3D work by extending disciplines such as ceramics, metal work and plaster casting and carving. The best evidence provided contemporary and pertinent references to inform the 3D work.

(b) Ability to develop a range of 3D ideas

The best work usually contained evidence of a range of maquettes and/or models with supporting investigative tests and trials with materials and techniques. However, not enough was made of encouraging the candidates to develop models or maquettes as a means of developing ideas.

The development and recording of ideas and the making processes through photography was apparent. Where the development and making process were illustrated through a good use of photography, this helped to inform and support the awarding of higher marks. Poor photography or the lack of any explanation and justification behind the making process attracted lenient assessment.

(c) Ability to produce a 3D outcome using and exploring the potential of media, materials and processes

Centres encouraged the production of several outcomes, showing good exploration of a range of materials and processes. This was then supported further by a 3D outcome for the Summative Project.

(d) Ability to analyse, refine and present 3D work

There was some good evidence of learners considering their presentation and photographic documentation of finished work. Digital software had also provided some exciting opportunities to present 3D solutions in a sophisticated and interactive manner.

Photographic records of the making process had usually been carried out, this process assisted learners in making evaluative comments regarding the development and refinement of ideas. As with Unit 4, the better analysis tended to offer an analytical assessment and judgement of the work based on feedback produced, rather than merely describing the processes undertaken.

Advanced GCE Applied Art and Design (A2)

6911 Unit 11: Develop and Produce Own Ideas

Unit 11, the synoptic project, is internally assessed and externally moderated. It allows learners the opportunity to demonstrate achievement through a specialist pathway from a self-generated or centre generated brief. A guidance document is available to support both centres and candidates, with the generation of an appropriate brief and this document highlights how evidence should meet the criteria of the unit requirements and the assessment grid. In this unit, there is an opportunity for learners to be assessed on the quality of written communication (QWC).

The Project Proposal

The completed Project Proposal document is a requirement of the A2 *Synoptic* Project. Most centres completed this documentation, whilst others wrote a 'Statement of Intent', but containing relevant vocational information.

The Project Proposals must be thorough and well written in order to provide adequate information for candidates to respond to it with surety and confidence. The Project Proposal should be a professional work proposal and include information on constraints. Some moderators reported that this was not always the case, with some proposals being rather vague and not sufficiently focused or comprehensive. It is sometimes the practice that units will be approached in combination; centres must carefully consider that this is solely for the purpose of producing a substantial final major project in a pathway choice.

a. Analysing the brief and planning the project

As reported previously and based on Moderators' findings, if this unit is delivered in combination with other units, then centres must review the delivery of the *synoptic* and associated optional unit to ensure adequate coverage of the two sets of Unit criteria; sometimes as a result of this combination the work for one unit was limited compared to the other and this will always limit mark potential. Lenient assessment decisions were noted where this was the case.

There were some very good examples of project planning showing candidates having real control and ownership of all the processes involved in the creative cycle and design methodology.

b. Creating and developing ideas in response to the brief

It is important when combining Unit 12 and 11 that a sub-brief or some other form of guidance documentation is generated for each unit. Successful centres divide the final major project between two briefs, each addressing individual units. This enables learners to understand the demands and requirements of both units. 'Twinning' with Unit 13 was most successful when Unit 11 was designated a design brief and when strong emphasis on

adherence to the client and the constraints allowed for a more extensive, often well developed response. Again, the evidence for two units combined in one project must be substantial.

c. Planning and producing final outcome using specialist working methods and processes

There was some excellent planning documentation this year with many candidates showing good organisation skills and real independence. The recording of specialist working methods still needs to be better evidenced, as this may be required by the 'client' to inform them of production considerations and constraints, particularly in design work. This recording of methods, in the form of a process log, is good practice in all cases. The use of technology and computer software applications had produced some very professional results and centres are to be commended for advancing this work forward as new technology becomes available.

However, some centres need to develop this aspect, particularly for the production of final work in graphic design and some illustration.

d. Evaluation of ideas, planning and finished work

It has been mentioned in previous reports and must be reiterated here that it is very clear to moderators that those candidates who had developed good ongoing evaluative skills throughout the programme produced the best evidence independently. The range of evidence for this assessment strand still varies considerably but is improving overall.

There was much evidence indicating that where ongoing evaluation was focused on ideas, planning and development, the importance of this practice in helping learners maintain close adherence to the requirements of the brief was highlighted.

The centres are reminded, once again, that the final evaluation should take place once the 'client' (or Tutor and Peers) has appraised and responded to the finished work. Candidates should then have the time and opportunity to consider this feedback and make their evaluation in response to it. There were some cases where formative evaluation was not correctly focused on intention, and summative evaluation not sufficiently focused on fitness for purpose. Assessment in these cases was often lenient.

6908, 6909 and 6910 The Portfolio Units

6908 Unit 8: Personal and Portfolio Development and Progression

(a) Personal presentation and communication skills

Centres have continued to produce a ring folder of evidence, including information such as; progression aims, health & safety, application forms, personal statements, CV's and so forth, which is typically presented alongside Unit 10: Professional Practice. Many centres also presented additional evidence through videos, logs and detailed witness statements, especially relating to individual and group presentations. Generally, this year there seemed to be more evidence of reflection and group presentations.

(b) Portfolio presentation techniques

A wide and varied range of portfolio presentation techniques was viewed including e-portfolios, online blogs, websites and social media. The use of a greater range of social media sites offered new ways to present evidence.

This ability to present a portfolio of work in different formats to different audiences is greatly encouraged. Most centres had made evidence clear by labelling and organising work for units 8 and 10 into folders. The documentation of evidence was strongest when the exercise of generating and collating information was guided and encouraged by the centres. This evidence was extensive and allowed the candidates to benefit from the full support this unit can provide and also to be able access the higher mark bands.

(c) Identifying and pursuing progression goals

It was pleasing to see that many candidates had achieved a progression goal.

Generally, there was a wider range of alternative progression routes explored which addressed the current climate for various progression paths within education, training or employment, rather than just a higher education route being identified.

There was generally a greater sense of coverage and research into the exploration of progression goals. It was often supported with digital files and online portfolios. As expected, the higher ability candidates clearly communicated their progression goals and their portfolios demonstrated a high level of skill. In relation to weaker candidates, there was a lack of dialogue and communication over progression routes. Evidence instead typically showed a limited collection of literature outlining progression routes that had not been fully considered or utilised by the candidate.

This unit was more successful in centres where the delivery team provided plenty of opportunities to collect and integrate evidence with other units at the beginning of the course. This helped to embed good practice.

6909 Unit 9: Contextual References

(a) Research historical and contemporary work; understand the context in which the work was influenced

Generally candidates had largely selected themes that reflected their own lines of enquiry, relating to their chosen pathways and although there was often an over reliance on Fine Art and European Art. There was generally an increase in breadth of historical and contemporary art and both western and non-western references this year. It was positive to see some centres focusing more on contextual links of craftspeople and designers.

An example of good practice was seen when a centre started unit 9 with a workshop, specifically on cultures and time periods. This offered an excellent opportunity for candidates to research a wide range of historical and contemporary artists from both Western and non-Western decent. Best practice was found when candidates had explored the work of others' and had produced research throughout their practical units, thus the research tasks and explanation of the work of others' was embedded throughout. Integrated with the work of Unit 11 was successful as candidates had more personal interest and engagement with the work. Equally, engagement with live work often provoked a more enthusiastic and personal response, which aided understanding of more complex issues.

Lower achievers continue to need greater support and it is advised that they use writing frames and 'how to analyse work' sheets. Lower achiever's work continues to be descriptive and lacking in analytical skill and critical understanding. Centres need to ensure that they consider both the range *and* understanding of context when assigning marks for assessment strand (a), and not to over emphasise the quantity of references.

(b) Record and present information explaining the use of visual language in others' work

Many candidates recorded and presented information on the use of visual language in the work of others' through annotated visual and written responses across the entire A2 portfolio, along with the presentation of a separate extended illustrated study.

Again, when learners were given the opportunity to engage with live work through visits to galleries and open studios, the analysis tended to be more in-depth, independent and perceptive. Some centres chose to present 'integrated' extended illustrated studies but most presented a separate essay. As expected, these varied in both quality and approach from centre to centre; the strongest evidence was seen when linked to unit 11 themes and proposals, and when it was focused on candidate's chosen pathways, allowing for better explanations of connections between the candidate's own work and the work of others'.

(c) Use contextual references in your work

The best practice showed candidates were selecting relevant contextual references that were clearly challenging their critical thinking and influencing and informing the development of their ideas.

Well focused analysis ensured the candidates commented and explained the influences and connections between their own work and the work of others'. In weaker portfolios, evidence of candidates using references in their own work and explaining connections was limited. Centres must ensure correct labelling of the work of others.

Centres are reminded that there is an opportunity in this unit (as well as others) for learners to generate valuable evidence and then be assessed on their Quality of Written Communication (QWC) in assessment strand (c). This is an important aspect of vocational learning and must be wholeheartedly addressed.

6910 Unit 10: Professional Practice

(a) Investigation and analysis of professional practice

The best practice was seen where candidates had been given the opportunity to attend a range of workshops, trips and exhibitions and to visit studios and workplaces to view and absorb a varied range of professional practices. Those who had reflected on work experience were also able to generate further marks for this unit.

As expected, the higher ability candidates clearly communicated their progression goals and their portfolios demonstrated a high level of skill. In weaker candidates, there was a lack of dialogue and communication over progression routes, evidence typically showed a collection of literature outlining progression routes that had not been fully considered or utilised by the candidate.

When centres devise and deliver this unit, they need to take every opportunity to capitalise on candidates being exposed to professional practices and encounters with artists and designers and professionals to highlight and gain an awareness of professional practices and the constraints and potential that professional artists and designers encounter on a daily basis. This is greatly encouraged.

(b) Application and development of professional practice in own work

Moderators highlighted that centres had encouraged group and peer reflection and critiques this year. Evidence of this spanned from self-promotion to creative, innovative and often skilful solutions when faced with a challenging brief. This was positive.

Evidence of the application of professional practice in the candidate's own work was found across the entire portfolio and had generally improved this year through the greater inclusion of witness statements, reviews, and reports etc. Where candidates had engaged directly with a practitioner, either through workshops or placements, there was evidence of this having a positive impact on the candidate's approach to their own practice.

Delivery teams need to take every opportunity available to extend study and application of professional practice through visiting practitioners, visits to practitioners, availability of case studies, video, film, or internet information on practitioners.

Centres should be encouraged (where possible) to provide opportunities for candidates to access and observe professional practice.

(c) Investigation of health and safety and legal requirements

Weaker candidates had either very little evidence to cover the assessment strand or significant amounts of print-outs of legal and health and safety documents, etc. However, no added notes or highlighting of text indicated a lack of engagement with the literature. Stronger candidates recorded annotations and highlighted specific considerations on health and safety and legal documentation. This practice is encouraged. Evidence of genuine understanding was strongest when related to artist workshops and interviews. For those candidates who were afforded such opportunities, a greater sense of understanding was conveyed in their investigation and application of legal, health and safety requirements and appropriate standards of professional practice across the portfolio.

Some centres did not fully explore the literature available for strand (c) or fully engage in reflective practice to secure higher marks in this strand. Centres are encouraged to annotate the literature and interact with the documentation used as evidence to award marks on strand (c) to demonstrate understanding and to ensure candidates can access the higher mark bands.

(d) Appropriate standards of professional working

Again, evidence for this strand was found across the candidate's entire portfolio, in particular in the organisation and care taken with the presentation of work.

Much of the evidence for this strand develops from personal interaction between learner and peers and learner and tutor, as well as evidence via witness statements, reviews, self-assessment documentation etc. Careful planning and time management when working to a brief, demonstrating an ability to manage a workload efficiently; showing commitment, adhering to health and safety guidelines and meeting deadlines, is all part of the evidence required for this strand.

The Optional Units: 6912, 6913, 6914

6912 Unit 12: Fine Art

(a) Recording of experiences or information to develop intentions

There was evidence of centres working with live briefs and providing exciting stimulus, such as artist workshops and links to professional practice or trips to museums and galleries or other areas of interest. This was an example of good practice in that it generated some of the most exciting and successful outcomes and offered a clear vocational element to the unit. Some centres had set a topic or theme and provided a brief; others had encouraged candidates to select their own titles. Work was more successful when students worked to a brief with appropriate constraints, which encouraged more creative and innovative responses rather than responding to just a title alone where intentions were sometimes unclear. Most worked more successfully when some structure was provided, but where there was freedom for independence and personalisation.

There was sometimes an imbalance of primary and secondary sources used. Reports noted a preference and predominance for photographic recording and limited evidence of recording through other methods e.g. drawing.

Some centres set this as a discrete project where candidates produced a body of work to specifically meet the unit criteria, more commonly, evidence was combined with either unit 11 or 13. Some degree of structure and a brief seemed to be more successful than a very loosely themed topic or word given without detailing any type of constraint.

(b) Use of materials, processes and technology, or a combination of materials, processes and technology to develop ideas

There was a broad and diverse range of project, themes and artistic disciplines witnessed by moderators this year. Disciplines ranged from painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, animation, film, textiles, wax casting to expressive painting pieces produced through emotion and music. Most moderators commented on an effective use of photography by candidates. At two centres, the work was described by moderators as 'the most commendable work across the portfolio'.

This Unit allowed candidates the opportunity to extend work with materials and techniques, and provided the introduction of new skills with which to develop ideas. The evidence often showed work that was developed with increasing independence, but this was often determined by the quality of the brief. There was evidence of the use of more combinations of materials, processes and technologies, especially in digital, animation, photography and Photoshop. There were however, a number of candidates that had explored a very limited range of ideas or had consolidated ideas too early. This was not always reflected in the centre's assessment decisions. Centres should be advised that successful and wide ranging development work and experimentation is necessary. It is also worth noting that best practice was observed when centres had provided exciting stimulus and inspiration

through links with professional artists, workshops, trips and visits to galleries or museums or other places of interest. This vocational aspect should be encouraged.

(c) The ability to analyse, refine and present a personal, coherent and informed response realising intentions

The ability to effectively analyse and refine work was often dependent on skills that the candidate had developed in the AS year, particularly in the work for Units 6 and 7. The evidence clearly showed that this refinement was essential for the successful realisation of intentions.

Many centres continue to integrate the work with other units, especially unit 11 and, in some cases, unit 13. This works best when sufficient time has been given in the coverage of work over two or more units.

(d) The ability to evaluate the creative potential and effectiveness of the developed idea

Some centres used an evaluation framework that was useful to maintain an appropriate focus.

Many centres continue to integrate the work of Unit 12 with other Units, especially Unit 11. In some centres where this was carefully planned and adequate time was allocated, the approach was successful; allowing for more extensive and in-depth project work. However, where Unit 11 work was cited as the source for the majority of evidence, the body of work did not always have the depth of evidence required to fulfil the requirements of both Units and as a result, limited the candidate's potential to achieve marks in the higher bands.

6913 Unit 13: Design

(a) Resolving the needs of a brief to develop intentions

Topics were varied and whilst some centres encouraged candidates to work to a collected brief, others encouraged an independently devised brief. Some centres worked to a live brief. A wide variety of design was explored, which was positive to see. One moderator commended a centre for innovative practice in the discipline of animations, short films and soundscapes. Design approaches ranged from textiles to illustration, sculpture to graphics.

Generally, moderators reported that centres had delivered this unit well and in some cases, exciting and innovative work had been produced. The best evidence demonstrated a thorough analysis of the brief; consideration of target audience/market and client's needs as well as any constraints e.g. budget and production limitations. Many centres continue to integrate the work with other units, especially unit 11. Whilst this works well for some, centres are reminded that candidates need to be given constraints of the

brief and client needs in order to be able to access the full range of marks available. The centres should be encouraged to make candidates more aware of the importance of working to a brief and specifically consideration of the constraints and making this clear, with particular attention paid to analysing the brief.

(b) Development of a range of ideas in response to a Brief

Work was more successful when candidates frequently revisited the brief and constraints through analysis of client and target audience feedback, questionnaires and project reviews to inform and develop ideas further. In a few centres, it was positive to see all candidates responding to personalised and independent briefs, resulting in candidates producing different outcomes, which again positively allowed candidates to work to their areas of strength.

(c) Production and presentation of a design solution

As with unit 12, work was more successful when students worked to a brief with appropriate constraints, which encouraged more creative and innovative responses, and intentions were clearly identified and revisited frequently.

Again, some centres set this as a discrete project where candidates produced a body of work to specifically meet the unit criteria, more commonly evidence was combined with either unit 11 or 12. Appropriate production methods were selected and generally, the presentation of the outcome/s was highly professional and in an appropriate format for their client, showing strong application of a professional working approach and a high level of skill, particularly in digital manipulation.

For some learners, the refinement of ideas and presentation of a solution was sometimes disappointing and obvious, suggesting perhaps a lack of time for the work at this final stage.

(d) Evaluation of the creative potential and effectiveness of the developed idea

As seen at previous years' moderation, candidates sometimes lacked the correct focus when evaluating their work by commenting on their progress and stating what they did, rather than discussing the creative potential and effectiveness of their developed idea in relation to the brief. This was not always accurately reflected in the centres assessment decisions, resulting in some leniency. Weaker evaluations of working to a brief were more likely to focus on how the work was produced rather than discussing the potential and effectiveness of the developed idea in relation to the brief and the client's needs.

Generally, the quality of evaluations of working to a brief (including evaluations of Unit 11) had improved as a result of stronger devised briefs where appropriate constraints had encouraged more innovative responses and intentions were clearly identified and revisited frequently. Supporting

evidence from other units, especially Unit 11, where learners work to a vocational brief, select a client and produce a detailed project proposal, often enabled a more in-depth coverage of the requirements for this Unit, in turn allowing candidates to access higher mark bands.

6914 Unit 14: Multimedia

(a) A record of information to develop intentions

The centres delivered this unit well and candidates were given exciting challenges and a wide range of experiences, through media and technology. Moderators commended centre's delivery of this unit by specialist teachers for the innovative use of on-line blogs and templates. It was also highlighted that at one centre, candidates were given access to excellent live briefs, advanced animation and film software.

The evidence of the documentation of computer editing processes in the form of screen grabs has improved, but in many cases, needs to be more extensively and carefully logged. It is recommended that wherever possible, all digital work should be additionally recorded in a cross platform permanent way, such as JPEG's, PDF's or printed hard copies.

(b) Development of multimedia ideas by combining technology media processes

The work for this unit was digital and included photography, video editing, animation and web design.

Due to the expansion in technology, digital, media and film processes in the workplace, it is essential that centres delivering this unit keep up-to-date with such advancements.

(c) Analysis, refinement and presentation of a personal, coherent and informed response realising intentions

Work was presented in a variety of formats, from digital photographs to video, with some of the strongest responses remaining in animation and photography.

(d) Evaluate the creative potential and effectiveness of the outcome

Evaluations of outcomes (especially when provided with a framework) contained some effective discussions on the creative potential and effectiveness of the developed idea, however, weaker evidence continues to present evaluations that solely focus on describing the process.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
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