

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2012

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

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

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

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General Comments

- A number of centres had been accredited for various units following the 2011 moderation series, and did not receive moderation for these units this year.
- Centres had followed guidelines for moderation and generally the work was well presented; it was clearly labeled with the evidence for the Summative Project, the *synoptic* project and the Portfolio and Optional Units clearly identified. Portfolios were usually accompanied by the Unit Assessment Grids and Authentication Forms; sometimes these were presented in a separate folder.
- The report that follows is a compilation of feedback evidence from the Moderation Team on the 2012 series.

Assessment

- The assessment of the AS units was fairly accurate, however the moderation team reported concern about the accuracy of some decisions for Unit 2, Units 4 and 5 and Unit 7.
- The accuracy of assessment of the A2 Unit 8: Personal and Portfolio Development and Progression and Unit 10: Professional showed improvement.
- The moderator's write an E9 report which focuses on the Centre's assessment decisions. Assessment and delivery teams are requested to refer to the Moderation Report for their centre as it will contain information that will assist with assessment review.
- Most centres had supported the moderation process by clearly indicating evidence against unit criteria on the assessment grids; where there were full annotations with information on the justification for the assessment decisions.

Advanced Subsidiary (AS)

The Summative Project:

The theme for the 2012 Externally Set Assignment was 'Cuts and Openings'. The Externally Set Assignment had enabled centres to devise appropriate methods of delivery that provided candidates with the opportunity to address all of the assessment criteria through individually devised project brief outlines. The Externally Set Assignment included a theme and scenario. The vocational aspect was addressed by the inclusion of a client list from which candidates could select the most appropriate for their chosen area of study. A self-identified client could be chosen if appropriate and relevant and some centres had done this by making use of live briefs.

Included with the paper was a Project Brief Outline document requiring details of the candidates' chosen subject, client, and their consideration of constraints. The candidates were required to fill this in at the beginning or very near to the beginning of the project. The moderation team reported quite a wide range of responses, some of which had been very thoughtfully considered whilst others lacked detail and focus.

It was clear through the evidence seen that those candidates that had given considered thought to this document and had written a clear, decisive outline of their personal project achieved responses that were indeed 'in response to the brief'. Given that the work for the ESA units must be judged depending on the response to the brief, the marks awarded in these cases were generally more accurate.

Raising Standards

Writing the Project Brief Outline

Centres must support their candidates in the writing of this document. The ESA is designed to enable candidates to bring together and apply the skills and understanding from all of the previous work; therefore selection of these skills in response to the theme, client and chosen pathway response must be considered first as a prerequisite before the outline is written. Once all of the decisions have been made (the notes down the left hand side should support the content), then the Project Brief Outline can be written. It should read like a statement of intent.

The document becomes a personal brief that should contain all of the constraints. (Response to theme, requirement of the client, resources, time scale, deadlines, plans for presentation and review etc). The learner must now analyse all of this information and write a project plan; planning is ongoing and will need to be documented. Modification to project ideas and planning is a part of a practitioner's work schedule, but care must be taken that the modification of ideas does not draw the candidate away from the Project Brief Outline, so that the work remains 'fit for purpose'.

6906 Unit 6: Develop Set Ideas

The theme of 'Cuts and Openings' had generally been well received. Responses were explored and interpreted with some diversity. Common responses and approaches explored quite a physical response exploring a variety of cuts and cutting techniques; involving mainly alteration of surfaces and materials through cutting and scoring.

The response to openings ranged from physical openings in structures; windows, doorways, arches, passages etc to ideas for an opening of an event. When candidates explored the relationship between these two sub-themes there was evidence of some interesting lateral thinking which emerged as a result of experimentation.

Some very beautiful results were seen in the area of lighting design and fashion design.

It was interesting to note the success resulting where the freedom to explore the theme was really encouraged at the start of the project so that candidates could produce their own experimental work and develop their ideas based on their investigations.

The unit had generally been assessed with a fair degree of accuracy.

a. The ability to research and analyse primary and secondary sources

Primary research was often in the form of directly working with materials and manipulating surfaces in response to 'Cuts'. For openings we saw photographs of doors and windows and other forms of openings, as in natural openings. Material that had been cut into had been opened out in interesting ways creating relief ideas. These results were then analysed for their potential.

In the best practice a range of ideas had been explored independently by candidates and it was evident that this had been in response to the suggestions given in the paper and/or by centres own supplementary briefs and paperwork. In the weaker work seen it was common to find limited initial exploration of the theme with candidates selecting an idea rather prematurely. This had resulted in a rather narrow, linear exploration that had inhibited freedom of approach in the development work and restricted choice of direction.

In the best practice candidates had assembled some good examples of the work of others who had also explored the theme, and the analysis had been very focused and informed ideas. In the best practice the range of self-directed visual research contributed directly to the development of project work; this practice had improved in some centres, although many still need to encourage candidates to produce precise visual information that could inform the development of ideas.

There was some good evidence of appropriate critical and contextual references being carefully selected to explore the theme and develop ideas. When this evidence had been covered soundly; showing an understanding of the techniques and processes used in others' work, it contributed favourably to the quality and depth of ideas and the final outcomes.

There were many reports of development of ideas using a range of techniques and processes, but particularly in the area of the manipulation and exploration of materials.

There is still an underestimation of the range required by some centres. The generation of ideas was dependent on the range of work produced for assessment strand a and where the initial exploration had been fulsome

c. The ability to develop visual ideas to prototype, using skills in materials, techniques and processes

It is still of some concern that we are still not seeing the production of a prototype showing good skill and finish. Sometimes the work produced did not fulfil the requirement of the brief or only loosely responded to the theme.

Centres are reminded that the Double Award student has to produce a prototype for Unit 6 and a final outcome for Unit 7.

Candidates that had understood the importance of a prototype had produced innovative outcomes, whereas weaker candidates had lost this focus and their outcomes were less successful.

It was good to see more 3D work for the ESA; this was considered to be because of the theme for this year.

It has to be repeated again, despite frequent reporting here and in individual reports, that too many centres are neglecting the very important Health and Safety aspect of art and design practice.

d. Evaluation

In the best practice ongoing annotations of the development of ideas continually referred back to the brief and to the client (target audience), either real or simulated. Ongoing reflection and reviews often allowed for the refinement and modifications of ideas and this usually resulted in more focused outcomes.

In weaker work ongoing annotations showed a lack of critical analysis and limited understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the ideas developed

in relation to the brief; they tended to be descriptive of the processes involved in producing the work rather than analysing the works effectiveness.

6907 Unit 7: Produce Set Ideas

Many centres are working hard and finding many different ways to improve evidence of planning and this is to be applauded. I am sure that all will agree that this work is paying off in the A2 year with increased independence being achieved by their learners.

As previously reported 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 all reports this year reconfirm the importance of this good practice.

a. Planning to produce a final outcome

As in previous years, evidence varied from excellent to rather basic project planning. As the allocation of marks for this strand is highly weighted it is important for centres to ensure their candidates make their planning more explicit rather than just implied. Where practical action plans, log books, Gantt charts, or diaries had been used candidates were enabled to organise their time and resources more effectively. In some cases candidates had completed centre devised planning timetables but had not always made full use of these to monitor or inform their project work. Where planning was considered to be of only a 'competent' standard this was largely due to the presentation of just the sketchbook of work. The Applied nature of this qualification calls for a more 'work related' approach to this criterion and centres should consider the transferable work skills that could be developed here.

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

Effective project management schemes had encouraged a more confident and successful realisation of ideas. Effective evaluation of the prototype and forward planning from this stage proved valuable.

Weaker candidates appeared to produce final outcomes without going through a considered evaluative process so that alternative ideas and forms were not fully explored and there was little evidence of the refinement of final pieces.

c. Presenting and evaluating the final outcome

Where time had been provided at the end of the project for reflection and presentation this had resulted in more focused, detailed and analytical evaluation. The careful selection and organisation of work at the end of the project, editing and refining the project portfolio, had also contributed to the effectiveness of the evaluation process.

It is vital that the candidate appraises the strengths and weaknesses of the final outcome and their use of specialist materials, techniques and processes. The best evidence was where candidates had been encouraged to either show or visually represent their work 'in situ', providing a realistic and effective presentation of their work in an applied context.

In weaker work, evaluations only gave an account of what the candidate had done and often made no reference to the technical or aesthetic qualities of the finished work or made reference to the original intentions or constraints of the brief.

It is suggested that candidates write their final evaluation having first considered –

- The original intention as outlined in the Project Brief Outline
- Feedback from the client, the audience etc.

6901 Unit 1: 2D and 3D Visual Language

Centres continue to present a range of introductory projects and tasks to explore the Portfolio Units. The general themes of natural forms and structures and man-made objects, machinery and domestic objects persist. The theme of architecture was especially popular this year. All of these topics were suitable for candidates of all abilities as well as fitting the unit and assessment criteria sufficiently. Evidence was clearly identified and presented as a combined submission with Unit 2: Materials, Techniques and Processes. This has been the standard practice of centres since the beginning of the qualification and one that is now fully entrenched.

2D visual language, for the most part is delivered with assurance. This is mainly evidenced through drawing, painting, photography (especially digital photography), printmaking and increasingly digital processes, notably Photoshop. Solid observational drawing is not employed with much rigour in some centres with some centres often presenting the processes of, for example, decorative collage or printmaking in place of good observational work from primary source material.

The majority of centres had employed simple and accessible materials, such as paper, card/cardboard, wire and modroc, to explore 3D visual language and formal elements. To broaden 3D some centres have been able to acquire and

use external practitioners by offering workshops to supplement project work. This had helped to enhance the learners' experience and understanding and increase the mark potential for assessment strands b and c. Some centres had engage their candidates in group 3D projects or had delivered a specific task to the whole cohort which meant that it wasn't always easy to ascertain the merits of an individual learner's 3D visual language skills, knowledge and understanding.

Yet again the evidence showed more extensive development work and outcomes in 2D than in 3D. As the work in 3D still remains restricted in centres it still continues to inhibit the potential for the unit. Where this imbalance was seen, the moderation team have addressed this in their reports to centres. Assessment was reported to have been fairly accurate overall. The only issues surround the lack of 3D exploration was 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. Work from a range of primary and secondary sources

A lack of recording and use of primary sources was often reported – particularly observational drawing. Where there was evidence of work from observation using set subject matter or visits to specific locations (such as gardens, museums) and the quality of this was variable.

Once again this year, moderation teams commented that observational drawing tends to be neglected. Digital photography is used as a means of generating primary sources. Weaker candidates had then copied these photographs, which meant they hadn't recognised the formal qualities of this source material as a means to inform or inspire their own work.

The very 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 and use of secondary sources was noted.

b. Exploration of 2D and 3D visual language, combinations of formal elements, mark-making and object-making

In most cases delivery was through a number of vocational projects supported by skills workshops and exercises contributing to work. The range of media and techniques employed for such approaches were good but sometimes served to mask or replace visual language skills; the main focus of the unit and this strand. Where effective exploration of visual language had taken place it had not always been considered and applied to project development for strand c.

As with last year, there was still a notable lack of 3D visual language, combinations of formal elements and object making, compared to 2D visual language. This again impeded the mark potential of this strand and often resulted in lenient assessment decisions. It is appreciated that this can be the most demanding stage of the creative process hence the reason this strand

attracts the most marks. This was the most leniently marked assessment strand in Unit 1.

c. Use of 2D and 3D visual language, mark making and object-making to develop and realise ideas and intentions

Centres are increasingly using image manipulation or other intermediary techniques were effectively used to develop a range of 2D ideas. Whereas it is very encouraging to see more evidence of digital manipulated imagery being used as a tool to explore ideas, an over use of Photoshop (especially the application of numerous filters) can also be a very cosmetic way of approaching ideas and lacks the depth of idea generation to merit the awarding of high marks.

The best evidence showed the combination of formal elements used selectively and appropriately 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 project work in both 2D and 3D.

At the lower mark range there was often limited work in the stage of development between the original idea and the final outcome. Not enough is made of drawing conventions as a means of developing ideas. In these cases the lack of development work inhibited the generation of innovative final ideas. 3D development work, in the form of making 3D models and maquettes was also not extensively explored. Most 3D solutions were developed via 2D design drawings alone and this limited the exploration of combinations in object-making. More focus to this stage may be advantageous.

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

The use of contextual references has continued to improve. However these are predominantly investigations into 2D fine art from western civilisations from the 20th and early 21st century. Few centres extend the range into designers and craftspeople, especially those who apply a more 3D approach, pre 20th century. Investigations or considerations of non-western civilisations are rarely seen or considered.

The higher scoring candidates are able to evaluate how others' work had influenced their own. Stronger candidates in their on-going annotations also expressed analysis and evaluation of own and others' use of formal elements and visual language but weaker candidates still struggled to explain their work in relation to the work of others, limiting their understanding by only mentioning the artist or designer, or merely through visual clues in the work itself. Visual evidence was used but this was not sufficient to justify placements in Mark bands 3 and 4 where very little or no written evidence was presented.

Consideration of the QWC had not always been taken into account in assessment decisions. Work at the lower end lacked sufficient depth of

understanding and showed a basic use of vocabulary. Where centres had developed delivery and 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.

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 that work well have been mentioned in the Unit 1 commentary and their choice is appropriate for candidates of all abilities as well as fitting the unit and assessment criteria sufficiently.

As in previous years, the evidence showed more extensive 2D work than in 3D. As reported in Unit 1, the work in 3D remains reduced in many centres. This continues to inhibit the mark potential for the unit. As with Unit 1, where this imbalance occurred the moderation team addressed this in their reports to centres. Team 3D projects or when a cohort had duplicated a centre guided technique made it difficult to evidence individual 3D skill.

Centres that offer good Level 2 and/or Level 3 Design Technology qualifications are also able to provide a wider and more diverse range of materials, techniques and processes. As well as having good resources there is often the staff expertise to provide learners with a greater acquisition of 3D knowledge, understanding and skills. Providing good quality photographic documentation, especially in regards to 3D object-making can be highly beneficial as evidence. Poor quality photography, as seen in some centres, has the opposite effect.

Assessment was reported to have been slightly lenient overall in this unit and most commonly in relation to assessment strand b; frequently lenient decisions were made by assessing in the correct mark band but marking at the wrong end. Centres tend to place marks in mark band 3 for only competent performing learners and don't access the range of marks available in mark band 2.

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 in drawing, painting, printmaking, photography and digital, some textiles work has been employed effectively in centres.

The use of digital photography and computer-manipulated imagery is becoming increasingly more commonplace and if used effectively work as an important creative tool. But as mentioned in Unit 1 employing Photoshop with little direction (such as endless filter applications) can result in purely cosmetic responses at best and be frivolous at worse. Weak candidates tend to employ

this technique and some centres are not rigorous enough in putting the emphasis on their learners submitting quality over quantity.

The range of 3D is to some extent dependent on the centre's provision of 3D making facilities and resources. However, increasingly, centres are beginning to use easily accessible materials such as paper, card and cardboard to enhance the experience of learners when working in 3D. Centres that have a successful Level 2 or Level 3 Design Technology qualification(s) appear better equipped and more able to offer a wider range of 3D materials, techniques and technology.

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

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

Reports continue to indicate that the exploration was very good in many centres. The potential though, once explored, was not always realised through the development and outcome stage and this sometimes limited and hindered achievement.

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.

Most centres are encouraging their learners to explore and develop combinations of 3D formal elements. However, sometimes the employment of certain techniques was not being fully realised with substantial 3D development work and/or outcomes.

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

Health and Safety evidence is reported as being well acknowledged by centres and indeed learners. For candidates to access the higher marks within this strand, there is still a need to show a personal 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. Weaker candidates had presented only photocopied health and safety handouts or downloaded material.

There was good development in the use of 2D materials, techniques and processes. However, there is still an imbalance with the use of 3D materials, techniques and processes. Centres are reminded that extensive 2D work cannot compensate for a lack of 3D provision.

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. Consideration of the QWC 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.

The best evidence was drawn from learners who had engaged in more formal, ongoing exercises, guided and supported by the centre; they were able to express themselves in the form of ongoing annotations or final written evaluations.

The identification of the potential and limitations of materials, techniques and processes used was noted to have been identified more explicitly and coherently in written annotations within sketchbooks, design sheets and in some instances in separate log books and journals. However, the analysis and discussion of the creative potential of areas for further development reported as not being as well covered.

6903 Unit 3: Visual Communication and Meaning

The best evidence was when Unit 3 was integrated across the AS portfolio. The unit is now rarely addressed as a separate visual communication project.

Evidence of the unit comes in the form of written art and design history notes and analysis of examples from visits to galleries/exhibitions. The best practice was where the learner's investigations and analysis in the work of others' was constant and informed each part of the project, rather than something that was done at the start and then neglected or considered too time consuming. Evidence for assessment strand b only became an issue of lenient marking if the centre neglected the vocational aspect of the qualification. Good quality design briefs always ensure that a specific 'audience' is addressed. Design and 'live' briefs were reported to have provided the best evidence for this unit. Poor choices of topic/task are themes that are too open-ended or conceptual as the lower performing learners struggle to clear about the meaning or messages they intend to communicate.

Centres that adopt the more holistic approach to Unit 3 also used the associated work for the Summative Project: Unit 6 and Unit 7, as further assessment evidence. Where specific vocational briefs had been presented mark potential and assessment was more accurate for strand b and d than in centres that had only recognised that the work for the Summative Project: Unit 6 and Unit 7 had offered more opportunity to address the needs of the audience for strand b. As a result, there was missed opportunities to meet some of the evidence here and work often showed a limited response to assessment strand b which asks for the identification of the 'audience' so that the 'meaning or message' can be specified.

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 continues to improve however, the analysis of and responses to the work of others' varied considerably in focus. Lower achieving students still rely heavily on collated imagery that, despite being relevant was still not accompanied with any form of written analysis to demonstrate their understanding.

The majority of references are still from the fine art world with limited design and craft references. Some centres make effective use of references from contemporary practice and work placements. However, as reported previously, centres are still advised to broaden their source material and extend the range of investigations. Consideration of art, craft and design from different cultures could be advantageous, as would investigations into pre-20th century practice. This would also serve as a good precursor to Unit 9: Contextual References in the second year of study.

The identification of the use of the formal elements as a means to visual communication in others' work is 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.

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

It remains evident that the identification of the 'audience' was more rigorous in centres where 'live' or simulated briefs have been used. Providing the candidates with a more 2D or 3D design orientated brief(s) allows them to identify and consider the needs of the audience.

c. Use visual communication to develop your own work

This work continues to be seen as fully integrated in sketchbooks, design sheets and in trials, samples, maquettes for a range of project work.

The success of the development of ideas and project work was dependent on the quality and vocationality 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 depending on each of the aforementioned issues.

Centres frequently submit work from the Summative Project: Unit 6 and Unit 7 as supporting evidence for this assessment strand.

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 gathering others' responses to the work.

Evaluations often referred to the overall success of the work, and did not fully address how it communicated meaning and messages.

The reported best evidence was provided both visually and with sound supporting ongoing written evaluations and a summative evaluation that would bring an activity or project to a realised conclusion.

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

The best evidence for these units was when there had been significant development from the work undertaken in Units 1 and 2, where learners had been encouraged to tackle the units as a separate entity in their own right and had developed new solutions to new problems. In the majority of cases, candidates had built on their earlier experiences to develop their ideas and practical skills.

Some centres had introduced new approaches to the development of 2D visual language via photography, life drawing, printmaking, graphic design and for 3D through workshops with practitioners ranging from ceramics, metalwork, woodwork and found object sculptures. Regrettably innovative product design ideas and solutions are rarely seen. Small architectural structures, such as designs for bus stops, kiosks/information centres have been considered by some ambitious centres and supported by the evolving use of digital software, such as Google Sketch Up. These new approaches to 2D and 3D had presented new challenges, and it was these challenges that deepened the students' understanding of the technical and aesthetic potential of new ideas.

A few centres chose these units to work with a practitioner and a 'live brief', or to devise a 'live brief' in collaboration with a local company. These vocational activities were very successful in generating the required evidence for these units and indeed others, such as Unit 3.

Moderation reported lenient assessment decisions across the strands where the evidence did not show sufficient development from the work of Unit 1 and Unit 2.

It is still the case that Unit 5 had a much smaller entry than Unit 4, but was selected by centres where the facilities and resources were sufficient for 3D development beyond the work generated for Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Some centres had inadvertently entered their candidates for the wrong unit and felt they would be penalised heavily if they made the decision to re-enter them for the correct unit. This sometimes meant marks were either leniently awarded or marked accurately but at the expense of the candidate scoring higher marks if correctly entered for the appropriate unit. (It is possible to change unit registrations.)

6904 Unit 4: Working in 2D

Whereas the focus of Unit 1 and Unit 2 is to practise and 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 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.

In the best practice seen there was a wide range of drawing and painting media supported by work in print, fabric and textile work, photography and computer generated and manipulated images. 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 learners' 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.

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 via the assessment grids.

There was usually a range of experimentation and investigation of 2D ideas. But some moderator's reports outlined there was a significant lack of breadth in drawing and mark-making techniques as means of visual recording and documenting ideas. Centres are reminded again of the need for students to 'analyse, refine and present 2D work' for this unit.

In best practice students had produced a series of development studies from a range of source materials that refined ideas and visual form and led to the production of accomplished outcomes; this was usually in response to a set Unit 4 brief.

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 to develop 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.

Centres tend to submit the outcome from the Summative Project: Unit 6 & Unit 7 for this assessment strand as a means of justifying higher marks.

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. The better analysis 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

As with previous years, there were fewer submissions for this unit than for Unit 4. The work for this unit included a range of approaches with a mix of 3D fine art sculpture and 3D design based work seen during moderation. There was evidence of a range of work using materials such as card/cardboard, clay, plaster, plastic, wire and wood.

As with Unit 4, if the centre generated a discrete Unit 5 brief or workshops there tended to be more scope for the assessment criteria to be fully covered and for marks to be awarded accurately.

Levels of technical skill are improving. The majority of the work was produced using simple technology materials and processes. This resulted in a lack of depth in the exploration and use of a greater range of materials and techniques required for the unit. However some work was seen at centres this year that was very impressive. Architectural forms had offered a promising topic for aspiring 3D designers. Increasingly digital software such as Google Sketch-up has also allowed candidates to realise and visualise their 3D design ideas in exciting and versatile formats. Product design was very limited, but some centres had undertaken some ambitious human scale working, with their candidates working on exciting projects such as designing and constructing a set design for a school or college production.

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.

Some centres had clearly developed their teaching and learning to support this unit and extended the experimentation of 3D work by introducing new disciplines such as ceramics, metal work and plaster casting and carving. The best evidence provided relevant and contemporary 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.

The development and recording of ideas and the making processes through photography was often inconsistent. Where the making process was 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 making process attracted significantly lenient assessment.

The quality of the briefs was a big factor in allowing learners to extend their experiences of working in this discipline. As mentioned, there was a notable lack of 3D Design orientated briefs, which may successfully address the vocational aspect of the qualification as well as providing an opportunity for additional evidence for Unit 3.

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

Some centres encouraged the production of several outcomes showing good exploration of a range of materials and processes. This exploration sometimes came to fruition in the Summative Project: Unit 6 and Unit 7.

Where centres were able to introduce specialist practitioners to their program, this usually resulted in better recording of processes, health and safety considerations and the production of more finished work.

Some centres would upon recognising their candidate had produced a 3D submission (in the form of one of the following: a sculpture, an item of product design or a garment/piece of fashion) in the Summative Project would cross-reference this work and use it as evidence for this assessment strand.

d. Ability to analyse, refine and present 3D work

Good evidence was produced when centres had worked with practitioners.

Some of the best work for this unit showed a very broad range of well-developed ideas.

There was some good evidence of learners considering the 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.

Where photographic records of the project and the making process had been carried out, this assisted the learner in making evaluative comments regarding the refinement of ideas and the success of finished work. The better analysis tended to offer an analytical assessment and judgement of the work produced rather than merely describing the processes undertaken.

Advanced GCE in Applied Art and Design (A2)

6911 Unit 11: Develop and Produce Own Ideas - The *Synoptic* Project

Centres must ensure that the published *synoptic* brief is made available to candidates and discussed fully with them as it contains valuable information for the candidates to reference, this is important even when a supplementary brief is delivered.

The Project Proposal

The completed Project Proposal document is a requirement of the A2 Synoptic Project.

Some centres encouraged a 'Statement of Intent' which was often located within the workbooks, and annotated the 'Project Proposal' to signpost this evidence. If a 'Statement of Intent' is generated, this must be transferred in full, to the Edexcel 'Project Proposal'. This document must be presented with the Unit 11 work.

The Project Proposals must be thorough and well written in order to provide adequate information for candidates to respond to with surety and confidence. The PBO of the AS year is a preparation for this, but the Project Proposal should be more of a professional work proposal and include information on constraints.

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

Once again, reporting by the moderation team confirmed that project management was on the whole very sound, with research, contextual referencing and evaluation all effectively undertaken.

If this unit is delivered in combination, centres must review the delivery of the *synoptic* and associated optional unit to ensure adequate coverage of 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 severely limited mark potential. 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

The development work was stronger this year and more extensive.

It is important when combining Unit 12 and 11 that a brief is generated for each unit. 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 better developed response. Again, the evidence for two projects 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 logging of specialist working methods still needs to be better evidenced. This may be required by the 'client' to show 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.

c. Evaluation of ideas, planning and finished work

The range of evidence for this assessment strand still varies considerably but is improving overall. It is very clear that those candidates who had developed good ongoing evaluative skills throughout the programme produced the best evidence independently.

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. It is also very clear that focused AS work in the summative project has a consequence for the work here in the A2 year.

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.

They need to ask –

'Will they change or refine anything in the light of this feedback?'

Such considerations should be the focus of the final evaluation of the work. It is this skill that will carry forward and support their further study or working life.

In weaker presentations this focus was very limited, with evaluations often being little more than a descriptive account of 'what they did' throughout the project.

The Portfolio Units - 6908, 6909 and 6910

6908 Unit 8: Personal Portfolio Development and Progression

A wide range of evidence is required to fully satisfy the requirements of this unit. Whilst many centres are doing an admirable job at covering the demands of the unit, some centres are still providing insufficient depth and breadth to the coverage of all its requirements. The best approach saw dedicated files,

usually labelled 'progression files' containing appropriate evidence, in addition to the portfolio of practical work. There was reported to be an increase in the digital presentation of work. This was often in the form of learner's own blogs, PowerPoint presentations and websites to present their work, the e-portfolio now often being required to submit evidence for degree courses. This was a positive aspect to the coverage of the unit and some centres are beginning to push learners towards producing a digital portfolio as well as a physical one. There were reports of some strong and successful work in well-supported 'mock interview' exercises, presentations of personal information and thorough exploration of progression routes and requirements in both education and the world of work. Moderators' reports continue to clearly highlight any shortcomings in the delivery of this unit and consequently inaccurate assessment decisions. Whilst coverage of the unit has improved, some centres are still not covering the demands of the unit sufficiently. This consequently, is restricting learners with an opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge.

When leniency in assessment decisions was noted it was most often due to a lack of depth to the evidence presented for each Assessment strand.

Assessment strand a - Personal presentation and communication skills

In some centres there was insufficient evidence of presentations in a range of contexts (peer, client, 1:1, mock interviews etc.).

Some centres included witness statements, and feedback comments regarding mock interviews and group presentations. However, some centres had not made the necessary improvements in providing this important feedback to their learners.

Evidence of students having prepared their presentations for interview was not always available.

Assessment strand b – Portfolio presentation techniques

The presentation of samples and finished work is clearly important to the production and presentation of a portfolio of work. However, there were instances of finished work not being mounted at all, or mounted effectively to warrant marks awarded. There were other instances of large-scale work not being photographed, organisation of sketchbooks being wayward, and a lack of supporting evidence to complement the work (briefs, evaluations etc.)

Assessment strand c – Identifying and pursuing progression goals

There remains insufficient research into progression opportunities carried out by learners at some centres. For example, a 'wide range' of evidence for this strand **cannot** be deemed as research into one course or job; the production of a CV and a personal statement, as was solely the case in some centres.

6909 Unit 9: Contextual References

As in previous years there were reports of some very successful work for this unit, whilst others told of work that demonstrated very superficial study. It was clear that students had performed better when supported in their research and with their critical analysis.

Moderators continue to take a holistic approach to this unit, with evidence of contextual references permeating all project work.

In most cases, the extended study was directly linked to project work and sometimes it was a separate stand-alone study. Poor choices of topics for some extended studies were seen by moderators, particularly when the learner had little personal interest in the work studied.

Images illustrating the work of others, with supporting annotation was evident across most of the portfolios. The best evidence showed very appropriate and relevant evidence, accompanied by considered analysis which was linked to the project work.

There was a range of contextual references used in most centres, though most common and predominant in the use of fine artists, and fine art work as opposed to designers and craftspeople. To raise achievement it is essential and good practice, to allow learners access to extend the range of craft and design work for the course and this unit.

There was a bias towards contemporary references though most centres had included some evidence of historical contextual references in the work.

Simple regurgitation of information gleaned from the Internet was still apparent and centres are urged to ensure that inclusion of this work is carefully considered. If it is included the learner must show that it was an important part of their research and show some indication of interaction with it.

Reports indicate the majority of centres interpreting and applying assessment criteria of this unit with some accuracy and consistently across samples moderated. Examples of leniency was found at both the top and bottom end of the mark range with centres incorrectly interpreting the range of evidence required for a strand and the level of understanding implicit in learners' work.

Assessment strand a. Research historical and contemporary work; understand the context in which the work was influenced

There was a bias to contemporary work over historical work for this strand. To raise achievement there should be some evidence of historical work (pre 1900) in learners work for this unit.

Research continues to link more closely to the learners' own work. This was found to encourage, and indeed show evidence of, a greater understanding of the context of the work referenced.

Assessment strand b. Record and present information explaining the use of visual language in others' work

The quality of evidence of the explanation of visual language in others' work showed improvement. This was often supported by centre devised handouts to support the development of analysis skills of the use of visual language. However, some centres are still not encouraging sufficient, in-depth study to raise achievement for this unit. Visits to museums and galleries had offered candidates the opportunity of first hand experience of encountering others' work. Where students had the opportunity to visit exhibitions/studios, or carried out visits independently, the evidence for this strand was generally recorded with more confidence.

Assessment strand c. Use contextual references in your work

The best examples of evidence for this unit saw the use of contextual references challenging learners' critical thinking and informing the development of ideas in project work creatively, thoughtfully and pertinently. The weaker evidence indicated that little attempt at any real in-depth analysis or understanding of the communication, relevance and context of the work, and how such study can be used in the learners' own work.

6910 Unit 10: Professional Practice

Unit 10 requires learners to investigate and apply the requirements of professional practice by working safely, legally and professionally. There is a need to adopt a professional approach by working within health and safety guidelines, by considering legal matters and when communicating with others. Unit 10 underpins all practical activities and work for it should be based on, and delivered through, integrated project work. Work should also be in response to projects or briefs that simulate professional practice.

Centres are reminded that evidence submitted for this unit should include:

- annotated and illustrated project work, from briefing through to final outcome
- a project with a supporting analysis of how a learner's own work could be improved by relating it to professional working practices
- observation and questioning to confirm a learner's ability to perform in a professional manner.
- how professionals work on a day-to-day basis
- how to analyse the constraints on professional practice, related to a learner's own work
- information and observation of health and safety practices.

Moderators reported that evidence for assessment strands a, and c was generally presented within a separate portfolio and all learners had been given guidance and support. Many learners included evidence of interviews with artists and good links with professional practice.

In some centres work experience was also undertaken. The use of strong and tight design briefs for Unit 13: Design, also helped to raise the standard of evidence of professional practice for this unit.

Some of the best evidence came from 'Live Briefs' and centres that had invited local artists to demonstrate or talk about their work to learners. This provided opportunities for personal study and professional practice content, but there were sometimes missed opportunities to include legal and safe practice evidence.

Assessment strand a. Investigation and analysis of professional practice

There was misinterpretation of the requirements of this strand when assessment decisions did not match the range of professional practices analysed to that of the mark band descriptors of the strand. The investigations and analysis of one or two professionals does not, and should not constitute a 'wide', or a 'wide and varied range' of professional practice as some centres were, incorrectly, deeming to be the case. To raise achievement it is essential that the coverage of this strand is much more thorough and comprehensive across professional working practices in art, craft and design.

Good, appropriate evidence was generated when local artists and designers were engaged to demonstrate or talk about their work. This provided the opportunity for learners to interact with, and report directly on the professional life of a practitioner.

Assessment strand b. Application and development of professional practice in own work

The organisation of learners' exhibitions or the inclusion of 'Live Briefs' proved a success. However, they were not always evidenced effectively and mark potential was sometimes lost as a result.

Design briefs requiring attention to presentation showed some evidence of this strand visually. Other work showed improved sequential processing supported by careful and considered presentation, but this was still underdeveloped in many of the weaker portfolios.

In some centres learners undertook work experience. When this had occurred, or learners had experience of engaging with a practitioner at the centre, it was clear that a positive impact had been made on the learners' approach to their own study. This was evidenced well when recorded in ongoing annotations and final evaluations of project work.

Assessment strand c. Investigation and allocation of health and safety and legal requirements

Evidence for this strand was often contained in a separate file and also, for health and safety, in sketchbooks and design sheets (in annotations supporting the work).

When delivery had fully adhered to the detail of the criteria of this strand, as stated in the Specification, assessment was much more accurate. Weaker delivery and inaccurate assessment was found when there was little evidence, or merely downloaded information from the Internet on Health and Safety and legal requirements. As highlighted in last years Examiners Report, the Specification clearly outlines the need for candidates to summarise, understand and apply appropriate information into their working practice. Some centres have worked hard to integrate this work into their delivery, but many centres are still giving scant attention to the criteria and evidence required for this strand. To raise achievement a more comprehensive, and absorbed learner understanding of Health and Safety and legal requirements must be presented.

Assessment strand d. Appropriate standards of professional working

There were some examples of centres providing very thorough and very detailed feedback and observation statements provided to candidates. There were also some useful, effective and detailed witness statements generated to promote and highlight the level of learners' application of a professional working approach. However, this practice was not always adopted and widespread. Furthermore, there were some instances, where there was some evidence, of witness statements lacking sufficient detail.

In light of the previous comments; centres cannot simply rely on the evidence of the organisation of work and the care and professional approach taken in the presentation of portfolio work.

6912, 6913, 6914 The Optional Units

The work presented for these units was approached and covered by centres in different ways. In some instances a specific project for two chosen optional units was completed, with other evidence drawn from the work carried out for, and adhering to the requirements of Unit 11. When Unit 11 was closely linked with these units, it was found that a large body of work addressed two units. Assessment decisions across the optional Units were often lenient when centres had awarded marks in the correct mark band, but incorrectly placed within the mark band; when this was seen across the assessment strands this resulted in significant cumulative leniency in many cases. Centres are advised to pay close attention to the mark band descriptors for each assessment strand and consider carefully how firmly a learner meets the assessment strand criteria within a mark band for each strand of these units, particularly when there is a range of marks available.

6912 Unit 12: Fine Art

Centres generally presented a wider range of work for this optional unit than others as more projects tended to contribute evidence for it. This was particularly the case when Unit 11 was approached in a fine art manner.

Moderators report that learners were provided with opportunities to make investigations into a wide range of contexts to initiate project work. 2D and 3D disciplines were covered well and learners produced creative and well developed sketchbook work, samples and loose sheets as evidence. There were some good examples of work in a range of large and small-scale work across all the fine art disciplines.

Assessment strand a. Recording of experiences or information to develop intentions

Reports indicate instances of very little evidence of recording from primary sources. A lack of exploration into the recording of experiences or information often resulted in unimaginative resource material being used. This immediately impeded the ability and potential for learners to develop their intentions.

Assessment strand b. Use of materials, processes and technology, or a combination of materials, processes and technology to develop ideas

It was reported that learners would benefit from using more varied materials, processes and technology, and a combination of these to develop their skills and ideas.

Where learners explored new ways of working and had developed ideas with independence there was some excellent evidence and coverage of this criterion.

Most centres had considered work from across the portfolio that addressed this criterion when making assessment decisions.

Assessment strand c. The ability to analyse, refine and present a personal, coherent and informed response realising intentions

Weaker work only showed some understanding of refining ideas for the realisation of intentions. The better evidence for this strand showed thorough and well-considered decision making in refining ideas and work to produce successful realisation of intentions.

Assessment strand d. The ability to evaluate the creative potential and effectiveness of the developed idea

There was much visual evaluation, particularly in weaker evidence. Whilst visual evaluation was clearly seen in stronger work this was also supported with insightful and effective evaluative annotations and summative evaluations. This helped to determine the extent of the learners' ability to make decisions about the effectiveness of their work.

The limited range of marks for this criterion in each mark band resulted in assessment decisions being much more consistent and accurate.

6913 Unit 13: Design

Centres had worked to vocational briefs and generally provided good structure for the unit. There was good evidence of a range of design covered, popular choices being, fashion, textiles, graphics, illustration, craft (ceramics), and product design.

Not surprisingly the tighter the design brief, with clear design factors and constraints to analyse and respond to, the better the project and outcomes. Some centres delivered very flimsy design briefs, with little notion of a client and constraints, impeding the mark potential of learners across the criteria for the unit as a result. However, there were some very good design briefs that did not always result in a good final response from learners due to poor design methodology.

This unit, when covered and delivered well, provided some effective and strong evidence for Units 8 and 10.

Assessment strand a. Resolving the needs of a brief to develop intentions

Success in resolving the needs of the brief was noted as improving this year, though still sometimes patchy. As would be expected, the success of learners resolving the needs of their brief was dependent on the quality and detail of the brief itself. There must be a clear sense of intention and objectives accompanied by purposeful analysis of requirement, supported by realistic planning for this criterion to be addressed successfully.

Evidence of how well learners had responded to the intention, and their ability to address both the aesthetic and the functional aspects of the product was inconsistent in some cases.

Regular review, critical analysis and feedback from peer groups, clients and the intended audience were often overlooked. This is recommended practice to raise achievement.

Assessment strand b. Development of a range of ideas in response to a brief

The quality and the breadth of the range of ideas were dependent on how closely learners had focused on the brief. Again, it was clear that the brief had to contain enough detail to encourage a range of ideas. Weaker evidence was found to be due to repetition of one early idea refined and developed straight away, without considering alternative solutions and possibilities.

Assessment strand c. Production and presentation of a design solution

There was evidence of some creative and imaginative design solutions. However, some solutions were often lacking in visual language skills and technical competence. This was often as a result of prototypes being

unresolved, poorly made and lessons not being learned from this.

Assessment strand d. Evaluation of the creative potential and effectiveness of the developed idea

Evaluation for this criterion was inconsistent. Some centres had encouraged learners to fully consider and reflect upon their journey throughout key stages of the design process, and in relation to the brief. However, some centres had paid little attention to this and evaluations were more often related to how the work was produced. There is a need for learners to focus discussion on the potential and effectiveness of their ideas, when reflecting on the 'fitness for purpose' of the work produced, and exploring its potential in meeting the needs of the brief. Centres are reminded that the evaluation must focus on the success of the work through the responses and feedback from others. A variety of audience feedback should be sought, relevant to the work being produced

6914 Unit 14: Multimedia

This unit has not been widely delivered, but where successful, shows significant improved provision and delivery. Projects appear to have been developed which allow access and skills building with new Multimedia, and the success of much of this work obviously relates to the commitment some centres have made in developing this specialist area. As technologies and software advance and change so rapidly at present, any centre wishing to offer this unit, or expand upon their existing delivery of it should embrace new technologies, but still pay close attention to the Specification in order to determine the suitability of resources and new technologies to adequately deliver this unit.

Assessment strand a. A record of information to develop intentions

There was some good evidence of recording from primary (particularly digital photography) and secondary sources. The success of the recording of such records was often dependant on the clarity, focus and nature of the brief that had been presented to learners. Technical notes and annotations on emerging ideas often supported records.

Assessment strand b. Development of multimedia ideas by combining technology media processes

Generally the work was digital and included photography, video/film editing, animation and web design.

The better evidence showed some creative combinations in experimenting with combinations of technological media processes. However, there remains a need to document evidence more fully for this assessment strand, such as pre production plans, editing processes etc.

Assessment strand c. Analysis, refinement and presentation of a personal, coherent and informed response realising intentions

Intentions were often realised very effectively. However, to raise achievement there still needs to be an improvement in the analysis of developmental work and processes. This will need to occur in the refinement of ideas.

Assessment strand d. Evaluate the creative potential and effectiveness of the outcome

There was some inconsistency in the coverage of this criterion. Although there was some good evidence of evaluation of ideas in the design and production stage and the coherency and the technical quality of the final outcome, this was not always in the light of the feedback from peers, tutors and client(s). A variety of audience feedback should be sought, relevant to the work being produced. Centres are reminded that the evaluation must focus on the success of the work through the responses and feedback from others.

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