



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2011**

**Art and Design (Three-
Dimensional Design)**

ARTE1

(Specification 2200)

Unit 1: Coursework Portfolio

Report on the Examination

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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GCE Art and Design General

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General

Familiarity with the examination resulted in more appropriately structured courses this year. The different demands of each unit were, in the main, been better managed. Students continued to explore a wide range of starting points, responding to diverse ideas and themes. Both traditional and contemporary methods and approaches were seen. Increasingly, in the latter parts of courses, students developed their own ideas. Many have engaged in issues-based work. The influence of photography, across a range of endorsements, had an impact on the nature of practice.

The response of students to critical/contextual materials had a significant influence on the work produced. Materials from books, magazines, the Internet and galleries were widely used. On occasions, visits to artists' and designers' studios and workshops proved to be productive. Unfortunately, some students found it difficult to move beyond the work of artists, designers and craftspeople and failed to make meaningful connections with their own work. In the most successful examples, students demonstrated that they had learnt from the work of others and at the same time successfully developed their own visual language.

Technical skills and awareness of the nature of particular materials continued to be a key aspect of the most accomplished work. Often the development of skills was a central consideration during the AS year enabling students to develop independently and with confidence at A2. The work of some students was really exciting and displayed an impressive level of achievement, maturity and competence. Clearly, such work was the result of many hours of conscientious effort and practice.

At the core of much of the most successful work, across a range of endorsements, was the development of drawing skills as a means of researching and investigating, and developing ideas. In some cases drawings were successfully presented as final outcomes.

A continuing problem was the tension between quality and quantity. Many students produced large quantities of work but failed to develop their ideas in sufficient depth. There is no specific guidance in the specification about an ideal quantity of work. Students should be guided by the assessment objectives and consider carefully the extent to which their initial intentions are realised through their work. Successful work often provided evidence of a coherent journey, with a genuine sense of purpose. Less successful work was often fragmented and poorly executed.

Sketchbooks and workbooks continued to be a key feature of the work of the majority of students. A smaller number chose to display their preparatory work solely on mounted sheets. Such work has become an essential means for researching and developing ideas and referencing critical/contextual work. It can reveal key aspects of a student's thinking, the starting point for their ideas, the impact of their observations and the influence of the work of others. In some cases, the quality of work produced was quite outstanding and demonstrated high levels of commitment and technical skills. Unfortunately, some sketchbooks were little more than a collection of cut and pasted images from magazines that provided little insight into students' ideas or intentions. In Photography, the workbook has become a key means of providing evidence of students' explorations into different techniques alongside studies into the work of a number of photographers.

Annotations and more extended written materials continued to be widely used across all units. At best, such material provided genuine insights into students' ideas, intentions and subject knowledge. At worst, written materials took the form of fairly superficial page fillers. Successful written materials can provide evidence of students' knowledge of subject specific

terms, the reasons for making various choices and the influence of particular works of art or design.

The use of ICT was a significant feature of work across all endorsements. The Internet enabled students to access the work of a wide range of artists, designers and craftspeople. However, teachers and lecturers need to be vigilant in monitoring the websites used, steering students away from inappropriate material. Most students used a digital camera at some point in their course. Adobe Photoshop was widely used for the development of ideas. The majority of Graphic Communication students used computers extensively in both preparatory work and final outcomes.

Coursework Portfolio

The introduction of the Portfolio had a significant impact on the nature of courses. The opportunity to explore different materials, techniques and ways of working was fully embraced in many centres. Students were encouraged to study a more extensive range of critical/contextual materials, than in the past and many had opportunities to engage directly with the work of artists, designers and craftspeople in studios and workshops. The changing nature of galleries and museums, with greater attention paid to widening access and the production of educational materials, has encouraged participation. Many students were also influenced by aspects of *street art*. A noticeable feature of successful courses was the extent to which a period of foundation studies, at the beginning of the AS course, enabled students to work with greater confidence and independence as courses developed.

Most students produced a single project as part of their Portfolio. Often these were developed in response to an idea or theme set by teachers and lecturers. However, in endorsements such as Graphic Communication and Textile Design students often produced several projects dealing with different aspects of the subject.

Administration, marking and moderation

Many moderators reported improvements in the provision of essential paperwork. In the majority of centres mark sheets were correctly completed and deadlines were met. Problems occurred in a number of centres where Candidate Record Forms (CRF) and Centre Declaration Sheets were not completed prior to the moderation visit. Detailed comments on the Candidate Record Forms (CRFs) were helpful and informative.

Preparation for moderation visits was generally good, with required samples organised as an exhibition or as a collection of folders. In some centres, labelling was very helpful and clear. Useful maps, indicating exactly where samples might be found, were particularly useful. Most centres made every effort to provide a quiet environment for moderation to take place. Many moderators commented on the warm reception they received although there were still occasions when they felt under pressure to reveal marks. General feedback was generally well received and thought to be helpful.

A better understanding of the assessment objectives resulted in more accurate marking in many centres but there was a tendency to be somewhat lenient in quite a few centres. Occasionally, problems occurred when centres awarded their top student maximum marks when a far lower mark in the high sixties was appropriate. Many teachers and lecturers commented on the value of standardisation meetings and the provision of examples of work at different levels. Unsurprisingly, erratic marking was often linked to non attendance at these meetings.

Assessment Objectives

AO1

The ability to develop ideas in a coherent manner was a key feature of the most successful work and impacted on all four assessment objectives. Successful students provided sound

evidence of learning from contextual materials but at the same time developed their own visual language. Evidence of analysis and critical understanding was provided in different ways. Written materials often gave insights into students' knowledge and understanding and the reasons for making various decisions. In less successful submissions work seemed fragmented, intentions were not always clear and connections with the work of others were often somewhat superficial.

AO2

A well organised course, at the beginning of the AS year, often gave students a good understanding of the nature and potential of a range of materials, processes and techniques. Students were able to build on these experiences when responding to a particular idea, issue or theme as they had a range of options available to them. It was clear that many hours had been spent developing these technical skills. Students were able to review, refine and communicate their ideas with confidence. In the least successful work, basic skills of handling materials failed to be developed and made it difficult for students to successfully explore ideas and realise their intentions.

AO3

The availability of digital cameras and mobile phones with cameras had a significant impact on the nature of recording. Digital images often came first in sketchbooks and were followed by drawings and colour studies. However, there were many examples of carefully observed, analytical studies, which formed the basis of other work. Some students recorded ideas and observations in written form, often making notes about particular locations, or as a means of noting aspects of colour, light and texture. Initial ideas were often recorded as a series of thumbnail sketches. In Textile Design many students presented their ideas in the form of mood boards. Evidence of reflecting on work and progress was provided both visually and in written form. In some of the least successful work students packed sketchbooks with poorly selected collections of magazine images.

AO4

In AS courses there was generally less emphasis on making a personal response than at A2 as many students concentrated on honing their technical skills and strategies for developing ideas. However, in some centres, students were given free rein and were encouraged to explore a wide range of personal ideas, issues and themes from the beginning of the course. This approach was often problematic as students tended to produce somewhat superficial responses. Generally, students seemed to respond well to a limited number of starting points. This was noticeable in the work produced for externally set assignments. The linking of written and visual elements was most apparent in the Personal Investigation. In the most successful examples, careful consideration and serious intent was clearly evident. Written work enhanced and informed visual elements and provided insights into the students' knowledge and understanding.

Three-Dimensional Design

Coursework Portfolio

Many centres appraised the content of their courses in relation to available resources and students' prior experience in handling media. This resulted in more focus on investigations in areas of interest and expertise and in the development of ideas arising from initial investigations. There was a growing understanding of the need to identify contextual references that can inform the students' progress. The most successful students displayed evidence of analysis and critical understanding.

In some cases there was a tendency for students to collect a range of small-scale illustrations which may have provided background information but were of limited use to them. It would be helpful if these were edited and refined to assist a more focussed line of enquiry. This was particularly noticeable in some product design courses. The most

successful students demonstrated careful consideration of the selection of appropriate sources which were drawn from many areas of art and design.

There were variations in the use of time available to deliver the portfolio unit. Some centres elected to introduce a broad range of media and techniques before encouraging students to develop an idea in maquette form. There was clear evidence that students had benefited from identifying the issues associated with different ways of handling materials. Other centres focused on a narrow range of processes using only one media which led to projects showing greater understanding of the properties of their chosen media. Whichever approach was adopted the most successful students demonstrated a journey of discovery and an appreciation of the possibilities inherent in their chosen media.

Students' responses to the reviewing and refining of ideas (AO2) improved and there was more evidence of maquettes and three-dimensional models being used to explore possibilities. These, sometimes delicate structures, must be retained for moderation as a photographic record does not always do justice to the work. There were fewer students referring to 'my final piece' when there was little evidence to show the investigative journey. The response to recording in AO3 saw an increased emphasis on drawing, either through direct observation or on visits to galleries or museums. Workshops with practicing artists also provided opportunities for direct recording. Students' own photography also contributed to the recording process. Commercial illustrations of structures or forms can inform but need to be of sufficient size and image quality to be of much use. In this endorsement it is often the degree of analysis of selected images that determines the basis for informed and meaningful personal responses. Candidates' ability to understand and demonstrate knowledge of the characteristics of selected media and the processes involved in working in three dimensions is of particular importance in this endorsement and this should be taken into account when setting topics or briefs. Centres are, however, becoming increasingly experienced as to what can be achieved within the time frame.

Many students were adventurous when experimenting with media. Card, plastics, wire, soft metals, stripwood, machined timber and folded paper were used to construct maquettes or architectural models. Some students produced mock-ups using larger pieces of fired clay or more durable materials.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

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