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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ART AND DESIGN

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

<p>Paper 9704/01 Controlled Test</p>
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General comments

An increase in entry numbers for the Paper this session led to more candidates gaining the mid to high levels of the mark range. Such success was directly related to the thoroughness of directly observed research and the development of ideas during the preparatory period. The tendency to depend on copying from secondary sources inhibited much of the less competent work from rising to higher levels. There was also a number of submissions below an acceptable standard for AS or A Level for which there was very little evidence of a serious response to the Question Paper, in either the preparatory or the examination work.

Most work was well presented and labelled with sensitive mounting to show sequential developments in the preliminary studies. There was more evidence of serious development from initial research, with selective and controlled experimentation with media and the exploration of ideas in terms of aesthetic relationships to inform the final pieces. Although the majority of submissions were from the Painting and Related Media Areas of Study, ambition and confidence was apparent in the work from Centres which encourages the use of mixed media. Some of the most exciting submissions, for example, were carried out through layering of pencil, pastel, paint with sgraffito and collaged elements.

Section A, the open-ended starting points, attracted the most responses, with **Questions 1, 2, 5 and 6** being equally popular. For **Section B**, the specific starting points, **Questions 7 and 8** were also very popular but the other options also attracted substantial numbers. The specific design briefs of **Section C** were undertaken by fewer candidates, but **Question 12**, the poster design was the most popular choice.

Comments on specific questions

Section A - Open-ended Starting Points

Question 1

Dismantled

Directly observed studies of natural and machine forms as well as ruined buildings informed the most stimulating visual ideas. Often the most successful approach was to select parts of the studies for experimentation and development into interesting compositional organisation, which became more abstracted in the final pieces. Some candidates chose the question to offer perceptive visual comment on political or social issues. Many interpretations were influenced by Surrealism in terms of the rearrangement of natural and organic elements. However, in such approaches, weaker outcomes resulted in observation and analysis had been avoided.

Question 2

Intimate surroundings

Some very sensitive interpretations were developed from the home environment and local landscape. Candidates choosing this stimulus tended to be motivated by a strong sense of personal direction which was expressed not just in terms of locations, but in the way familiar surfaces and objects were rendered through the use of colour and mark-making. The less strong responses usually floundered because of a limited ability to organise spatial relationships.

Question 3*Ceremony*

Although a less popular question in this section, the theme inspired some of the strongest work seen. Cultural customs and identities were sensitively or energetically explored and compositional ideas were more often surprising than conventional. Less successful attempts did, however, tend towards stereotypical imagery and some of these were little more than copies of comic book illustrations.

Question 4*Flexible or folding structures*

Few attempted question this question, but it encouraged a thoughtful choice of sources. A focus on clothes and the human form was the most usual approach. Most work was of a competent to high level and very few weaker responses were seen.

Question 5*Transition*

A common approach at all levels of ability was to interpret the theme in terms of metamorphosis. Similar to other questions, the thoroughness of directly observed research was related to the motivation to search for inventive solutions to communicate ideas about change, growth, evolution and frequently, death. The most advanced work, however, sought to express ideas about light through the selection and organisation of colour and surface qualities.

Question 6*Cross-sections*

This question also attracted responses of a wide range of ability. Generally, interpretations were straightforward in developing ideas from direct observation of natural forms, usually fruit or vegetables. A few interesting attempts focusing on political and social cross-sections were seen.

Some candidates chose the question to develop design solutions, such as repeat patterns, rather than a question from **Section C**, and this was a perfectly acceptable way to use the Question Paper.

Section B - Specific Starting Points**Question 7**

The still life arrangement of ingredients for grilling alongside cooking utensils was the most popular choice in this section. Candidates had been well taught for this traditional examination task and, consequently most submissions achieved competent to high levels of expertise. Less successful responses showed an uneven ability to establish spatial relationships within and surrounding the objects. Otherwise, preparatory studies were generally thorough and, in the most advanced work, the definition of forms and structures was precise and a strong sense of unity was achieved by a fluid use of colour, tone and media.

Question 8

The more selective specimen observation question, focusing on two or three musical instruments on a patterned cloth, was the next most popular choice in **Section B**. Preliminary studies showed a careful consideration of points of view from which the instruments were seen, leading to many stimulating compositions. Few weaker attempts were received, possibly because the theme appealed to those with a specific interest, consequently encouraging a personal sense of direction. In the most able studies the organisation of complex forms and structures showed a clear appreciation of aesthetic relationships. Some of the most interesting developments led to knowledgeable abstract solutions informed by the later Cubist periods of Braque, Gris and Picasso.

Question 9

The reclining pose for the figure study question attracted a substantial number of responses. Several outstanding submissions were worthy of the highest range of marks and few fell below a proficient level. A knowledge of underlying bone and anatomical structures informed understanding of forms and contours. Spatial relationships within and surrounding the model and the observation of proportion and foreshortening were assumed and confident. Tone, colour and the use of media evoked directional light sources, enhancing forms, shadows and surface qualities, as well as giving unity to the studies as a whole.

Question 10

The environmental study of a view of receding telegraph poles or electricity pylons attracted only a small number of responses. All of the work received, however, was very competent in terms of establishing depth and recession. The best interpretations were highly evocative of particular places, even when the choice of location was quite ordinary.

Question 11

The extract from the novel, 'A Suitable Boy' by Vikram Seth appealed to a pleasing number of candidates. All interpretations were focused on specific rooftop views, which encouraged distinctive personal qualities in the development of compositional ideas, many of which achieved an excellent evocation of the extract.

Section C - Specific Design Briefs

Question 12

The poster design brief to advertise a local Flower Show was the only question in this section to attract a large number of responses. In many designs, however, only a basic level of competence was apparent in the study of appropriate sources and letter forms, or the organisation and integration of text and image. Mid-levels of achievement were often used to enhance when decorative borders were used to enhance lettering and the whole design. The best work evolved from thorough preliminary developments to perform its function in terms of clear, attractive and selective visual communication.

Question 13

The repeat pattern design for the furnishing fabrics of a shop selling jewellery, clocks and watches appealed to no more than a dozen candidates. The most able designs achieved proficiency through directly observed research and an understanding of the techniques of repeat pattern organisation. Several weaker attempts floundered because of an apparent lack of experience of this specialisation. A poor awareness of figure-ground relationships and attempts to literally repeat motifs without any development of positive-negative counterchange, shifting, cropping or overlaying led to outcomes only worthy of the lower range of marks.

Question 14

Several good submissions were received for the costume design question. Thorough preliminary research of the agricultural theme led to inventive ideas in the forms and shapes of costumes, the choice of materials and the organisation of colour, pattern and textures.

Question 15

Only a few responses for the packaging design question were received. Candidates understood the requirements well enough to achieve competent results. The use of colour or tonal contrasts to create an impact on the consumer could, however, have been given more consideration.

<p>Paper 9704/02</p>

<p>Coursework A</p>

General comments

The coursework submitted for this Component should be in one area of study. Many candidates still do not appreciate that it is not the finished product that is so important but it is the evolvment of ideas and development of them using a variety of media and methods which will be the main emphasis of the assessment. It is, of course, necessary for candidates to have a firm grasp of the basic artistic skills on which to build their work and these are all outlined in the Subject Syllabus. Much depends on the depth and scope of the course offered by the Centre.

The best work submitted did follow on the lines mentioned above and the work was individual in character, was selective and showed thorough research, recording and evaluation. These candidates had worked in a number of different media and processes and included a selection of source information and a knowledge of cultural influences was made evident.

Unfortunately many still do not define the different emphasis between this Component and Component 3 and dwell too much on the finished product without attempting to evolve different ways of developing their theme. This does not mean that there has to be a large variety of expensive materials. For instance, in the area of Painting and Mixed Media experiments can be carried out with aspects of drawing, collage and printmaking techniques. Some candidates also undervalue the importance of direct observation from original sources and many still rely too heavily on the copying from magazine photographs. Photography can be used for information, preferably the candidate's own photography, but should not be mindlessly copied however skillful the technique may be.

Most work submitted fell in the area of study concerned with Painting and Mixed Media, but other areas of artistic study were represented.

Almost always Teachers had assessed the work well and placed their candidates in the right order of merit. Only one or two Centres for one reason or another had got this wrong and adjustments had to be made. On the whole the work was too generously marked, especially in the higher grades and marks had to be reduced, sometimes by quite large amounts. It was most usual for the candidate's personal qualities to be overestimated. Occasionally some individual achievements had been overlooked and marks could be raised.

Comments on specific questions

A few notes follow relating to the areas of work submitted by candidates.

By far the largest number of candidates submitted work within the scope of Painting and Mixed media. There was the usual observational study work which was to be evolved into still life paintings and in other imaginative and creative directions. Research on historic example was clearly in evidence in some of the best work. There was figure drawing and painting and portrait work. One candidate had based study on mural painting designs. At best the Painting and Mixed Media area could show excellent study in a variety of approaches. However, in the middle ability submissions, too often candidates relied heavily on photographic copying. The work mainly lacked a secure base of artistic knowledge and skills. The very weakest floundered in a complete lack of direction and experience, was often messy and structureless. Sometimes the tasks candidates had set themselves were just not good enough and gave little scope for development.

Of the diversity of topics chosen some can be mentioned. There were many rewarding studies based initially on the observational work involving wild animals, insects, human life studies, landscapes, townscapes and plants. Many Centres had encouraged work directed by local culture. Work always seems to be better and more appropriate when these references are undertaken.

There were few examples of submissions concerning textile design. A few candidates had experimented with a variety of techniques in the production of repeat pattern making. These were imaginative and skillful designs, often showing a good sense of colour combinations, inspired by bugs and butterflies. One candidate had submitted designs for woven carpets. Here the backup study of historic research showed appreciation and dedication.

Only one or two examples of designs for 3D work surfaced. Work consisted of the detailed evolution of designs on paper for sculpture and ceramic forms based on the study of natural objects.

In the area of printmaking there were examples of block and stencil printing. The designs could be well developed but the actual printing was often poor in technical skill.

The Graphics area of study was comprised mainly of computer generated designs. Mostly there was good thinking behind the work and at best interesting ideas and experiments were put forward. A most eye catching several page calendar was presented with great polish and skill. It was a great pity that some pictorial inclusions were not the candidate's own paintings.

Most of the Photography was of a poor standard. There were few original ideas or the development of them, and very little experimental work. Overall, compositions were weak with a poor balance of shapes, textures, tones and the enhancement of depth by the employment of light and shade.

Paper 9704/03

Coursework B

General comments

Coursework B asks for a study to be made in depth but with a definite focus made towards a finished piece of work. In the assessment here, more emphasis is placed on the final outcome of a candidate's study rather than Coursework Component A.

On the whole the assessments made in the Centres were realistic and required little alteration by the External Moderators. Very occasionally candidates did not seem to be placed in an appropriate merit order and this had to be addressed, but this was rare. Often the work of the better candidates in a Centre had been too generously treated, quite out of relationship to their fellow candidates. This was usually due to an over emphasis on personal qualities which were not apparent or indeed that very special quality concerning maturity based on knowledge. At the very other end of the scale these same qualities may have been overlooked in a Centre and it became the External Moderators' pleasure to raise the marks.

This year there was not so much evidence of work which had been too heavily mounted or where candidates had not been selective enough in the specimens of work submitted. The candidate's personal judgement as to the work submitted is very much a part of the assessment criteria.

Some very fine courses were on offer in a number of Centres and the work engendered could be quite outstanding. By far the largest number of entries was in the area of Painting and Mixed Media with only a few in the other areas of study. The top grade work showed highly sustained, refined and resolved artistry. In the best work the theme of study had been chosen with care and had been treated in an individual and distinct manner. Work nearly always is best when it is based on a candidate's own environment and experiences coupled with a particular study of historic practices.

Less successful candidates often suffered from a lack of the basic skills which should have been mastered at a lower level of study. These are such as structural drawing skills, the enhancement of depth and the portrayal of form in their work, or the recognition of and colour evaluation, or in matters of composition and general design balance. Some, as always, rely heavily on derived images based on little other than technique. Often sketchbook work was not genuinely the candidate's own but just scrapbooks with little cohesion or development.

Comments on specific questions

Some outstanding entries were submitted under the heading of Painting and Mixed Media. The work was at its best when candidates were on top of all of the basic artistic skills and brought these together with a selection of themes which could be expanded imaginatively and when there had been a sound historic cultural reference. There were beautifully painted still life pictures which were well balanced in composition, harmonious and rich in colour, and searching in textural quality. Fine portraits of African ladies; some of which had progressed towards cubism. Imaginative fantasy paintings; one involved the study of mountains in one of which there was a door which led into inner depths of well laid out country house gardens. Flower studies which had been developed into thought provoking imaginative compositions; honest colour enriched landscapes, butterflies in lovely rural scenery. Interesting focus made on studies of the head with classical Greek reference. These are only a few of the subjects represented.

There is only complete success when all of the basic elements of artistic criteria are brought together at the same time. In the middle range of submissions the work had often been let down by an insufficient study from direct observation of source material. On the other hand there was a Centre where observational study had been thorough and basic skills sharpened, this involved the detailed study of animals, flowers and fungi, but after that the direction had been lost and the final development was dull and disappointing. Some work could be too ambitious in size and in the medium used, such as some large portraiture work carried out in oil paint.

At the bottom end of the scale there was much evidence of thinking far from Advanced Level standards. Trivial subjects had been chosen and these were unskillfully executed. Sometimes work from photographs had been knowledgeably translated and used but only too often it was seen to be only a technical accomplishment and without much other merit.

Three dimensional work was hardly in evidence. There were some designs for paper sculpture models of themes such as footballers. The designs were satisfactory but mostly detail had been left to chance.

There were a number of notable examples of textile designs. These were made into repeating patterns to be printed by stencil or block. Such inspirational material as animals, butterflies and flowers had been evolved into nicely flowing and beautifully coloured designs. Altogether these were well supported by first class preparatory development based on direct observational research.

Printmaking brought forth a fine etching of a zebra.

There were no reports of exceptional Photography. Prints were described as being poor in the development of ideas and themes. There was a dearth of experimental dark room work, and little idea of the compositional values of basic artistic elements.

<p>Paper 9704/04 Related Study</p>
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General comments

The Examiners are pleased to report that the response to the component this session was altogether much more encouraging. This led to a substantial improvement in mark levels with approximately 20% more candidates achieving a firm A Level standard, as well as an increased number of higher level submissions.

Most candidates considered their intentions seriously, making use of the outline proposal form which was usually sent to the Board's Examiners for comment and approval. The organisation and presentation of studies also showed evidence of thoughtful planning. While the majority of candidates had access to computer processing for the layout of text and illustrations, many well scripted hand crafted submissions were also received.

One aspect of the component which needs to be focused on for the future is the extent to which the studies relate to candidates' coursework experiences. Centres should not assume that the study is marked by the same Examiner who moderates their candidates' coursework. The Examiner is unaware of what has been achieved in the coursework components because the Board's Code of Practice, quite properly does not allow the same Examiner to mark all the work of an individual candidate. It is therefore important for Related Studies to incorporate references to and comparisons with some of the candidates' own work and this would need to be illustrated or reproduced in order to inform the Examiner. Ideally such comparison could be integrated with the analysis of chosen works as the study progresses, but it would be perfectly acceptable for them to be included in a separate section before the conclusion.

Comments on different levels of achievement

In the best studies personal qualities were clearly apparent in the sustained interest and enthusiasm with which the investigations had been conducted. Independence and initiative were evident in recorded visits to sites, galleries, studios and exhibitions, leading to the communication of distinctly personal views. The selection and relevance of visual and written material contributed strongly to the focus and structure of the studies. Chosen works were subjected to practical visual analysis as well as written comment. Relevant comparisons were made with the candidates' own coursework experiences as well as other works only available in reproductions. Very lively visual presentation was apparent in thoroughly planned layout, integration of text and image, inventive formats and a variety of illustrations. There was no question that such investigations had contributed to the candidates' understanding of Art and Design issues. The cultural contexts of the works referred to were seen to inform analysis and the evaluations of the research in relation to intentions.

At the mid-levels of achievement, studies were well sustained and focused but analysis of works was often patchy. Descriptions of what was depicted or constructed were thorough, but analysis of their compositions in terms of the relationships of visual elements was seldom undertaken. Practical studies, consequently, tended to be just copies of works, rather than a selective or critical examination of their constituent parts. For example, analysis of artworks might involve separately considered extractions of the qualities of light, space, form, rhythm, mass, colour or shape as well as the use of materials, which could then be compared with other works. Although the presentation of mixed and written material was usually coherently organised, many candidates could have achieved a higher level of marks if they were reminded that they were engaged in an Art and Design investigation and therefore needed to make it as visually interesting and exciting as possible. There was also a tendency at this level to include cultural contexts and historical information as a chronological list, rather than employ it to inform personal evaluations.

At the lower levels of achievement, confused intentions led to a poorly sustained interest, a lack of structure and an unselective inclusion of secondary sources to bolster the presentation. Works were seldom commented on for more than a few descriptive sentences and, sometimes, they were left entirely without identification. There were few illustrations and reproductions were often of a very poor quality, suggesting a lack of commitment to planning and organisation when attempting to collect such information. Some studies amounted to little more than a catalogue of works downloaded from the internet or a regurgitation of technical processes of a particular craft. Others presented broadly ranging histories with little focus on specific works or scant evidence of any first hand experience. Teachers can encourage substantial improvements to these failings if they provide the necessary advice and support in order to avoid such confused intentions of 'last minute' responses.