

Moderator's Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2014

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

The report that follows is a compilation of feedback evidence from the Moderation Team on the 2014 series.

- Some centres had been accredited or were still in accreditation for some units following the 2013 moderation and previous moderation series.
- Generally, centres had followed guidelines and the work was well presented for moderation. Work was clearly labeled with the Summative and Synoptic projects being clearly identified. The portfolios were accompanied by the Unit Assessment Grids and authentication forms.
- Where individual Assessment Strands have been mentioned, these are identified by a shortened version - for example - ASa, ASb etc.
- Where individual Mark Bands have been mentioned these are identified by a shortened version – for example – MB1, MB2 etc.

Assessment

- Generally, assessment was reported to be accurate to lenient across the units, there were very few reports of severity.
- Some moderators reported marks being correctly located in a Mark Band but incorrectly placed within the band. Centres need to ensure that careful consideration of all of the evidence is carefully considered and more discretion be given to allocating marks.
- There is some concern over the assessing of units when in combination. Most centres had assisted this process by clearly indicating evidence against units on the assessment grids. There were some reports of problems identifying evidence where this signposting via the assessment grids was not as clear and thorough as it could have been.
- The annotation of the assessment grids was very useful to moderators particularly when the details gave full information on evidence location and justification for assessment decisions. Many moderation reports went out to centres this year urging teams to improve annotation in the comments section of the assessment grids; this should assist assessors in their decision making and would certainly support the moderation process.

6906 UNIT 6: DEVELOP SET IDEAS

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

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

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

a. Research and analyse primary and secondary sources

This year's theme presented the opportunity to promote primary source material. However this was not always the case. Moderators commented that there was a reliance on photography as a means to produce primary evidence with only some evidence of initial drawing activity.

Photographs were used with inconsistency, with some candidates presenting poor quality, blurred and uncropped images; evidence also showed copying of the photograph as opposed to using it as a springboard for further development work.

Candidates, from some centres, were directed towards secondary source material at the expense of primary. Moderators commented that more primary research could be afforded to create breadth and the investigation of other possible ideas. The heavy reliance on secondary research meant the chance to draw on their experience found in other units was not always exploited; this prevented these candidates from building and developing substantial exploratory bodies of work. When more capable candidates forged strong connections to contextual studies there was added breadth to the research and it often formed the foundations of developmental work.

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

The candidates are expected to generate a range of initial ideas, using the relevant visual research information they have gathered. The emphasis is on the generation of ideas with an exploration of a variety of ideas using drawing, experiments with media and other appropriate methods. These developmental

studies should be annotated to explain the ideas and clarify the methods of working.

Some candidates took the opportunity to employ all the materials, methods and approaches explored in the previous units. This resulted in some resolved and consolidated ideas. In some centres there were some very good examples of well-formulated and evaluated ideas.

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

There is still a tendency to feel that the evidence for this strand is a resolved, well-executed outcome; however the specification encourages the use of appropriate skills in materials, techniques and processes to produce a prototype.

The on going concern for the Double Award is that without a recognisable prototype(s) it is difficult to differentiate between this assessment decision and the one that is targeted for Unit 7 assessment strand b. The better examples seemed to be when these candidates had produced a range of prototypes to justify the decision to choice and use of specialist media, materials and techniques in the production of a final outcome.

d. Evaluation

It is important, when generating and developing ideas, for the learner to use appropriate annotation. They are encouraged to comment and reflect on their work throughout the process. These can be submitted in various formats visual, verbal and written. When all are evidenced the assessment decisions are accurate. However with little evidence of written some leniency in the assessment occurs. Not enough is made to the candidates about being self-critical and the need to articulate strengths and weaknesses in their use of visual language needs to be more pronounced.

6907 UNIT 7: Produce Set Ideas

This unit is delivered through the externally set Summative Project. It provides the opportunity for candidates to work on a vocational focused brief. They are required to respond to a set theme given by Pearson Edexcel. This is published on the Pearson Edexcel website in September. This year the theme was Urban Eyes- Rural Eyes. Overall this appears to have been well received by the majority of the centres.

This unit gives the learner the opportunity to produce set ideas based on the development and prototype work completed in Unit 6: Develop Set Ideas. They have the opportunity to use and extend their construction skills, depending on the art, craft or design they explored in Unit 6, to enable them to realise a final outcome.

As well as employing specialist materials, techniques and processes to produce the final outcome, learners should undertake proper planning. It is also important that the candidate shows evidence of analyzing their work and reflecting on their working process in order to make any developments.

a. How to plan to produce a final outcome

The majority of centres, recognising how many marks are available for this assessment strand, have a sound understanding of how to provide evidence for this strand and encourage their candidates to include week plans and/or interim reviews. Halfway reviews are now common practice, allowing the learner to take stock of their progress and outline any areas for potential improvement and progression. Weaker candidates tend to only show implicit planning and this can lead to some leniency with the assessment decision for this strand.

A well-written Project Brief Outline, clearly written as a statement of intent early on at the project's inception increases the mark potential for this assessment strand. Regrettably too many state obvious intentions, such as shoot photographs, make drawings or develop ideas, without explaining how or why and without alluding to the constraints that could hinder development and/or affect the initial plan. Without any Project Brief Outline, which can still occur, this strand had been too leniently marked.

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

There was some really exciting work produced in response to the *Urban Eyes-Rural Eyes* theme. Some candidates had focused on one over the other, whereas others had tried to visual interpret both urban and rural as a form of contrast or juxtaposition. Both had yielded imaginative responses. There was a tendency for weaker candidates to be drawn to obvious sources such as graffiti/street art for urban and the countryside, particularly wildlife, for rural.

Moderators reported a diverse range of responses from traditional painting and sculpture to installation, video and animation work. The use of extensive mixed media, exploring both conventional as well as unconventional approaches meant that an interesting and creative vocabulary had started to emerge in some candidates, resulting in some highly interesting outcomes.

c. Present and evaluate a final outcome

Final evaluations for this unit are now commonplace. However the quality of depth and reflection varied from the low achievers making basic descriptive comments to some high achievers making extremely detailed and reflective commentary that was broken down into key sub-headings. Most candidates also need to be encouraged to return to the original intention. Only the high performing candidates seem to make reference to any original constraints that they thought they may have encountered (expressed in the Project Brief Outline) and how they tackled these. In addition the needs of the client and/or target audience need to be considered and once again only the candidates deserving of the higher marks will do so.

6901 UNIT 1: 2D AND 3D VISUAL LANGUAGE

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

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

2D visual language, for the most part, is delivered with confidence and assurance. This is mainly evidenced through drawing, painting, digital photography, printmaking and digital processes, especially Photoshop. Traditional observational drawing is predominantly initiated at the start of the year and, for the majority of centres, at the beginning of a project but only sustained and developed further by some candidates. Moderators continue to report that some centres employ processes, such as printmaking and simple Photoshop manipulations (such as employing filters) to hide the drawing ability of their weaker candidates.

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

In the exploration of 3D visual language and formal elements centres had continued to employ accessible 3D materials. Paper, card/cardboard, clay and wire are still predominantly utilised. Some centres also employed textiles with a sculptural application with interesting results. Hardly any centres had explored materials such as wood, concrete, stone or glass unless they have an additional Level 2 or 3 Design Technology qualifications that provide access to these resources.

Some centres had continued to extend their 2D and/or 3D provision by offering workshops delivered by external practitioners to supplement project work. This

help to enhance the learners' experience and understanding as well as increase the mark potential for assessment strands b and c.

Team projects focused on 3D visual language had also instigated. But a failure to either record these thoroughly or identify individual contributions meant it wasn't always easy to ascertain the merits of an individual candidate's 3D visual language skills, knowledge and understanding.

Assessment was reported to have been fairly accurate overall. Concerns still surround the lack of 3D investigations and explorations were again not accurately reflected in assessment decisions, impeding the mark potential for assessment strands b and c. This led to centres assessing with leniency, with it most noticeable with middle to low achievers.

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

Traditional observation drawing from a primary source tends to be introduced at the start of the course; however, this is rarely sustained or developed beyond that time.

Digital photography was the principle means of generating primary sources. Low scoring candidates tend to rely solely on this approach as a means of producing primary evidence. A high majority of candidates just copy from 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. This technique of recording and copying photographs was particularly prevalent this year, not only amongst the weaker candidates but also the higher scoring ones.

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

The best evidence included primary and relevant secondary sources that were used to identify starting points for creating and developing ideas. As with last year an over reliance of secondary sources, at the expense of effective primary recording, was noted by the moderation team.

Nearly all the candidates make connections with the work of others. Some good examples were found where candidates not only cited their influences but began to question the wider issues as well as their ideas and intentions. The impact of this manifested itself in experimental approaches to creating diverse outcomes revealing exciting potential.

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

This was the most leniently marked assessment strand in Unit 1. It is appreciated that this can be the most demanding stage of the creative process hence the reason this strand attracts the most marks.

There is still a notable lack of 3D visual language, combinations of formal elements and object making in comparison with to 2D visual language. This impeded the mark potential of this strand and often resulted in lenient assessment decisions.

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.

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

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

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

3D development work, in the form of producing smaller 3D models and maquettes was also not extensively explored. When seen to a high level it is exciting and invigorating, as it is obvious the learner is trying to formulate their ideas visually and creatively. Most 3D solutions were developed via 2D design drawings alone and some of these were weak and poorly executed. This limited the exploration of combinations in object-making. Where appropriate more focus to this stage would be beneficial.

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

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

The higher scoring candidates are able to evaluate how others' work had influenced their own and make fluent connections. Stronger candidates in their

on-going annotations also expressed analysis and evaluation of own and others' use of formal elements and visual language. Weaker candidates tend to provide only biographical information (often lifted from *Wikipedia*) about others. They fail to explain their work in relation to the work of others, limiting their understanding merely through visual clues in the work itself. Visual evidence was used but this is not sufficient to justify placements in Mark bands 3 and 4 where very little or, sometimes, no written evidence was presented.

Consideration of the QWC had not always been taken into account in assessment decisions. In light of the CIF centres should try and encourage their learners to build on their literacy skills. Work at the lower end lacked sufficient depth of understanding and demonstrated only 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 mentioned in the Unit 1 section of this report work well. Their choice is appropriate for candidates of all abilities as well as sufficiently fitting the unit and assessment criteria.

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

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

Providing good quality photographic documentation, especially in regards to 3D object making can be highly beneficial as supporting evidence. Poor (often out of focus) quality photography of 3D samples and outcomes, as seen again in some centres, has the opposite effect. However with an increased use of digital technology this no longer appears to be a significant issue.

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 placement within the correct Mark band but at the wrong end. Centres tend to place marks in Mark band 3 for 'competent' performing learners too readily and overstep what is the correct placement within 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 printed textiles work had been effectively developed in some centres.

The use of digital photography and computer-manipulated imagery is now commonplace. If used effectively work as an important creative tool. However employing Photoshop purely by applying decorative effects and filters can result in purely cosmetic responses at best and be frivolous at worse. Weaker candidates tend to employ this technique and some centres aren't rigorous enough in putting the emphasis on their candidates submitting quality over quantity.

The range of 3D is to some extent dependent on the centre's provision of 3D making facilities and resources. Most centres will employ paper, card and cardboard to enhance the experience of learners when working in 3D. The other main materials used are wire and clay. With the latter if the time and effort has been made to glaze and fire the outcomes the process has been thoroughly delivered and the results tend to be better. The use of papier-mâché, modroc and textiles are also offered and developed. Hardly any centres use wood, glass or stone object-making techniques.

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

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

This assessment strand is often where the leniency in assessment resides. There was good development in the use of 2D materials, techniques and processes. However, there was 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.

Reports continue to indicate that the 2D exploration was very good in many centres. Combinations were very strong where the initial work on the formal elements had shown breadth of experimentation. This was reported as being particularly strong in 2D Fine Art, photography, surface pattern and textiles work. The potential though, once explored, was not always realised through the development and outcome stage. This sometimes hindered achievement.

Limited numbers of centres are encouraging their candidates to explore and develop combinations of 3D formal elements. This is due to the notable lack of sustained 3D delivery. The employment of certain 3D techniques is not being fully realised with substantial 3D development work and/or outcomes.

Despite allocating the correct Mark band for their candidates, most centres marks tend to be awarded too high, especially for middle to low achievers.

Greater recognition of these candidates' level of competence or confidence needs to be accurately reflected in the marks awarded.

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

Health and Safety evidence is reported as being well acknowledged by pretty much all centres and most learners. For candidates to access the higher marks within this strand there is still a need to show an individual appreciation, knowledge and understanding of good health and safety practice.

Learners should present relevant information in the form of written on-going annotations and also in any final evaluations related to their own creative activities in order to fully address the health and safety aspect of this strand and merit higher marks. Weaker candidates had only presented the health and safety handouts/booklet provided by the centres. At a few centres these were tucked away at the back of the candidates' sketchbook and looked barely touched.

It is important that assessors need to authenticate learner work and provide evidence that they have achieved a certain level of performance. The use of witness statements now appears common practice but stronger candidates ensure these provide the basis for the learner to demonstrate their own understanding of how to safely in creating and developing finished work.

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

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

When produced 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 students who had engaged in more formal, ongoing exercises, guided and supported by the centre. The candidates were able to express themselves in the form of ongoing annotations and a final written evaluation. The best evidence was analytical, where the learner had been able to explain reasons behind their work, as opposed to just proving a lengthy anecdotal description of what was done. Even the stronger candidates did not always significantly cover the analysis of the creative potential of areas for further development.

6903 UNIT 3: VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND MEANING

The best practice for Unit 3 is to embed it across the whole AS portfolio and nearly all the centres successfully deliver it in this way. Evidence should come in the form of written art and design written notes and the analysis of examples from visits to galleries/exhibitions and be evident in all the projects that cover the Portfolio and Optional Units. The best practice is where the learner's investigations and analysis in the work of others connects directly into the development of a project and is done continually rather than something that is done at the start of a project and then is not extended further.

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

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

a. Analyse visual communication in the work of others

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

The majority of contextual references are from the fine art with some design and, on occasion, some craft references. It would be refreshing to see source material that extends beyond the usual range of investigations. Some candidates have predictable investigations into 20th century modern art whereas others reference artists who populate the Internet on websites such as *Pinterest*. The latter, whilst providing a platform for stimulating imagery, is rarely supported by any explanation as to the visual communication, and links tend to be more aesthetic than conceptual.

The identification of the use of the formal elements as a means to visual communication in others' work has not been covered in sufficient depth in some centres. Consequently, this impeded how learners understand how they can communicate their ideas using the formal elements and visual language. Learners need to show a deeper analysis of how the formal elements have been used as the means to visual communication and expression, and to articulate this understanding, for the awarding of marks in the higher Mark bands to be considered by the assessor.

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

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

c. Use visual communication to develop your own work

The evidence for this is now fully integrated into all Unit sketchbooks, design sheets and in trials, 3D models, maquettes for a range of project work. These cover all the Portfolio Units, one of the Optional Units, as well as the Externally Assessed Units.

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

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

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

Evaluations tend to assess overall success of the work, and did not fully address how the outcomes communicated meaning and messages. Weaker candidates have a tendency to describe rather than explain processes that hampers the mark potential for this assessment strand. Candidates who failed to produce any written conclusions to their work significantly hindered their chances of securing more marks in this strand. This was again apparent with weaker candidates.

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

The majority of AS Double Award students are entered for Unit 4: Working in 2D at the expense of Unit 5: Working in 3D. Unit 5 had a significantly smaller entry, but tended to be offered by centres where the facilities and resources were sufficient for 3D development beyond the work generated for Unit 1 and Unit 2.

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

The best evidence for this unit was when there was significant development from the work of Units 1 and 2 and where candidates had been encouraged to tackle the unit as a separate entity in its own right and develop new 'solutions' to new 'problems.'

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

A very small number of 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 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 was only drawn from limited evidence and where centres had used Units 6&7 to provide the evidence. It is now rarely the case that candidates have been submitted for the wrong Optional Unit. On the times it does occur marks were leniently awarded or marked accurately but at the expense of the candidate scoring higher marks if correctly entered for the appropriate unit.

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

6904 UNIT 4: WORKING IN 2D

Whereas the focus of Unit 1 and Unit 2 is to practice 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 and developed the work undertaken for Unit 1 and Unit 2. The more discrete evidence resulted in greater consideration of the unit specification resulting in more accurate assessment. Some centres had produced briefs that encouraged new work that developed effectively from the introductory work of the earlier units. However other centres still tend to bypass this Unit and extract evidence from Units 6&7 Summative Project, meaning the coverage of the unit is very thin.

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

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

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

b. Ability to develop a range of 2D ideas

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

There was usually a range of experimentation and investigation of 2D ideas. Moderators express that many candidates just systematically copy from their own digital photographs without extending them into further idea development. Centres are reminded again of the need for students to 'analyse, refine and present 2D work' for this unit. High performing learners were able to produce a series of developmental studies from a range of source materials. This allowed them to refine their ideas and led to the production of more accomplished outcomes; this was in response to a set Unit 4 brief and then further located within the Units 6&7 Summative Project.

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 still tend to rely heavily on the resolved outcome from the Units 6&7 Summative Project for this assessment strand as a means of justifying assessing a candidate in a higher Mark band. Sometimes this was not fully merited and meant too much leniency with the assessment decisions.

d. Ability to analyse, refine and present 2D work

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

6905 UNIT 5: WORKING IN 3D

There were significantly fewer submissions for this unit than for Unit 4. The work for this unit included a range of approaches with a mix of 3D sculpture and 3D design based work seen during moderation. There was evidence of a range of work predominantly using materials such as card/cardboard, papier-mâché and clay. Sadly it appears that some centres wait for the candidates' pathway choice in Units 6 & 7 before establishing which Optional Unit to enter them. This has resulted in some candidates being incorrectly entered for this Unit when there was stronger evidence for Unit 4.

As with Unit 4, if the centre generated a discrete Unit 5 brief or workshops there was 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 uncomplicated 3D 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. Evidence of product design was extremely limited.

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 contemporary and pertinent references to inform the 3D work.

b. Ability to develop a range of 3D ideas

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 could address the vocational aspect of the qualification as well as providing an opportunity for additional evidence for Unit 3.

The best work usually contained evidence of a range of maquettes and/or models with supporting investigative tests and trials with materials and techniques. However at the lower end candidates are not being provided with enough materials to develop ideas and therefore the outcomes are generally unrefined. There is little evidence from most candidates of scale modelling or maquettes building.

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

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 was then further supported by a 3D outcome for the Summative Project; however, if only the latter provided the evidence for this unit, there tended to be too much leniency in the final assessment decisions.

Where centres were able to introduce specialist 3D practitioners to their program, this usually resulted in much better recording of processes, health and safety considerations and the production of more finished work.

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

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.

The inclusion of photographic records of the making process had been carried out it supported the generation of evaluative comments regarding the refinement of

ideas and the success of finished work. As with Unit 4, the better analysis tended to offer an analytical assessment and judgement of the work based on feedback produced rather than merely describing the processes undertaken.

Advanced GCE Applied Art and Design (A2)

6911 Unit 11: Develop and Produce Own Ideas

Unlike the AS Summative project, the Edexcel synoptic project paper is a guidance document. Centres must use this to support the development of their own project briefs.

The Project Proposal

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

The project proposals must be thorough and well written in order to provide adequate information for candidates to respond to with surety and confidence. Tutors must consider if the proposed work is within the scope of available resources and the designated time.

The focus of the unit is on the research, development, production and display of work which answers a vocational brief and the proposal should contain reference to all of these important aspects for a completed and successful project to be achievable.

a. analysing the brief and planning the project

Reports suggested that project management was on the whole very sound, with research, contextual referencing and evaluation all effectively undertaken. It was also reported that the often extensive development and refinement of ideas seen in the Summative Project at AS Level was sometimes lacking. Where two units were linked by the project, the work was more substantial, but project work addressing two complete units had to be substantial and sufficient to cover the criteria of two units. This was not always so and where this was the case it was usually reported to the centre by Moderators. Those cases identified must review the delivery of the *synoptic* and associated optional unit to ensure adequate coverage of the two sets of criteria.

The quality of the brief varied enormously; in most cases the client was very obvious, but sometimes the client and the constraints were less clearly stated or forgotten during the development of ideas. This was particularly evident in weaker work, which was a disappointing factor, as close adherence to constraints can often support rather than inhibit the development of ideas.

b. creating and developing ideas in response to the brief

Where the unit was 'twinned' with Unit 12, the exploration and creation of ideas was sometimes consigned to that Unit. In these cases the work for the *synoptic* focused closely on the application of these ideas to the brief. (The separate delivery of Unit 12, with its exploration of visual language also supported Unit 11 as the skills and understanding achieved were then available for the candidate to apply to Unit 11).

Where the unit was 'twinned' with Unit 13, this was most successful when Unit 11 was generated via a design brief and the strong emphasis on close adherence to the client and the constraints allowed for a more extensive, often more well developed response.

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

Some learners produced excellent work for this unit showing well resolved outcomes with considered presentation skills.

The logging of specialist working methods should be better evidenced. This may be the requirement of the 'client' and is, nevertheless, good practice in all cases.

d. evaluation of ideas, planning and finished work

The range of evidence for this assessment strand varied considerably from centre to centre and within a centre. Candidates who had developed good skills throughout the programme produced the best evidence and this often quite independently. Some very good supported practice was seen and this helped weaker candidate enormously.

For all work for A2, 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 digest and consider this feedback and make their evaluation in response. Will they change anything in the light of this feedback? Do ideas need to be revised? And so forth. These considerations should be the focus of the final evaluation of the work. In weaker presentations this was not seen, with evaluations often being little more than an account of 'what they did'.

6908, 6909 and 6910 The Portfolio Units

6908 Unit 8: Personal and Portfolio Development and Progression

Assessment strand a - Personal presentation and communication skills

The practice of compiling a ring folder of evidence including information such as; progression aims, health & safety, application forms, CV writing etc has been continued in some centres. However some centres, particularly those coming out of accreditation, seemed to have let this good practice slip and evidence had to be asked for and then time spent locating evidence.

Witness statements regarding mock interviews and group presentations were included by some centres, however some centres have made little improvement in providing this important feedback to their students.

Assessment strand b – Portfolio presentation techniques

This now includes e portfolios. In these cases, centres must ensure that they give this task adequate time and support for it to be effective.

Assessment strand c – Identifying and pursuing progression goals

In most cases, evidence was presented in the form of progression routes to Higher Education and Further Education courses. Work place research and job applications not evident in many centres. (Job applications - even if mock - should be written and be accompanied by CV's).

Centres should include support for progression to the range of Apprenticeships now available. It was disappointing to see some learners, particularly those not anticipating higher education, finishing their course with no progression route secured.

The importance of the experience provided by the work for this unit should support learners in the management of their work and in the making of reasoned judgements about the specific implications of alternative progression goals. Lower achieving learners often presented very disorganized and unfocused portfolios. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that this Applied qualification must also support those students who may be considering progression to the workplace. A well presented portfolio, with the confidence gained from the exercise of a mock presentation or interview, may assist them to perform well at job interviews. Students should benefit from this Applied qualification by showing skills that are transferable to the workplace.

6909 Unit 9: Contextual References

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

Although references are still predominantly in the 'mainstream' category of fine art, the evidence of references in craft and design was more in evidence. The use of web resources had extended the referencing in contemporary design.

Research continues to be more closely linked to learners own work and this encouraged a greater understanding of the context of the work referenced.

Engagement with live work often provoked a more enthusiastic response and aided understanding.

Lower achievers continue to need support with their research and analytical skills. There are still many cases of evidence from this category that fall below the standard expected at this level.

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

The opportunity to visit exhibitions/studios showed that where this had taken place the analysis of the work of others was more accurate and perceptive.

It was still the case that much visual information was presented without any accompanying observation or explanation.

Assessment strand c. Use contextual references in your work

The research of historical and contextual references continues to grow resulting in portfolios that showed a broader range of knowledge and understanding.

The best evidence showed relevant study that was challenging the learners' critical thinking and influencing and informing the development of their ideas.

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 support the learners' own work.

Sometimes understanding will have developed through discussion, but the extended essay is there to allow for the development of more in-depth and independent analysis.

Centres should continue to support learners in their selection of references from a range of sources. The use of web resources has extended the referencing in contemporary design and this should continue and be extended.

The extended essay allows for a more in-depth analysis of the work of others.

The development of the research and analytical skills should begin in the AS year be applied to all subsequent research throughout the course.

6910 Unit 10: Professional Practice

Assessment strand a. Investigation and analysis of professional practice

The best evidence was generated when local artists and designers were invited in to demonstrate or talk about their work. This provided the opportunity for learners to engage with and report on the work of a practitioner. It is disappointing to see that some centres have not maintained this practice. Generally, it was reported that evidence of the study of the day-to-day working life of a practitioner was limited.

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

Once again, those centres who had engaged with a practitioner or had arranged work placement reported the positive impact this had made on the learners approach to their own study.

The 'application' of professional practice has improved. Design briefs requiring attention to presentation showed this visually. Other work showed improved sequential processing supported by careful and considered presentation, but this was still underdeveloped in many of the weaker portfolios.

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

Evidence indicated that where delivery had closely adhered to the assessment criteria and comments on the grids closely related to required evidence, the assessment decisions were likely to be accurate and the health and safety and legal issues addressed.

Health and safety evidence varied in quality, but was often included as log sheets or downloaded information from the internet.

Legal considerations were limited with the exception of copyright issues.

Assessment strand d. Appropriate standards of professional working

Identification of evidence for this assessment strand has not always been easy to find as the evidence develops from personal interaction between student and peers and student and tutor. However, observation of students working supported by written feedback to students and also from personal self-assessment can be supportive. The best practice this year showed witness statements and feedback sheets to students.

Moderators have identified additional evidence by looking at the organization and care taken with presentation of all work.

There are many elements to this unit and centres need to ensure full coverage of the unit requirements to ensure that Marks will be accessible when making assessment decisions.

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

6912, 6913, 6914 The Optional Units

6912 Unit 12: Fine Art

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

The evidence showed recording in drawing, painting and photography.

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

This unit offered learners the opportunity to extend work with materials and techniques and allowed for the introduction of new skills (not covered in the AS year) with which to develop ideas. The evidence often showed work that was developed with increasing independence, but this was often determined by the quality of the brief. The introduction to new ways of working was encouraged and this provoked new approaches to ways of recording and expressing ideas. In their assessment decisions, most centres had taken into account work from across the portfolio that addressed the criteria for this unit.

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

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

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

Effective evaluation was confidently expressed by higher achieving students.

Due to the extensiveness of evidence for this unit there was much visual evaluation. Many students had showed the 'value' of their emerging ideas through confident, sequential development and working drawings in sketchbooks and on worksheets. Weaker submissions did not show such evidence and it was sometimes difficult to determine the students' ability to make any decisions about the effectiveness of their work.

6913 Unit 13: Design

The design work presented this year showed an improvement in addressing the constraints of the design cycle and the challenges that one would normally associate with a design brief. This had often come about via better formulated design briefs that had followed a closer scrutiny of the Unit. Presentation was improved in some centres, particularly in the stronger portfolios, but weaker evidence once again showed limited understanding of how or why we order, mount and display work. The acquisition of these skills and their application to this task should show the characteristics of real work in the design sector. (this presentation work links strongly with Unit 8 and evidence can be shared across these units)

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

A much wider range of design briefs were developed this year, although Graphic design remained the most popular option. Other briefs on subjects as varied as surface design and packaging design were also in evidence.

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

The breadth and quality of the range seems to have been dependent on the amount of time allocated to the unit. There was evidence of some very successful development work that shared a common starting point (theme) with the work in fine art of Unit 12.

Once again, there were reports that organised and methodical approaches to fulfilling design briefs were the most likely to lead to strong development work and successful outcomes. Weaker evidence nearly always reflected the limited ability to understand and respond appropriately to the brief, with students losing their way, impetus and often interest. As reported in Unit 11, constraints - time and material - strictly adhere to, can provide a supportive framework.

Assessment strand c. Production and presentation of a design solution

It has often been reported that work that had developed well through the design process stages of research and development sometimes falls at the last hurdle – that of the production and presentation of a design solution. Reports indicate that the refinement of the final work was sometimes disappointing, suggesting perhaps a lack of time for the work at this stage.

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

As with other evaluations of working to a brief, the evaluations were more often related to how the work was produced rather than focused on the potential and effectiveness of the idea in relation to the brief.

Time should be given to the practice of reflecting on the work produced and exploring its potential for further ideas; if this practice is then followed by the

recording of this potential in note form then the evidence for this strand would be extended.

Delivery teams must continue to focus on presentation of the design solution so that the work shows context and is in a suitable format to present to a client. Learners should be supported and encouraged to understand the importance of presenting work in a professional and appropriate format designed to meet the needs of their client. They also must allow sufficient time for the final making and for the potential of ideas to be discussed, considered and recorded.

6914 Unit 14: Multimedia

The work for this unit was limited to one or two centres. The outcomes show that the development of the work for this unit has been steadily maintained and developed and there were some outstanding results in animation.

Assessment strand a. A record of information to develop intentions

Intentions were usually identified through carefully devised briefs and developed through story boards or a series of photographs etc.

The evidence of the documentation of computer editing processes in the form of screen grabs has improved, but still needs to be generated and more extensively and carefully logged in some cases. Blogs need to be carefully chaptered and titled to be easily accessible.

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

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

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

Work was presented in a variety of formats, from digital photographs to video and animation.

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