

ART AND DESIGN: FINE ART

Paper 9830/1, 2 and 3
Art and Design

Please note: There are five Art and Design Pre-U syllabus codes available; in June 2012 entries were submitted for 9798, 9830, 9831 and 9834. This is a general report that covers all three of the syllabuses but for administrative purposes the report has been reproduced with four separate headings according to the four syllabus codes for which candidates were entered.



General comments

The number of Centres who are entering candidates for the Pre-U Art and Design course continues to increase; and it appears that its reputation for affording more time and consequently greater opportunity to explore and develop ideas can be credited for its growing popularity. This year was the first year that candidates entered for the 9831 Art and Design: Graphic Communication endorsed syllabus.

Centres are no longer restricting their entries to Art and Design: Fine Art alone, with more Centres offering the endorsements with similar success. The smooth transition from each of the papers is clearly enabling candidates to produce some truly exceptional work; giant leaps in skill and proficiency were often seen as candidates had built on their experiences of their *Portfolio* work before embarking on their final resolutions in the *Project* work during the second year of the course.

Teachers demonstrated a sound and confident use of the assessment procedure, and the end of course displays were a pleasure to view. Teachers are to be congratulated on their excellent presentation and clear labelling – all of which makes the task much easier. The warm hospitality received at Centre was much appreciated.

Paper 1: Portfolio



A range of different but relevant approaches was seen; from the very detailed and highly prescriptive, to the highly experimental through to a foundation type approach. All of which were appropriate to the teaching strengths and facilities at each individual Centre.

Generally, candidates displayed a good approach to building their visual skills and developing ideas. Some Centres used a mixture of highly finished outcomes; an A1 portfolio and sketchbooks, whilst others based the course on an ongoing development of an A3 sketchbook/journal. Most Centres had a sound and worthy approach to incorporating visits to galleries, workshops with artists and off-site study days. Where this worked well, the candidates were significantly well prepared for both the *Evaluative Study* and the year *Project work*.

There was a tendency for *Assessment Objective 2 Experiment*, to be the strongest element in the *Portfolio* submissions. *Assessment Objective 3 Develop*, and *Assessment Objective 4 Respond*, were also strong in most cases with *Assessment Objective 1 Record*, often the weakest and most variable element. Some candidates would have done better had they escaped from the safety of the digital camera and sketchbooks for more direct first hand drawing. The use of pocket sketchbooks and 'think books' that facilitated drawing and recording points throughout the day were very effective in one particular Centre. The challenge of larger and more demanding drawing projects often allowed observational studies to reach a high level of competence and confidence. In essence, digital recording should be an adjunct to and not a replacement for drawing directly from subject matter. As a result the visual understanding has duality, and approaches to observational skills become more formative in the development of ideas and completed works of art. The active, engaged courses allowed candidates to try out ideas and develop through experimentation without pressing time limits. Some Centres decide not to complete more finished elements, but this could be useful practice to hone some skills before the onset of the second year's work. Some Centres kept all work in a folder when some selection might have helped the candidate to realise their strengths.

A number of teachers commented that the greatest asset of the year long *Portfolio* is the smooth passage it affords for interviews and applications for higher education courses.



Paper 2: Evaluative Study

This paper aims to develop and refine research skills and it encourages candidates to express their own opinions using critical analysis. The skills learnt through the process of academic rigour can also be related to their own practical work if the candidate wishes. The study challenges the candidate to develop, through their own ideas and experiences, the ability to make first hand evaluative responses and personal research. Stronger responses made very effective progress through an analysis of work they had actually been in contact with and interviews they had conducted. Whilst the word limit does intentionally have a constricting factor, an appendix can be added to the essay with details of visits and other relevant research. It is not surprising that this element has been very successful with Centres.

At the highest level studies were very detailed, well written and engaged in a pursuit which allowed for challenging points of view and an excellent understanding of the theme explored. Academic structure, use of subject language and terminology were very good in the majority of submissions. Some candidates dwelt too long on the biography and life history of an artist making rather rudimentary descriptive statements. This is meant to be evaluative, so purely factual statements from the Internet or art dictionary are not adequate enough.

Some of the following were indicative of submissions that were less successful;

- disregard for the word limit,
- Lack of editing resulting in repetition,
- Choice of subject matter restricting potential research,
- ignoring Examiner's comments on the Outline Proposal Form,
- Thin and patchy research,
- Very descriptive with little evaluative analysis,
- Weak academic processes,
- High dependence on Internet research without recourse to testing the material,
- No bibliography or referencing,

- No apparent review of grammar, spelling and structure,
- poor labelling of images.

There is no compulsion for the *Evaluative Study* to link to the candidate's own practical work but in the nature of art, themes often do originate in the *Portfolio* or *Project* which is of course often good practice. The nature of the personal response in many submissions was a pleasing development.





Paper 3: Project



The *Project* can start as early as September of the first year of the course, so it is not surprising that there was some extremely excellent work and some outstanding work. The detailed pursuit and experimental nature of many projects revealed candidate's talents at their best and development was centred on research and recording of high quality. The exhibition format revealed candidates at their best and nearly all submissions were thoughtful, well planned and well presented. The extra time for the *Project* lead to some very exciting installation, film and video, series of larger paintings and good personal development.

In one or two Centres there were some areas of concern regarding the display of the *Project*. Ideally the work for all three papers should be displayed in an exhibition style, enabling the Examiner/Moderators to

view the work holistically and to see the 'journey' that the work had taken. It is appreciated that some Centres may not have expansive exhibition space available but limited space in some Centres could have been better organised, giving candidates the opportunity to show their work in the best conditions possible. Some Centres had also delayed starting the *Project* until well into the second year; this invariably cuts down on the time available for quality progress and outcomes. The Cambridge Pre-U course provides teachers with more time so it is a shame to see that some are missing out on this opportunity. On the whole, the Assessment Objectives were met to a high level, with outcomes matching the aims of the syllabus and the general spirit of the course.

Administration

The large coloured labels were very successful; identification of candidates' work was much easier. The provision of well lit rooms and a map was much appreciated but some Centres were reluctant to provide tables for the use of the Examiner/Moderators. Stooping to look at work on the floor may be okay for the first couple of candidates, but it is far from ideal and it would be helpful if empty tables could be provided as work stations for the use of the Examiner/Moderators.