

GCSE 2004
January Series



Report on the Examination

Applied Art and Design (Double Award)

- Working to project briefs

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Unit 3 – Working to project briefs

General

This was the second opportunity for moderation of the externally assessed unit. This GCSE replaces the Part One GNVQ Foundation and Intermediate qualifications. In this unit candidates learn to understand and use the creative process to meet a set brief in art, craft or design. Assessment is designed to confirm candidates' understanding of the set brief, the working methods and resources needed to fulfil it, and is based on internal assessment and external moderation. Moderators look to the assessment evidence grid to ensure that evidence is complete. The grid has two components; the line across the top of the grid which indicates the type of evidence that must be produced e.g. research and developmental work to meet the brief, and secondly, the columns that give the quality indicators contained within the evidence. Teachers need to ensure that underpinning knowledge and guidance on the practicalities of working to a brief are covered through sufficient similar vocationally related activities, in the form of smaller briefs and assignments, to allow the required evidence to be generated. Candidates should also be encouraged to adopt a professional approach through planning, recording and evaluating their progress throughout the project.

The responses to the briefs based on the theme of a French Market Weekend were generally very good, and some vibrant, confident, ambitious and exciting work was seen. The most popular choices were the design for a billboard in which text was not required, and the design for a poster to advertise the event. There were several candidates who did not clearly state which brief they had chosen. Often, insufficient note had been made of the constraints identified in the brief, scale was not evident in the work, and the method of production of the final piece of work had not been given due consideration. A final finished piece to scale is not required, but the work presented must be of a standard and scale suitable to present to clients.

At the research stage there was some difficulty in collecting information from primary as well as secondary sources, although some candidates visited markets (not all French!) and obtained information, and took photographs. The use of still life groups, and fruit in particular, was very popular. Others' work, especially contemporary artists and designers, was not always well recorded in preparatory work, nor used in a meaningful way to develop ideas. There were some centres where ICT and other technological media were used very successfully. In some cases there was a dubious amount of work presented for assessment, the equivalent of two and not more than four A1 sheets (or a sketchbook or other suitable form) was interpreted as any number of smaller sheets by some centres. Sketchbooks often included information that was not relevant to the briefs, as candidates sometimes became side-tracked by a particular idea and lost track of their design proposals.

Final ideas were often very successful and candidates had clearly enjoyed the process of development and production, although they often failed to identify suitable scale and materials.

The most popular choice was the design for a poster to advertise the event and the best candidates explored the theme well and used different artist's styles to inform a variety of different responses. Others struggled to produce convincing images which used no more than five colours as specified in the brief. Size and scale were not always given due consideration in the production of the final image, and consideration of where it would be displayed was not well researched. The inclusion of the information provided on dates was important and many candidates failed to include this, or changed them to suit themselves, which did not meet the requirements of the brief.

Another popular choice was the painting, collage, print or mixed media image which could be reproduced as a billboard. Again the best candidates explored the theme well and used a variety of media and techniques to produce vibrant and exciting work. However, for some candidates the size restriction proved difficult and resulted in designs which lacked cohesion. The constraint that text

was not required was not understood well by candidates, and many interpreted this to mean that they could include text if they wished. This was not what was intended, and in some cases led to images being spoilt by unnecessary text. Billboard design was generally not well researched by candidates, but those who had a clear understanding of the impact and context of designs produced striking and successful outcomes.

There were limited responses to the remaining three briefs, the three-dimensional, packaging and flag designs being the least popular choices. However, some lively and interesting work was seen which was most successful when suitable materials and techniques were explored and where the candidates worked with these confidently.

The requirement to produce a short written evaluation of the final idea generally met with a good response, and well annotated records of initial ideas and developments informed these successful comments. A clear understanding of the design process and of the constraints and considerations of the brief was evident in the work of the best candidates, with an acknowledgement of why their idea was fit for purpose being explained clearly. Weaker candidates also managed to explain their work in a more descriptive format. However, here the level of comments was weak and did not review the work and intentions, or show understanding, particularly of the work of others. Candidates should be given guidance on form and content of annotation since it is particularly important that this is relevant and has evaluative (formative and summative) content.

Assessment

Assessment varied with marking outside the standard being both lenient and severe at the extremes of the range. The actual numerical mark awarded by the assessor within a particular level should reflect not only that the candidate has achieved the necessary criteria, but also the quality of the work undertaken in meeting the criteria. At the higher levels candidates must demonstrate an independent approach, and exhibit a high order of ability and understanding. There were instances where insufficient regard had been given to the requirements of the assessment evidence grids in the allocation of marks.

Administrative efficiency

Most centres provided the appropriate paperwork as required, although there were instances where the relevant record sheets were not completed correctly. Teacher comments to provide justification of the mark awarded were not well used and better explanation here would help visiting moderators to judge where marks had been awarded. Most centres provided all of the required sample and realised that the work of all the candidates should be accessible to the moderator if needed.

Recommendations

The individual centre specific issues will have been identified in the visiting moderator's report. There remain general issues that may have relevance to centres which can be summarised as follows:

- ensure that candidates are prepared for the practicalities of working to a brief through the introduction of similar vocationally related activities, briefs and assignments;
- encourage candidates to develop their own ideas and images based on the work of others;
- improve the level of annotation and include both formative and summative evaluative comments;
- ensure candidates clarify accurately the requirements of the brief and understand the constraints.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Unit	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Working to project briefs 3810/3	50	50	26.22	9.98

For units which contain only one component, scaled marks are the same as raw marks.

Unit 3 - Working to project briefs (325 candidates)

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	50	46	40	34	29	24	20	16	12
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidate lie in range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Uniform Mark: a score on a standard scale which indicates a candidate's performance. The lowest uniform mark for grade A* is always 90% of the maximum uniform mark for the unit, similarly grade A is 80%, grade B is 70%, grade C is 60%, grade D is 50%, grade E is 40%, grade F is 30% and grade G is 20%. A candidate's total scaled mark for each unit is converted to a uniform mark and, when subject grades are awarded in 2004, the uniform marks for the units will be added in order to determine the candidate's overall grade.