AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Applied Art and Design (Double Award) 3811

Report on the Examination

2006 examination – June series

- 3810/1   2D and 3D visual language
- 3810/2   Materials, techniques and technology
- 3810/3   Working to project briefs

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All Units

General

This was the third opportunity for full certification of this award. The number of candidates following this specification increased, and most centres were more familiar with the requirements and features of the specification. The best evidence for assessment was provided through well-devised centre set assignments that reflected the vocational requirements of the award. Centres have gained in experience and confidence in this area and some strong, lively and stimulating work was produced.

Teachers need to ensure that assignments are sufficiently broad to allow the required evidence to be generated, that the quality indicators are present in the work when it is assessed, and that final outcomes are supported by development work which is documented and logically presented.

Assessment

The accuracy of assessment varied, with marking outside the standard being mainly too lenient, particularly in the higher mark range, and more accurate at the bottom of the range. Marking at some centres was erratic and it was not always clear how marks had been allocated. Assessment requirements were not always fully addressed, especially where centres did not cross reference the coursework units to bridge gaps and to provide the range of 2D and 3D work required. The mark awarded by the teacher within a particular level should reflect not only that the candidate has achieved the necessary criteria, but also the *quality* of the work produced in meeting the criteria. At the higher level, candidates must demonstrate an innovative, independent approach, and exhibit a high order of ability, technical skill and an in-depth understanding. Often this was not evident in the portfolio work, and there were instances where insufficient regard had been given to the requirements of the assessment marking criteria in the allocation of marks.

Administrative Efficiency

Administrative efficiency and the format of the presentation of work for moderation varied greatly between centres. Most centres facilitated the moderation process by ensuring that all paperwork was completed and used the correct documentation. It is essential that both the candidate and the teacher sign the Candidate Record Form. Discrepancies between the marks supplied to AQA, and those on the Unit Record Sheets were evident in some cases and all forms should be checked carefully in order to avoid such errors. Teacher's comments on the Unit Record Sheets should provide a justification for the marks awarded; indicate where evidence can be sourced; and support candidates' independence, attitude and approach to the working process.

It is essential that work is presented in an organised manner and labelled clearly. There are no specific requirements to display work for moderation as an exhibition, but if centres choose to display the work on walls they must ensure that candidates' written comments are clearly visible to the moderator. Most centres provided all of the required sample, and realised that the work of all the candidates must be accessible to the moderator if needed.

Recommendations

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

- the appropriate balance of 2D and 3D work in portfolio units is still an issue; and experimentation with a range of different 3D techniques, using both resistant and non-resistant materials, should be encouraged

- there was a lack of work from direct observation; a greater emphasis should be placed on primary sources, and on drawing, as starting points for work

- centre devised briefs were not always vocational in nature and they should be presented with the work to ensure a clear understanding of the requirements and constraints

- links made to the work of others, especially vocational contextualisation, should directly influence ideas, and show an understanding of how others work, particularly in the use of materials

- ICT should be evident as a tool for developing and producing creative work and not just as a means to record work or research

- the creative journey should be recorded by annotation and evaluative statements throughout

- the work should be organised, labelled, displayed clearly and cross-referenced for Unit 1 and Unit 2 where appropriate.

Portfolio Units

Unit 1 – 2D and 3D visual language and

Unit 2 – Materials, techniques and technology

Assignments/Tasks

Some of the most successful candidates had followed well-written briefs that reflected the vocational nature of this award and there was some very good evidence of an understanding of the design process and planning. Generally, there was evidence of a wide range of 2D media being used, but often an imbalance in the range of 3D materials experienced, with insufficient evidence of the use of both resistant and non-resistant materials. In some cases 3D work was limited to surface application or relief and did not fully explore 3D object-making techniques as described in the specification.

Some centres worked predominantly in one area, for example, textiles, leading to a lack of breadth and depth of coverage of contexts and processes.

A number of centres have built on previous experiences and have begun to address areas of weakness. Some centres provided an appropriate quantity and range of work during the course, and offered a variety of opportunities for candidates to explore materials and processes in both 2D and 3D.

Several centres had taken advantage of available funding to work with artists in residence, museums or art, craft and design studios and these provided excellent experiences and relevant outcomes. Good links with design technology departments also proved to be beneficial to candidates.

The use of ICT, as a tool to develop professional outcomes to design based briefs, was well used in some centres, but others lacked the necessary hardware and expertise to use the computer within an art and design context.

Some excellent use of sketchbooks was seen to record sources, explore visual language, and to develop ideas and intentions. The use of annotation is a significant feature of exploration and research, particularly regarding the work of others, and the more successful candidates explained their work and ideas well through the use of relevant and evaluative comments throughout. However, annotation by less successful candidates tended to be descriptive, or in the case of contextual studies merely, a 'potted history'. Some strong links were made with the work of others in final outcomes, but often these were not expanded on to include the use of materials, techniques and technology. There was little written comment about others' working methods and their influence on individual candidate's work. Health and safety issues were not well documented, and candidates at some centres had omitted such comments entirely. The quality of evaluation, both formative and summative, needs to be addressed as it often lacked relevance and analysis. Candidates should be given guidance on the form and content of such comments since it is particularly important that annotation is relevant and has evaluative content.

Unit 3 – Working to Project Briefs

Good practice was seen where candidates had clearly embraced the theme, and sought to develop ideas which were creative and practical. However, some issues remain. Many candidates used primary photographs but it was disappointing that so few candidates actually visited allotments to carry out first-hand drawing. Too many candidates relied heavily on the internet, so much so, that the same images of allotments could be seen in a number of centres. There was a lack of work from first-hand sources, and only a small number of centres provided set-ups of vegetables and gardening tools for first-hand observational studies which were developed successfully and used appropriately in the design process. Alternative ideas were generally limited across all levels of response, many being variations of one idea, rather than a range of alternatives. Links made to the work of others, especially vocational contextualisation, should directly influence ideas. Appropriate materials and processes to explore ideas should be evidenced, and a broad range of materials should be explored, with reference to relevant health and safety issues. Annotation and evaluation statements should be used throughout the process to support the practical work.

Final evaluations were mainly descriptive and lacked a clear understanding of the design process and the considerations and constraints of the brief. The evaluation needs to focus on the final idea, how it is fit for purpose with suggestions for possible improvements. The lack of focus and what appeared to be minimal time spent on the written evaluation is a concern. The recommendation of 30 minutes of the 10 hours of supervised time is given in the Teacher's Notes together with guidance on the required underpinning knowledge.

Brief 1 Poster Illustration

This was by far the most popular brief. Some colourful and creative work was seen and appropriate scale and size were used. Landscape and portrait format were equally popular. Suitable images for posters were produced, although some candidates added text which was not required. There were some very pleasing final designs; although the brief was mainly executed as a painting, interesting use of mixed media and collage was also seen.

Brief 2 Sculpture and Brief 3 Functional object

Design proposals included decorative sculpture and designs for functional objects. Examples seen in response to Brief 3 included clay containers to hold equipment based on a wheelbarrow and on Wellington boots. Generally the 3D briefs were not as popular as those of a 2D nature and experimentation with materials and processes was not widely explored.

Brief 4 Calendar

The design for a calendar with a prominent logo was also popular. Designs were generally bold although some candidates did not adhere to size and scale constraints, or produce a design which included the twelve months of the year. Some research into calendar designs and layout was undertaken, but there was little evidence of how this informed the calendar ideas. Little consideration was given to health and safety issues or to how the calendar might be professionally produced. ICT could have been more widely employed for a slick finish.

Brief 5 Artefact using textile and/or ceramic processes

This brief was chosen by very few candidates. Responses included ceramic teapots and textile designs for deckchairs. Research was not always appropriate to inform the development of ideas and innovative designs were rarely seen.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Unit	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
2D and 3D Visual Language 3810/1	50	50	26.4	10.3
Materials, techniques and technology 3810/2	50	50	25.5	10.4
Working to project briefs 3810/3	50	50	26.4	10.2

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

Unit 1 – 2D and 3D visual language (3183 candidates)

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	50	44	37	30	23	19	15	12	9
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

Unit 2 – Materials, techniques and technology (3194 candidates)

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	50	42	36	30	24	19	15	11	7
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

Unit 3 – Working to project briefs (2412 candidates)

	Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Scaled Boundary Mark	50	43	36	29	22	18	14	11	8
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

Provisional statistics for the award

3196 candidates

	A*A*	AA	BB	CC	DD	EE	FF	GG
Cumulative %	5.6	15.3	34.9	59.6	76.6	85.5	91.7	96.5

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 the uniform marks for the units will be added in order to determine the candidate's overall grade.