AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Applied Art and Design (Double Award) 3811

3810/1 2D and 3D visual language

3810/2 Materials, techniques and technology

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

3810/1 2D and 3D visual language

3810/2 Materials, techniques and technology

GENERAL

The popularity of this specification continues to increase as centres become more familiar and confident with the requirements and special features of the qualification. Most teachers reported enjoyment in the teaching of it. The most successful evidence for assessment was provided through well-devised centre set assignments reflecting the vocational requirements of the specification. A variety of outcomes in a wide range of media were seen in response to these; most centres had gained in experience and confidence and candidates subsequently produced some strong, lively and stimulating work.

There has been continued improvement in the use and quality of the design briefs set by centres, with much more emphasis on the vocational context of the course allowing candidates to make independent choices and place their work in a clear vocational context. The use of good 'live' briefs in the form of community projects and the employment of practising artists to emphasise the vocational nature of the course have become more wide-spread.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to experiment with and investigate a good range of materials, media and processes, and this was not always evident in the work seen. The 2D work produced this series was generally stronger than 3D work, but the lack of resistant materials being used was an issue.

Teachers need to ensure that assignments and projects are sufficiently varied to allow the required evidence to be generated and that final outcomes are supported by development work showing a range of fully documented and logically presented ideas with the quality indicators present in the work when it is marked.

ASSESSMENT

The accuracy of assessment varied, with marking outside the standard being mainly too lenient, particularly in the higher mark range. Some centre marking was erratic and it was not clear how marks had been allocated. Centres should ensure they send a representative to a teacher standardisation meeting in order that they can fully understand and appreciate the vocational nature and focus of this specification. This will result in candidates' work being more accurately assessed.

Strapline requirements were not always fully addressed, especially where centres failed to cross reference the coursework units and 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 levels, candidates must demonstrate an independent approach, and exhibit a high order of ability, technical skill, in-depth understanding and innovative responses. This was often not evident in the portfolio work, and there were instances where insufficient regard had been given to the requirements of the assessment evidence grids in the allocation of marks.

ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY

Administration and presentation of work for moderation varied between centres. Most centres facilitated the moderation process by ensuring that all paperwork was completed using the correct documentation. It is essential that centres have the Candidate Record Forms (CRF) signed by the candidate and teacher and most centres provided these. We continued to see discrepancies between the marks supplied to AQA, and those on the Candidate Record Forms and often it was because these were not added up correctly. In the space provided for comments on the CRF teachers should provide justification for the marks they have awarded, indicate where evidence for these can be found in the work and in addition support candidates' independence, attitude and approach to the working process.

Well organised folders are essential, and when the work is presented and labelled clearly it aids the moderation process. **It is not a requirement to mount exhibitions of work for moderation**, and if centres choose to display work on walls they **must** ensure that candidates' written comments are clearly visible to the moderator, and that **all work is accessible.** It is **essential** that a quiet room is provided for moderation. Displaying work in corridors and foyers is not helpful to the moderator and should be avoided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The individual centre specific issues will have been identified in the visiting moderator's report. There remain general issues that have relevance to many centres such as:

- the lack of balance of 2D and 3D work in portfolio units, and experimentation with a broad range of different 3D media, materials and techniques, using both resistant and non-resistant materials

- a greater emphasis on primary sources and drawing from first hand observation

- the lack of direct use and development of source material

- more links made to the work of others, especially vocational contextualisation, which should directly influence ideas, and show an understanding of how others work, especially in the use of materials. Candidates should explain the working methods of others clearly, and not just produce a potted history of their work

- greater use of ICT as a tool for developing and producing creative work and not just as a means to record work or research

- more references to Health and Safety where appropriate

- lack of annotation and evaluative statements throughout the work. This does not necessarily need to be in the form of written comments, tapes, ICT presentations and video evidence are all suitable alternatives to lengthy commentaries.

PORTFOLIO UNITS
UNIT 1 – 2D and 3D VISUAL LANGUAGE and
UNIT 2 – MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGY

Assignments / Tasks

Some of the most successful candidates benefited from well written briefs that reflected the vocational nature of this award, and there was some very good evidence of understanding of the design process and planning.

A good number of centres have built on previous experiences, and have worked hard to develop areas of weakness. Many centres provided a good quantity and range of work during the course, and provided a range of opportunities for candidates to explore and experiment with materials and processes in both 2D and 3D.

Several centres had arranged for candidates to work with artists in residence, museums and/or vocational centres, and these provided excellent experiences and informed relevant outcomes. Some good links with Design Technology departments proved beneficial to candidates.

The use of ICT as a tool to develop professional outcomes to design based briefs was well used by some candidates, and there was an improvement in the integral use of ICT in the design process, with some very professional looking outcomes. Some candidates still lacked the necessary hardware and expertise to use the computer within an art and design context and there was a tendency to include far too much poor quality, down-loaded information and images which showed no relevance to the project or understanding of real research or contextual studies.

There was generally evidence of a wide range of 2D media being used, but a wide variation in the range of 3D materials experienced, with not enough evidence of the use of both resistant and non- resistant materials. Sometimes 3D work was only surface application or relief, and did not fully explore 3D object making techniques as described in the specification, or include the experimentation and exploration of a good range of different materials required in these units. Some candidates worked predominantly in one area, leading to a lack of breadth and depth of coverage of contexts and processes.

Some excellent use of sketchbooks was seen to record sources, explore visual language and to develop ideas and intentions. The use of annotation was a significant feature of exploration and research, particularly the work of others, and more successful candidates explained their work and ideas well in relevant and evaluative comments throughout their work. However, the use of annotation by less successful candidates tended to be descriptive, or in the case of contextual studies purely a 'potted history' where content was poor in many instances.

There were some strong links with the work of others in final outcomes, but this was often not expanded to include how the use of materials, techniques and technology had been used. Little written comment was made about others' working methods and influences on individual candidates' work. Health and safety issues were not well documented and some candidates had not commented on these issues at all.

The quality of evaluation needs to be addressed as it often lacked relevance, analysis and focus on the final idea and how it was fit for purpose. Candidates should be given guidance on form and content since it is particularly important that annotation is relevant and has evaluative content. A creative approach to recording evaluation is to be encouraged, and presentations and/or ICT can provide alternative evidence that is personalised and relevant.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results statistics page of the AQA Website.