

GCSE

Edexcel GCSE in Applied Art &  
Design

(2301)

Summer 2006

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## **Introduction**

The Chief Examiner's Report is an amalgam of moderators' summative reports to their team leaders at the end of the moderation series, supplemented by the views of the Principal and Chief Moderators and the Chief Examiner. It shows, therefore, an across-the-board analysis of how centres have performed this year, from many informed viewpoints. It is not often easy to draw firm conclusions from the feedback received, as the response shown by centres can vary enormously. Strengths in some centres are areas for improvement in others, and vice versa.

Perhaps the most valuable way for tutor-assessors to regard this report is to read it objectively, then to evaluate their own performance against each point raised.

Further feedback will, of course, be provided in individual reports to centres that have been moderated this series.

## **General information**

This was the third occasion on which this qualification had been moderated and examined by Edexcel, and it was rewarding to see how well-established the qualification has become in many centres. All units in the qualification were centre-assessed and the marks were moderated by Edexcel's visiting external Moderators, who based their decisions on a sample of student portfolios from each centre.

The GCSE in Applied Art and Design continued to benefit from a programme of INSET meetings in London, plus other regional, centre and consortia-based INSET activities. Aspects such as curriculum planning, assignment writing, preparation for the externally-set assignment, assessment, and feedback on the previous moderation series were covered, with a new Inset introduced covering 'Practical Problems: Positive Solutions'. This was praised by delegates and will be extended in the coming year to focus on more aspects of programme delivery. Many examples of student work were available for scrutiny at INSET, supplemented by current work brought in by delegates, which made for pertinent, lively discussions.

A 'CD to Centres' containing further examples of work, plus detailed commentaries on content and assessment, was issued, as were sample assignments. A DfES funded DVD of contemporary practitioners working within centres was issued to every centre. The Edexcel web site carried a Specification addendum, details of INSET, improved assessment grids and the 2005 Chief Examiner's report.

### Structure of the Qualification

The GCSE in Applied Art and Design (Double Award) comprises three equally weighted units:

Code	Name	Number	Type
5301	Unit 1	2D and 3D Visual Language	Portfolio unit
5302	Unit 2	Materials, Techniques and Technology	Portfolio unit
5303	Unit 3	Working to Project Briefs	Externally-set assignment

It is usual (and recommended) for Units 1 and 2 to be assessed on the basis of a common set of portfolio evidence. Unit 3, the externally-set assignment, is assessed on the basis of a project undertaken in response to Edexcel's given theme and choice of briefs. This is available to download from Edexcel's website from October each academic year for assessment during the following summer series.

Centres are encouraged to add further focus to the theme and scenario by writing supplementary project briefs which promote available resources and centre strengths. Evidence from Unit 3 can contribute to Units 1 and 2, as it employs a combination of Visual Language and Materials, Techniques and Technology. Where the work for the externally-set assignment is the pinnacle of achievement, this contribution is very significant and justifies allocating the project more than the required minimum of 30 hours. This approach has been advocated during the INSET programme, resulting in the submission of a substantial body of work for this unit by many centres; in some cases achieving parity with Units 1 and 2 in terms of delivery time and effort. This is not in itself a guarantee of success, but has resulted in a much more cohesive response and is strongly recommended.

### General Comments on delivery

Last year, the comment was made in the Chief Examiner's report that as a double award qualification, it would be reasonable to expect that centres would allocate twice the time allowed in that centre for a single award GCSE. Feedback from INSET had in fact indicated that centres' delivery time per week varied from 2-3 hours - i.e. same as for a single GCSE (with students expected to add on additional lunchtime and after hours work) - to more than 5 hours per week. Feedback this year has been much more gratifying. Centres have largely realized that the qualification is not only for low achievers and that by investing the appropriate amount of time and resources into the programme they have found it a source of achievement for all abilities; with some candidates showing levels of skill and understanding above the expectations of a NOF level 2 qualification.

The emphasis on the vocational aspect of the programme continues to grow, and many tutors have commented on how much they are enjoying the challenge.

Vocational links and contexts have been improved from last year as centres are appreciating the potential of relationships that they have developed to encourage and motivate their students. There was growing evidence of centres having engaged the support of practitioners to work with their students, resulting in candidates gaining a first-hand insight into contemporary methods and practice, far superior to evidence only available through the restricted media of books and web sites. For this qualification, the relevance of contemporary professional practice is likely to be far higher than that of historical figures, whose working methods were far-removed from those of our own time and culture. That is not to say that the study of art and design in the past is not worthwhile, but suggests that the balance needs to be adjusted.

Visits to galleries, museums and other places of interest, e.g. local venues and companies, public spaces etc., continue to increase as starting points for project work and to provide valuable links to vocational scenarios. Centres have been gratified by the way candidates have responded on these visits: Conducting themselves in a sensible, focused manner is in itself a vocational consideration.

### **Administrative Procedures**

Centres were required to mark each candidate's work for each unit out of a total of 50 marks. The marks were then transcribed to the OPTEMS forms; the top copies sent

to Edexcel's processing department and the remaining copies retained in the centre (one for the moderator's visit, from which the moderation sample was chosen, and one for centre records).

The EDI system, which enables centres to enter their marks online proved very popular.

Authentication Forms must be signed by all candidates. This caused a problem in only a few centres. Most tutors remembered to get them signed before normal timetables ceased.

A change this year was the introduction of the marking with an asterisk on the OPTEMS sheets of a random selection of candidates, whose work was required for the moderation sample. As the system for moderation of the Applied programme is different to the Single award, in that the portfolios are viewed holistically for units 1 and 2, this resulted in a further request for *all* work to be presented for every candidate asterisked - even if they were nominated for only one unit. Most centres coped admirably with this: Those with small cohorts tended to present everything from everyone. Only a few centres neglected to make sure they had included the highest and lowest scoring candidate for each unit in the sample.

### Assessment Evidence

Generally, most centres provided evidence that matched the Assessment Evidence 'banner' at the top of the assessment grids. Some work moderated did not fully cover the banner, however, and deficiencies had not been realised during assessment. These shortcomings related less to the use of primary resources, which has been a problem in previous years, but most definitely to the imbalance in the delivery of 2D and 3D exploration. (More detail on this in the relevant sections).

As for last year, moderators had been instructed that the absence of 3D work in Units 1 and 2 should not result in the withholding of *all* marks, but should preclude students from achieving in Mark band 3, regardless of how good their 2D work was. (It is very rare to find ample 3D, but a lack of 2D work). A similar ruling was applied to a lack of relevant primary-sourced research. This mitigated the unfairness of unduly penalising students for defects in delivery. Centres that had been requested last year to remedy deficiencies for the following year seem to have done their utmost to redress the lack of evidence, although a few still do not seem to have

grasped the ethos of the vocational nature of the programme. These centres are urged to attend INSET or seek guidance from Edexcel in the coming year.

At worst, in a few cases, the 2 year programme had been carried out without any relevant excursions or visits from practitioners, and projects set lacked vocational application. All centres are reminded that the title of the award is GCSE in Applied Art and Design. Happily, most centres had sought to deliver a meaningful programme across all contexts of art, craft and design.

### **Assessment and recording**

The Edexcel approved assessment grid, with space for annotation, was used in most centres. Despite comment in last year's moderation reports and guidance in this matter at Inset, there was often no added comment from tutor-assessors to justify marks awarded; just numerical scores, which implied that they had been used at the last moment to record final marks, rather than as ongoing records.

Others were annotated with very general comments on student performance that bore no relationship to individual criteria.

However, at best, the annotation gave specific references to pinpoint best achievement, proving a considerable aid to moderation. This often showed evidence of the grids being used for formative assessment at interim stages of the project for Unit 3. In these cases assessment was often seen to be consistent and accurate - a reflection of good practice.

The use of the assessment grid Front Cover sheet, for portfolio indexing and student feedback/witness statements, has grown. Where filled in, they provided valuable evidence of feedback to students, and tutor-assessors have remarked on their usefulness.

Almost without exception, the Unit 3 work was presented separately to the coursework, as required.

Overall, a full span of marks was seen, from single figures to the full score of 50, which demonstrated the suitability of the set theme and scenario 'Segments: Sets: Sequences' for Unit 3 and confirmed that the qualification is now attracting a more appropriate cross-section of candidate abilities. The same mark was often arrived at



for work with very different strengths and weaknesses, highlighting the flexibility of the assessment grids.

The most difficult situation to deal with following moderation is inconsistent assessment, which was seen on occasion. It did seem that sometimes work was marked on the quality of outcome, especially at the top end of the mark range, without full consideration of all aspects of the banner headings. Inconsistent assessment disadvantages every candidate as it often leads to regression of all marks within the cohort.

Deficiencies in the fulfilment of criteria were not always acknowledged at assessment. On a few occasions, work to justify the mark seemed to be missing from portfolios.

There was also an optimistic assessment of units in many centres, particularly Unit 3, and particularly within Mark band 2. In some centres it was noted at moderation that work which should have sat in the high 20s, a possible D grade, was marked in the low 30s, a possible C grade, and therefore within the A - C category which is an important target for many centres. This caused a significant shift in the statistics and resulted in an upward move in the grade boundary marks for C and A. Centres are reminded that there must be parity in marks awarded from year to year. This is carefully checked during the Awarding process to uphold standards.

## Unit 1 (5301): 2D and 3D Visual Language

It is now the norm to find evidence integrated across Unit 1 and 2 as recommended by Edexcel, although a few centres have still tried to separate evidence into unit folders for moderation – presentation in project/activity folders is preferable and far more time effective. The work for Unit 3 supported and extended the work for Units 1 and 2 and was reflected in the awarding decisions.

Centres often presented several complete projects for moderation, sometimes too many to allow for in-depth study. Others presented only two, which did not give candidates sufficient opportunity to explore and experiment with the breadth of visual language across different contexts.

*Raising standards: Plan the whole of the programme in advance. Be flexible enough to make the most of unexpected opportunities, but generally use the first half of the course to exemplify visual language within a variety of contexts, both in 2D and 3D. Ensure that the banners of Units 1 and 2 are covered by your particular combination of projects and activities.*

Assessment for this unit was seen to have ranged from accurate to slightly lenient. Few centres marked severely, but a number were very lenient in their approach, often giving an identical mark to units 1 and 2, without due consideration of the unit content and different focus of criteria. Annotation of the assessment grids tended, in the case of leniency, to amount to a ‘character reference’ rather than specifically focused notation.

**Use a range of primary and secondary sources and explore visual language**

There was a slight increase in opportunities for primary research, but it was often prescribed where more personal sourcing of material would have enhanced both

understanding and marks. Sometimes, although individual, the evidence was limited to digital photography, with little or no evidence of direct observational drawing. Photography has an undoubted value in its capacity for recording detail, capturing fleeting moments, manipulating images and giving instant results, but drawing for diverse purposes is a most important skill, which underpins the understanding of visual language. It must not be neglected.

There was evidence that even where primary drawing was produced, this had not been used to fully explore visual language. Its function as a source for inspiration and starting point from which to develop ideas still requires more consideration and integration by delivery teams who tend to fall back on the use of secondary source materials. These, incidentally, were used with far more discrimination than seen previously, but still often lacked annotation to explain their presence.

It should be noted that students' drawings from their own digital photographs do not constitute true primary source work. The primary source is the photograph, but the drawing interacts only with a photograph and not with the directly observed object. Such photos are better used in a creative way - not just copied again - as valuable starting points for media trails, elements of collage, print and mixed media.

*Raising standards: Individually sourced primary inspiration can sometimes be difficult to identify at moderation unless labelled. Please make this clear. (For example, the use of the candidates' own digital photography can easily be mistaken for an internet download).*

**Use combinations of formal elements, mark-making and object-making, and use drawing to develop ideas and intentions**

The approach by individual centres varied widely. Some wisely introduced formal elements and technical terms early in the programme through a series of mark-making and object-making activities and encouraged students to refer to them in annotation in ensuing projects. These centres often supported their students and helped them to achieve through the use of carefully considered and constructed guidance material.

Others immediately started working on projects requiring final outcomes; sometimes to good effect, but often with the result that the underpinning skills and knowledge required of formal elements was not taught as decisively and early outcomes were

not of a high standard. Some portfolios were reviewed that do not contain a single meaningful reference to line, tone, texture, form, etc. and all evidence had to be interpreted visually at moderation, which in higher marked portfolios especially, had the danger of being a subjective process, as there is danger of reading more into the work than the candidate intended or realised.

*Raising standards: Start with the basics. Don't assume prior knowledge. The first term especially should set a firm foundation on which to build individual performance.*

*Don't feel pressured into jumping straight into substantial projects. Keep activities 'bite-sized', then collate them to create informative explorations.*

At best, centres had developed well-devised vocational briefs to reflect professional practice, complete with timetables and procedural references indicating restraints and health and safety considerations. This proved really good practice for Unit 3. There was still, however, a definite bias towards Fine Art across the centres, especially in 2D which throws the qualification out of balance.

It is difficult to make sweeping statements on the practice seen across all centres. However, it is evident that centres had worked hard to present a balance of 2D and 3D work, often in restricted circumstances. Some were fortunate in having ceramic facilities through which to develop skills in non-resistant materials, but these should be balanced with object-making techniques using resistant materials.

It was highly unusual to see design projects in 2D or 3D attempted with any depth of technical detail or professionalism, (although just a few centres produced outstanding examples). As with the absence of 3D in some portfolios, this fine art bias limited the possibilities for the 'use of visual language'. It is acknowledged that fine art-related skills are at the basis of all visual work, but in this qualification these should not be seen as ends in themselves, and should increasingly be applied.

*Raising standards: Work to your teaching strengths for major activities. Then seek to include a simple but meaningful introduction to those areas you are not so familiar with. A fine art piece can translate easily into design.*

*Inset presentations are planned that will help centres address this imbalance.*

A few centres, not necessarily new to the programme, were still not achieving an appropriate balance between investigations in 2D and 3D visual language. Mark-making in various combinations was often skilful, lively and varied but the same attention was not given to the development of object-making techniques and analysis of their visual qualities. Relief structures, which are an exciting development on 2D work, but are not strictly 3 dimensional as they are intended to be viewed from the front only, were the only evidence for object-making in a few centres. This is not acceptable, and will inevitably result in the lowering of candidates' marks.

*Raising standards: Analyse which category your centre comes into, then devise strategies to achieve a better balance if necessary. For example, each body of research used for a 2D outcome can be re-visited to address the formal elements such as form and structure to produce work 'in the round'.*

The increase in the use of computer-aided design and photography in its own right continued to grow. Some adventurous work using film and animation was seen, particularly for Unit 3. PowerPoint applications were used to the full. Results were often superlative and very commercial, but centres are reminded that just as with any other technique, each stage of a computer-manipulated process should be recorded and justified.

Some centres were still not able to offer their students opportunity to explore visual language via a range of technological media. This is an increasingly important aspect of any vocational programme, as so much commercial art and design work is reliant on technological innovation. Although visual skills must be given due consideration, and not be allowed to be overshadowed by technological proficiency, photocopiers, computers, digital and video cameras are now an accepted part of the design process.

Within the techniques offered, results in print-making, batik, silk-painting and collage spanned a wide range of abilities and responses. Some seen were below the level expected for this qualification and could not contribute to the range: Other results were exemplary. Stitching or pastels were worked onto prints to give innovative results, and collage took tactile exploration to its utmost.

*Raising standards: It is tempting to 'play safe' in printmaking but if you produce a sufficient number of prints you can document the sequential process, experiment with colour-ways and versions, present a final outcome, then carry it even further with more adventurous developments. The addition of text and computer manipulation adds even more possibilities.*

**Identify formal elements and techniques used in the work you have studied and describe how others have used visual language**

The Fine Art bias was often seen in the development of project work using the work of an established (often historical) artist as a prescribed reference, when a designer or craftsman would have been more appropriate. This was sometimes introduced too early, to lead the candidates' response, when original exploration into the subject matter, before reference to the work of others was introduced, would have resulted in a more genuine, original response, rather than simply 'work in the style of...'

Information was very often historical or biographical, rather than focused on the use of visual language to communicate ideas.

Students' copies of work by other artists in inappropriate media were still seen, despite being censured last year. The artist's use of scale was hardly ever considered. It must be remembered that a candidate looking at a small reproduction in a book or on the Internet can have no idea of the dramatic impact of a large scale painting or sculpture. The explanation of the use of visual language is therefore severely restricted and work developed from these studies often seemed mechanical, lacking originality and personal interpretation.

*Raising standards: Prescribed references do avoid candidates choosing irrelevant or unwise references. However, if you offer them, offer some element of choice. Use them to inform, but not to lead a project. Candidates then have some independence in the direction their work takes and a 'cloned' response is avoided.*

On a happier note, many centres had taken the opportunity to extend the vocational aspect via the study of contemporary practice this year. Local practitioners were invited into the classroom, and many individual or group projects were well

documented and gave exciting results. These projects were inventive, and often reflected the practitioner's own experience and dealings with clients.

This practice helped to avoid a common failing, in that projects tended to stop short of their full potential. Although work produced was of a suitable standard, its application in a vocational context tended to be ignored: The use of visual language to lend impact in communication in the modern world is of prime vocational importance.

*Raising standards: Print making was seen to produce extremely adaptable outcomes. Investigate its commercial development as a repeat print for textiles, or poster, book jacket or stationery. The selection of colour for this and investigations into colour theory generally can be linked with the advertising and packaging of products for different target audiences.*

**Demonstrate use of visual language and show how visual language has developed your ideas**

The careful display of work, 'as if to a client' was emphasised as an important part of the project work in more centres this year. Generally, the presentation of work was neater and much better organised, although a few centres still did not realise the vocational relevance of candidates taking a pride in the presentation of their work, from initial research in sketch books, through developmental stages to the presentation of the final outcome. Apart from diluting the quality of the work, poor presentation makes moderation a very arduous task.

A students' final portfolio should demonstrate both visual skills (i.e. in work which is valuable for its intrinsic qualities) and the use of visual language to develop ideas. This subsequent application is an aspect of vocational art and design work important for progression to both Further Education and the world of work.

*Raising standards: The term portfolio does not imply anything except a neatly presented body of work. Thin card or sugar paper (the less garish the better) is perfectly adequate for mounting 2D work, using a style appropriate to its needs. Maquettes and test pieces can be mounted on a board to show sequential development.*

From these comments it can be seen that at its best the evidence continued to show an improvement in terms of range and quality of work, with visual language being used very imaginatively to explore ideas. In some centres the range of work in the formal elements was more extensive and adventurous, and the level of technical application was very high.

In some centres the work presented was of a fairly basic level of achievement. This generally was for one of two reasons. The first was in the recruitment of candidates of a fairly low level of ability. Although seen less than when the programme was first introduced, it is still happening. This is acceptable where the cohort spans a range of abilities, but the qualification is not intended specifically for less able candidates. Scrutiny of the Mark Bands will verify this. The other was in the lack of leadership, of steerage, of the programme within some centres, which has resulted in the need for some teams to plan their delivery with a more criterion focused approach and closer consideration of the *applied* nature of the programme.



## Unit 2 (5302): Materials, Techniques and Technology

### Explore 2D and 3D materials

In nearly all centres the coverage of unit requirements was comprehensive in relation to 2D materials, techniques and technologies: Silk painting, batik, textile work (especially appliqué) and printmaking were regularly seen to supplement painting and drawing using a variety of media, and at best were used expressively and innovatively.

Computer aided design, Photoshop in particular, was often used to create, develop and enhance 2D outcomes. However, true graphic design projects were rarely set. Individual students showed very competent graphic skills, and the use of video and animation software to a high standard was becoming more commonly seen, but often because these students had facilities at home, not because they were being formally taught.

*Raising standards: As in Unit 1, documentation of the process employed is an important factor in gaining marks and aids in the authentication of students' work.*

Non-resistant materials such as paper, card, chicken wire, mod roc, wire and withies were all used to good effect for 3D, usually within a Fine Art context, and some ceramic pieces were seen of an almost professional finish. Resistant materials, such as wood, plaster or stone for carving, and resistant sheet materials for cutting and construction were much less in evidence. Design outcomes such as architectural models and interior/set design were still a rarity and little evidence was seen of drawing to inform a technical process.

Where provision of facilities or teaching for work in 3D is still very limited, centres should seek strategies to overcome this or they will continue to limit the marks available to their students. The resources for delivering a vocational programme which embraces the needs of 2D and 3D Art, Design and Craft must be carefully

considered, so that a balance of activities, offering full coverage of the specification content, can be achieved.

*Raising standards: Units 1 and 2 are essentially skills-building units. Substantial outcomes are not necessary from every exploration. A range of trials and maquettes in various materials, using different techniques, will extend the range and improve mark potential.*

### **Produce responses and ideas in a range of media**

At best, projects were original, challenging and vocationally focused. They made good use of visits to exhibitions or the use of local practitioners for case studies and workshop activities where the use of materials, techniques and technology could be observed first hand.

Centres definitely seemed more adept at writing suitable assignment briefs, making the most of their immediate environment and local resources. Some forged links with bodies such as LeapArts (London area) to create exciting and innovative projects. Many had striven to present a balance of 2D and 3D work and used one body of research to inform several outcomes across the contexts of art, craft and design. Others were still not achieving this balance and were consequently limited in the marks they could achieve.

*Raising standards: Rehearse working to vocational scenarios in units 1 and 2. Find opportunities (e.g. library, cafeteria) within the centre if 'real-life' briefs are not practicable. Having a 'client' and a presentation as a definite goal to work towards definitely seems to give the candidates a sense of pride.*

There were many cases of quite individual responses from candidates who had been given a freedom of choice of materials and techniques to use. This was most prevalent in Unit 3, where the candidate had opportunity to build on previous experience.

As for Unit 1, assignments often stopped just short of their full potential: An interesting development, as advocated at Inset, was the use of Photoshop to manipulate photographs to show paintings and sculpture in situ, but generally,

commercial aspects such as what a sculpture would be made of in reality, or the necessary techniques to site a mural out of doors, were rarely addressed.

*Raising standards: Make an audit sheet of skills and resources available to you. Don't forget those in other departments such as Design and Technology.*

*Log them against the requirements of the programme (i.e. both 2D and 3D across Art, Craft and Design contexts) and write suitable activities into your assignment briefs that will use the resources to the full.*

*Where there are gaps in your log, consider bringing in a tutor from another department, or a practitioner, experienced at working in centres. He/she will take the lead, informing you of time, facilities and resources required. Felt-making and working in stained glass (2D craft/design) are two very successful examples that were seen this year.*

#### **Use tools, equipment and technology in an art, craft or design context**

As for Unit 1: strand 2, evidence for this requirement of the banner spanned a massive range of abilities and skills levels. It was rewarding to see that some candidates were awarded full marks in both the units, and on careful scrutiny at moderation were found to be above the level appropriate for the qualification, such as the level of understanding and technical ability shown.

Unfortunately, for many candidates, the recording of process was not well covered. Under the 'Ways of working' heading, (Specification p27) 'making brief records of each step, so that you can repeat the process another time, if necessary' is required. A few centres *have* shown this successfully, incorporating the need for design activities, by using storyboard presentations to explain methodology and incorporating contextual references such as Pop Art and Manga to enliven the activity.

*Raising standards: A visual response may be easier to elicit than written notes. Consider all options and differentiate if necessary.*

A record of Health and Safety issues could usually be found somewhere within portfolios. Handouts were prolific, but did not always involve student interaction,

which is necessary to gain marks. Sometimes techniques and technologies were covered in handouts that the student did not use, and were therefore meaningless.

Some students wrote notes or devised symbols to insert at relevant points in sketchbooks (again addressing the need for design activities) and this year even PowerPoint presentations of hazards in the studio were seen.

Centres are reminded of the need to fulfil this requirement. Their students risk penalty if they fail to show this awareness as 'safely' in assessment strands 1 and 2 requires evidencing. It only appears in Mark Band 1 as it is a basic vocational requirement, but it must be fulfilled to make progression to higher mark bands valid.

*Raising standards: If students are engrossed in their practical explorations do not break their concentration in order to document Health and Safety. Use photographs coupled with an Observation Record by the tutor to evidence safe practice, or let students annotate photos at a later time.*

#### **Identify in writing or visually, how others use materials and techniques**

The focus on the use of materials, techniques and tools in the work of practitioners was frequently under-emphasised or even missed altogether. Biographical descriptions of "artists" will not satisfy the requirements of the unit specification which are very clear. Students need to specifically investigate the use of materials, techniques and technology of both historical and contemporary practitioners across the contexts of art, craft and design. As in previous years fine art posed little problem, ceramicists were most commonly used for craft references, but evidence in relation to designers was sadly lacking. On a happier note, although largely fine art in nature, there were more references seen to practitioners in 3D this year.

*Raising standards: Ask students and staff to bring in supplements from weekend newspapers to use as resource material. These contain a wealth of references to topical subjects including architecture/interior design, fashion and product design.*

The most meaningful observations of others' use of materials and techniques were achieved during visits to galleries and studios or by practitioners to schools. Centres are commended for making the effort to arrange such activities, which have proved extremely successful in entertaining, informing and inspiring students.

*Raising standards: Refer to the DVD: 'Real people, real art, real design' distributed by Edexcel to view examples of letters to practitioners, risk assessments, etc.*

### **Comment on how you have used materials and techniques**

Across the centres a wide range of responses was seen, from ongoing annotation in sketchbooks, to technical notebooks, to the inclusion of narrative detail within summative evaluations. Annotated photographs were used to good effect in documenting processes such as cutting glass and object-making.

To achieve well in this area students need firstly to document the methods used (along with evidence of safe practice). Secondly, they need to show justification for choices and modifications made and to apply critical analysis to final outcomes. This is as important as the bare narrative detail in gaining marks.

## Unit 3 (5303): Working to Project Brief

### Produce work in response to a brief

The externally-set assignment for Unit 3 is the sole means for assessment of this unit. No time constraints are set, except that it must consist of a minimum of 30 hours work. The reasoning for this is that in a truly vocational situation, time constraints are set by date, not by hours worked.

This capacity for independence has been favourably received by centres, but some are still not allowing sufficient time for candidates to develop a substantial, in-depth response to the paper. As all evidence can be cross-referenced back to units 1 and 2, nothing is lost by giving Unit 3 the consideration it deserves.

*Raising standards: Centres are reminded that delivery can begin at any time after the paper is posted on the Edexcel web site. A suitable time for introduction to candidates is early in term 2, so allowing tutors ample time to plan a structured delivery, incorporating relevant review points.*

As in previous years the paper offered a theme and scenario; this year the brief was 'Segments: Sets: Sequences'. Opportunities were given for outcomes across the contexts of fine art, craft and design, each with 2D and 3D alternatives. A 4D, 'narrative moving image, film or animation sequence' alternative was added this year to cater for the growth in ICT facilities available in some centres.

Free choice was offered and each option was carefully considered at the writing stage to ensure comparability across the options in terms of the degree of difficulty and potential for differentiation across the ability range.

*Raising standards: Where do your centre strengths lie? Work to them. An option does not have to be offered to candidates if it is inappropriate for your centre.*

Based on moderator findings from the previous series, the theme and scenario were intentionally devised to ensure the inclusion of the use of primary sourced research for assessment strand 1, and to encourage more in-depth consideration of display and presentation for assessment strand 4, as these had been highlighted as areas for improvement during last year's moderation. The focus of the theme, organic/mechanical forms, assured easily accessible resource material within the

centre environment, so increasing potential achievement for centres that were unable to take candidates off-site for research activities. This resulted in an increased inclusion of primary material in most submissions.

The 'narrative' of the theme and scenario was purposely kept to a succinct minimum to allow centres to introduce a centre-devised supplementary brief (advocated strongly at Inset for the last 2 years) yet still giving enough of a framework to those centres who chose not to write their own. Some centres enjoyed the freedom of approach. A few commented that there was not enough guidance and that more detail was needed. The inclusion of too much detail, (for example, the formal requirement for a display of work) may disadvantage some centres, as facilities and resources vary considerably. It is far better for individual centres to establish their own vocational constraints which are relevant and manageable.

Pertinent results were achieved by the inclusion of a real life or role-played client, or by information gathering visits to well chosen sites and venues, although this was not a guarantee of the visual quality of the final outcomes.

*Raising standards: What are vocational constraints? Read the Specification carefully for guidance. Talk to colleagues who work free-lance. Check with your centre Governors - some may be local business people or have contacts willing to help. Rehearse working to vocational scenarios in units 1 and 2. Find opportunities (e.g. library, cafeteria) within the centre if real-life briefs are otherwise not practicable. Having a 'client' and a presentation as a definite goal to work towards definitely seemed to give the candidates a sense of pride in their work.*

Centres showed this moderation series that they are becoming more adept at cross-referencing evidence from the externally-set assignment to Units 1 and 2, as recommended.

### **Meet the constraints of a brief, including time and material constraints**

Reports by moderators indicated a mixed response to the brief: At best, centres had added focus and structure to the externally-set assignment with supplementary, centre-related briefs which optimised local primary and secondary resources, staffing strengths and time available. Assessors in many centres expressed approval of the

theme and appropriate outcomes were developed, often highly individual in nature, although a few cohorts produced cloned responses, using the same prescribed research, materials and techniques.

A few tutor-assessors expressed confusion over whether they were supposed to address one of the title words of 'Segments: Sets: Sequences' or all three. Closer scrutiny of the options offered would have answered this question. The relationship between the word meanings is very close. They all refer to the idea of division or union of some kind. They were intended simply to start a myriad of thought processes regarding organic or mechanical (or organic *versus* mechanical) forms and the subsequent display of the work produced.

An unexpected consequence of unstructured delivery in some centres was the lack of adhesion to the main theme. Candidates had started strongly, using aspects of organic and mechanical forms that suggested 'Segments: Sets: Sequences' - items such as seed pods and sprouting seeds, cogs and gear mechanisms, but then had been allowed to wander from the theme, looking generally at flowers or machines without the necessary focus and emphasis on sections, slices, fragments, groups, arrangements, series, successions, progressions, chains and cycles of events - any of which are suggested by the theme. Final outcomes showed a very tenuous link to the title and in a vocational situation would run the risk of being rejected by the client.

*Raising standards: A successful assignment requires substantial planning on the part of the tutor, prior to distribution to candidates, right through to the anticipation of suitable outcomes. The tutor must have a strong understanding of and affiliation with the identity of the project to be able to inspire and draw out the best performance from candidates.*

Where the project formed the high point of the students' portfolios, the body of work presented was complete, coherent and often of a very high creative and technical standard. It demonstrated a high level of commitment to the brief and adhered closely to the requirements of the Paper; no doubt aided by the sound structure set by centres, which this year showed a marked improvement in understanding the vocational focus and requirements of the unit.



Elsewhere, the work was deemed rushed and not fully resolved. Some centres were still setting a 10 or 15 hour 'exam' for the final making process within the GCSE examination timetable, (although more viable alternatives have been put forward at Inset). Some students had been unable to give of their best under these conditions.

Sometimes, no reference to the Candidate Paper or scenario was seen at all within the work, and candidates had not been given time afterwards to evaluate and present their work, 'as if to a client', which was a requirement of the Paper, carrying 26% of the marks (assessment strand 4).

*Raising standards: Keep referring back to the brief! Although all stages right up to the final making process should be taught as in a normal assignment, you must not lose sight of the extra vocational emphasis. Encourage candidates to constantly think of the client and audience requirements. 'Rehearsals' of this within earlier projects will familiarise candidates with the process.*

At Inset, the display and presentation of work has been clarified to maximize mark potential in assessment strand 4, and this year an extra paragraph was written into the Paper to amplify its requirements. This paragraph was largely ignored by some centres which resulted in a loss of marks.

*Raising standards: Build the importance of display and evaluation of work 'as if to a client'. This activity could be carried out within the GCSE exam timetable if it is the final time candidates attend. Use your weekly planner to work backwards from this point, setting sufficient time for making, idea development, and initial research. This will give you a suitable start date for the project.*

Although some centres encouraged individual time planning and the careful monitoring of progress by candidates, many tutors assumed all responsibility for these factors, denying their students the opportunity to demonstrate their organisational skills. This year, an optional checklist was included with the Paper, whereby candidates could tick off each practical activity (linked to assessment criteria) as they completed it. This was intended to aid improvement on the previous year's performance, when some centres had lost marks through neglect of evidence for certain criteria. In their reports moderators noted its absence in many centres,

which is disappointing. The centres that did use it reported that it helped candidates to demonstrate independence in organising their response to the brief.

*Raising standards: Encourage candidates to take responsibility for own planning and monitoring of progress. Provide suitable templates. Use the Candidate checklist - preferably as part of your tutorial system.*

**Collect primary and secondary source material / Use primary and secondary source material to understand and respond to the brief**

Primary source research is defined as the candidates' own studies from real life, such as sketches or own photographs.

The strategy of including ample scope for primary research within the theme paid dividends, in that it was rarely absent from submissions. The quality of the research, its relevance and its use in the development of ideas was variable, as was to be expected, and studies of orange segments were ubiquitous, but drawing, photography and even video was used in some innovative ways to capture sequential stages; in particular in growth, decay, and movement.

A few centres prescribed exercises at the start of the brief to ensure coverage and then largely ignored them in later stages, resulting in heavy reliance on secondary sources for the development of ideas and a lack of synthesis between collection and use of material. Over all, however, progress has definitely been made in this area.

In some centres, the process of creating and developing ideas from 'well-worked' primary sources was truly evident and resulted in original and innovative outcomes, free from issues of copyright or plagiarism.

*Raising standards: Remember, it is the collection and use of both primary and secondary source material that gains marks. At the planning stage, tutors should only select primary source material that has relevance and potential in idea development. When research material is selected for development, candidates should justify their decision for choice or rejection.*

Visits to an art gallery were often used to start the project to give inspiration, which is commended, but these were not often expanded to introduce the concept of

curating an exhibition to build vocational relevance: Liaison with the education officer at large galleries can provide this.

*Raising standards: Join as many mailing lists as possible for Art, Craft and Design organisations and recreational venues in your area. You will then have advance notice of events suitable to enhance your projects.*

Because of the open nature of the title, the use of others' work was diverse, with both historical and, more freely this year, contemporary references seen and used to good effect. David Hockney, Lucy Milroy, Bridget Riley and Antonio Gaudi all proved popular choices. Local practitioners were sometimes used in vocational case studies (relevant for units 1 and 2) and were brought into lessons to conduct relevant workshop activities for 'Segments: Sets: Sequences'.

*Raising standards: Centres are reminded that information gathered should be acknowledged, either by name of the artist/designer, bibliography or website index. Primary resource material (especially photographs) must be clearly labelled as such to avoid confusion at moderation. This is particularly becoming a problem where the students' own digital photographs are printed on the same paper as Internet downloads.*

### **Use tools, equipment and technology safely to meet the requirements of a brief**

The use of materials, techniques and technology was often very skilful. Vocational considerations were often encouraged through clearly defined tasks, size and technical requirements, material constraints and opportunities for presentation.

Many large scale canvases or sometimes sets of smaller canvases were seen, which gave a professional 'edge' over painting on paper. Acrylics and oils seem to be superseding poster paint, but trials and developmental work varied considerably. Some were superlative but others were scant, with methodology poorly documented (to the detriment of evidence for Unit 2). Coverage of health and safety aspects varied enormously. It was totally absent from a few portfolios; addressed in a structured, hand-out orientated way in many; but inventively covered by annotation using student-designed symbols and even PowerPoint presentations in a few centres.

Responses spanned all options, but 2D fine art was by far the most popular. This is completely acceptable in Unit 3, if that is the centre's area of expertise.

However, within the Fine Art option the Paper read 'Produce a piece of artwork (which may be composed of several related or interlocking parts).' This qualifying suggestion was largely ignored and outcomes were often far more prosaic than anticipated. This had a knock-on effect on the display of the final outcome (assessment strand 4).

At best, the display of artwork that was composed of several small components was inventive, sometimes even planned on paper in advance, but this was rare.

*Raising standards: Encourage candidates to record process throughout the programme. Allow them to develop their own style of recording; visually, using photography or storyboard techniques, if writing is arduous. By the externally-set assignment it will be second nature to them to document and analyse each step of the process.*

Safe practice is an important vocational consideration. It must be evidenced for Unit 3: Candidates were penalised if it could not be found by the moderator. At Inset meetings we have been advocating that if candidates use materials, techniques and technology for the externally-set project that they have already used and documented within Units 1 and 2, it is acceptable for them to either put that evidence of safe practice with the Unit 3 work, include specific directions towards the evidence or include a photocopy of it. It is not necessary to use valuable time rewriting the *same* health and safety guidelines, but they must be present somewhere in the portfolio.

*Raising standards: Health and Safety handouts will not add to candidate marks unless they are 'interactive'. The candidates' own symbols to indicate hazards, accompanied by brief notes, can often be more meaningful.*

### **Display the work / Evaluate your response to the brief**

Annotation is a most valuable way to include evaluative comment within all stages of a project and can remove the need for extensive written evaluation on its completion. This was often seen at the top end of the marks range, incorporated on

sketchbook pages with careful regard to aesthetics, but lower down annotation tended to be purely narrative, perhaps with value for unit 2, but not evaluative, to justify choices made in the development of ideas.

*Raising standards: From the start of the programme be definite about what you require within annotation. Supply word lists and examples of good annotation.*

*Encourage references to formal elements and the use of technical terms.*

Vocational aspects such as self-initiated planning and monitoring were seen only in a minority of centres. Many centres had treated the project as simply another assignment, with tutors taking the responsibility for time management, material constraints and so forth, restricting the candidates' scope for response. Self-reflection of these aspects constitutes a valuable part of the ongoing evaluative process.

On a high note, some centres had excelled in finding innovative ways to give a vocational flavour to the project, such as introducing interim presentations within the time scale, to monitor progress and justify decisions made. Careful presentation of work through all stages of the brief reflected the need for effective portfolio building for progression to higher levels, which is in itself a vocational consideration. Some candidates even wrote letters to real or imagined gallery curators, posing relevant questions regarding display, transport and insurance of exhibits. Final outcomes were exhibited in the centre cafeterias or learning centres, and feedback obtained from the 'audience'.

Presentation 'as if to a client' was covered enthusiastically by many centres, who staged private views of the work or videoed the candidates presenting to their peer group, and tutors who role-played the part of client. This was often supplemented by presentation notes and specific tutor witness statements, so removing the need for a written summative evaluation, yet maximising achievement.

Others ignored this part of the instructions and relied on written evaluations. At best, these served the purpose well, relating work to the brief: For example, by citing potential improvements and details of display possibilities. At worst, they were simple narratives of what the student had done, without critical analysis or consideration of vocational focus. Next year, many centres must consider this area

more carefully to fully meet the requirements of the brief, or mark potential will seriously be reduced.

*Raising standards: Plan well ahead: Book a suitable room, support staff and technical equipment such as video recorder. Invite your 'client' and make them aware of the role they are to play. Prepare your candidates well with presentation notes and relaxation techniques.*

It is not a requirement of the externally-set assignment that work is presented in a display *for the moderator*. Of course, the moderation visit takes place too late to form part of the presentation process. However, some centres had taken the opportunity to stage an exhibition, often with the candidates themselves taking responsibility for its organisation and publicity. A few centres had even provided 'comments books' for audience feedback, which informed an advanced stage of summative evaluation.

Where this had taken place at an earlier date to the moderation visit, photographic/video evidence recorded the event, which is completely acceptable.

*Raising standards: Keep your feet on the ground but aim for the skies.  
Don't forget a photo shoot and write-up for the local press!*

## Concluding remarks

Generally this year, the qualification continued to develop and gain significance as a purposeful alternative to the conventional single award GCSE.

It may seem that in this report many 'negative' points have been raised, in terms of identifying deficiencies in the range of activities and contexts offered to candidates. This has been done in the spirit of promoting the expansion and improvement of courses. Many tutors should, after reading it, be able to commend themselves on a very successful year. For some, it is the third time of moderation and a familiarity with the process has replaced the nerve-wracking task of facing a new system. Other, 'new' teaching teams, have got off to a highly successful start. Tremendous enthusiasm was seen in centres that made the moderation process extremely rewarding.

Ending on a high note, good practice far outweighed poor delivery this year. Tutors have continued to rise to the challenge in formulating a meaningful vocational programme of study, directed at a full range of abilities, often in less than perfect circumstances.

## Statistics

### Unit 1 (5301) - 2D and 2D Visual Language

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Upper	50	45	40	35	31	25	20	15	10
Lower	46	41	36	32	26	21	16	11	0

### Unit 2 (5302) - Materials, Techniques and Technology

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Upper	50	47	41	35	30	25	20	15	10
Lower	48	42	36	31	26	21	16	11	0

### Unit 3 (5303) - Working to Project Briefs

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Upper	50	46	41	36	31	26	21	16	11
Lower	47	42	37	32	27	22	17	12	0



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