Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE in Applied Art and Design (2301)

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Contents

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, highlighting areas for improvement.

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

Structure of the Qualification

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

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 **September** 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.

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.

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 candidates 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 candidates 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.

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. Missing signatures caused a problem in only a few centres. Most tutors remembered to get them signed before normal teaching ceased.

Last year saw the introduction of asterisks on the OPTEMS sheets to select random 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 the whole portfolio 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.

Unit 1 (5301) - 2D and 3D Visual Language

- This year the message had reached most centres that Unit 1 and Unit 2 were best delivered in an integrated manner. They were almost always delivered holistically and were largely project based.

- There was some concern that a few centres labelled the work for moderation as Unit 1 and Unit 2. This usually meant Project 1 and 2. To avoid confusion these centres may care to use the titles of their projects instead for the next moderation series.

- Just a few centres had tried to deconstruct the work to present discrete portfolios for Unit 1 and 2. This is not a requirement of moderation. Moderators view a portfolio holistically when moderating Unit 1, and then again for Unit 2, in order to view best evidence wherever it occurs.

- Many approaches to the assessment grids were seen for Unit 1 and Unit 2; from those that had obviously been used for formative assessment throughout the programme and meticulously annotated summative documents - both of which are acceptable, to those hastily filled in with just a mark and no annotation, which moderators noted were most likely to be leniently assessed.

- Teachers often commented that they had not been allowed sufficient time for assessment. Front sheets (portfolio index sheets) were rarely used, although a few excellent examples were seen, documenting interim feedback to students. These aided the moderation process greatly.

- The introduction of Authentication forms seems to have posed few problems within centres. Occasionally some were seen that had not been signed by both teacher and candidate.

Use a Range of Primary and Secondary Sources and Explore Visual Language

- Some centres had successfully used primary sources to build and refine observational drawing skills, linked directly to the understanding of formal elements, at the start of the programme. This practice is commended, as it provides candidates with the skills to respond with confidence to more complex activities later in the programme.

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.

- There was an increase in the use of primary research generally, which was gratifying. However, in some centres, in order to 'tick the box', sources were prescribed by teachers and did not always fit an individual candidate's needs for ideas development. The 'use' of such images was, therefore, often minimal. The exception to this was the 'Go See!' brief, which focused centres' attention on their own locality and at best produced some unique and stimulating research material.

- Digital photography was seen to be a fast growing technology for the recording of primary material. At best, this recorded information that could not be captured by drawing, but in a few centres it was the only source of primary research. Drawing for diverse purposes is a most important skill, which underpins the understanding of visual language and must not be neglected. Any imbalance will need to be redressed.

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 and vice versa).

- Secondary sourced images from the internet were commonly seen; sometimes unacknowledged, they brought copyright issues to the fore. The quality of the learning experience from such research was debatable. Often the reproduction quality and the miniaturised scale diluted the impact and understanding of viewing original artwork.

- On the other hand, well-planned visits to appropriate venues such as museums, galleries, studios, design centres and tourist attractions had increased and were generally of considerable value to all units. Teachers cited visits from practitioners, such as glass workers, interior designers and felt makers, into centres as the best way to convey the meaning of visual language and its use to candidates.

Use Combinations of Formal Elements, Mark-Making and Object-Making and Use Drawing to Develop Ideas and Intentions

- A wealth of 2D materials was used to explore mark-making. Both dry and wet media were utilised to varying levels of achievement. (Moderation reports this year tended not to list the range seen as moderators had been instructed to keep the accuracy of assessment judgements as the focus of their reports).

- Drawing was often well employed in mark-making exercises and observational studies (still life, portraiture) to increase skills and sometimes for meaningful research. However, it was very rarely used well to inform spatial awareness and the 3D process (as in plans, elevations or construction details). Happily, the use of thumbnail sketches within graphic design and for compositional alternatives generally had increased.

- There was also an increase in 3D evidence, as centres made every effort to achieve a balance. The evidence was usually in non-resistant materials, but soap/wax/Oasis carving was seen as a cost effective and manageable introduction to resistant materials, and was sometimes combined with casting techniques. Centres with ceramic kilns had sometimes extended their use to glass slumping/fusing.

Raising standards:

Work to your teaching strengths for major activities. Then seek to include a series of simple but meaningful trials in those areas with which you are not so familiar.

- Cutting techniques were still largely restricted to paper and card, but some outcomes were seen, eg large scale architectural models in these materials, that were impressive. Results were inventive and when combined with strong light and shade, very aesthetically pleasing.

- Several teachers reported to moderators that they had good design and technology facilities within their centre, but could not access them for various reasons.

Raising standards:

Access to CDT facilities for mini-workshop activities could well redress the fine art bias seen in many centres.

- Other teachers had embraced the growing ICT facilities available to them.

Identify Formal Elements, and Techniques Used in Work Candidates Have Studied and Describe How Others Have Used Visual Language

- Some centres took the time to introduce students to the formal elements via exercises and observational work, rather than leap into complex, brief-based activities. This resulted in a more mature approach to investigations and annotation later in the programme, and is highly recommended. Some 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.

- The term 'visual language' seemed not to be fully understood by a few teachers, as annotation which focused on obvious comment on materials, rather than on the formal elements in the students' own work and that of others, had been cited on the assessment grids as evidence for Unit 1. Some centres had devised writing frames to aid low ability students but answers on these seemed not to have been checked, nor feedback given, so limiting their worth. Centres are reminded that although leniency is allowed in candidates' spelling generally, technical terms **must** be correctly spelt.

- Centres seemed divided between those who embraced the modern world of art and design, using local and topical references and those who relied heavily on mostly 2D fine art references, the 'old favourites' of the 19th and 20th Century, such as Van Gogh and Georgia O'Keefe, with African Masks still appearing regularly! Best evidence was seen where strong visual links were made between others' work and the candidates' own, without excessive recording of irrelevant written detail.

- Several approaches were seen, from carefully annotated, methodical sketchbooks, to cases where visual links were quite tenuous. In the latter case it was difficult for assessors and moderators to guard against reading more into the work than the candidate intended or was aware of; or on the other hand, to avoid missing tiny but pertinent links. Careful annotation on the grid is of great help for this assessment strand.

- The emphasis on the vocational aspect of the programme had continued to grow, and many teachers commented on how much they were enjoying the challenge. There was an increase in visits by professional practitioners, often carefully chosen either to support areas of expertise in which teachers felt they had least skills or to add an element of excitement to the programme. Recording varied from witness statements by teachers, to group questionnaires, to individually generated PowerPoint presentations of the visit. From evidence seen there is still scope to increase the focus on the use of visual language here, although the use of materials, techniques and technology was well covered.

- 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.

Raising standards:

Devise strategies to achieve a better balance. For example, each body of research used for a 2D outcome, whatever the context, can be re-visited to address the formal elements such as form and structure to produce work 'in the round'.

- Henry Moore, Andy Goldsworthy and Anthony Gormley seemed to be the 'token' 3D references. A few worthwhile references to fashion and textile designers were seen, which extended the range and inspired candidates in a vocational context.

- Teachers reported finding making meaningful contextual references and working in 3D more challenging than 2D.

Raising Standards:

Stay one step ahead of the candidates! The internet is a valuable tool for teachers. Using a search engine to find, for example, British Sculptors, will open up links to a huge number of 21st century sculptors, on sites such as the Cass Sculpture Foundation. Try a similar search for textile designers, craft workers, etc.
Don't forget the immense value of the websites of the Arts Council, the Craft Council and the Design Council.

- Some centres provided well planned excursions, usually at the start of a brief, to enthuse students.

- 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.

Raising Standards:

Plan well ahead. Explain to your Head of Department why the longest possible lessons are necessary and enlist their support over timetabling.
Centres are urged to undertake manageable trips. Many 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.

Demonstrate Use of Visual Language and Show Sow Visual Language Has Developed Candidates' Ideas.

- Workshops with practitioners brought about successful results. Candidates could observe demonstrations, be informed first hand of the thought processes that underpinned the practitioner's progression of ideas and question both practical and aesthetic considerations of the process. This understanding could then be channelled into their own work.

- A fine art bias, or more occasionally a lack of 3D, limited the range of 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**.

- At best, the growing vocational focus seen within many portfolios meant a number of ways for candidates to communicate messages and meanings within their work. It was still quite unusual to see design projects attempted with any depth of technical detail or professionalism, (although a few centres produced outstanding examples) but commercially focused graphics projects using ICT did produce some highly viable outcomes.

Raising Standards:

It is hoped that exemplar design projects will be posted on the Edexcel Art and Design micro-site shortly, to inform teachers with little experience in this area. Work may also be shown to candidates, to inspire and inform.

- In this strand leniency was often noted at moderation. General reference to an artist/designer had mistakenly been awarded marks, rather than the analysis of a specific element of their work, which should then have contributed to the candidates' own development of ideas.
  Likewise, candidates' accounts of how they had used materials and techniques were 'carried across' as evidence to Unit 1, although they had not commented on aspects of their use of visual language.

Unit 2 (5302) Materials, Techniques and Technology

Explore 2D and 3D Materials
Produce Responses and Ideas in a Range of Media

- The 2D/3D balance had improved: centres were also becoming more adventurous, introducing digital photography and film making, PowerPoint presentations, Photoshop computer manipulation and glass techniques to extend the range and to enthuse candidates.

- Some centres, however, still had very limited ICT facilities. OFSTED had criticised this deficiency in its 2004 report of the 'new' qualification, and had highlighted the relevance of this technology within the programme. Since then, facilities have improved greatly for most, but not all, centres.
  Vocationally, the use of computers is essential in many applications of art and design.

- In 2D contexts, especially fine art, there was often creative and extensive media experimentation, with well executed final outcomes. Some print outcomes were exceptional.

- This year, it became more commonplace to see 3D outcomes alongside 2D interpretations of a body of research, (although these were sometimes 'cloned' – the whole cohort presenting very similar outcomes). This is a time-effective method of delivery and is applauded.

- At best those who were not confident in their own teaching of 3D had forged links with local practitioners, for example jewellery makers, sculptors and glass artists, to help them overcome this problem.

- Most centres knew that photographic evidence of 3D work was permissible. Some had used photographs taken during the making process and of the final pieces (often mocked-up in situ) to fully inform the moderator of the quality and scale of the work.

- In the light of the difficulties some centres had delivering 3D it was disappointing that some teachers still felt a 'substantial' piece was necessary as evidence. In this situation work was often poorly finished in comparison to the level of 2D skill seen. A series of trials and maquettes could prove a more manageable way of demonstrating use of materials and techniques. The use of resistant materials for 3D was not common.

Raising Standards:

Using resistant materials seems to be the hardest approach to working in 3D for teachers with little experience. There are simple resistant materials available which do not carry the health and safety implications of stone or wood carving: soap, wax candles, green Oasis (used for live flower arranging) plaster and cuttlefish. These are all easily 'worked into' using non-specialist tools. The 2008 INSET presentation will include further details on this matter.

- 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.

Use Tools, Equipment and Technology in an Art, Craft or Design Context.

- The range in 2D was usually wide, appropriate and well understood by teachers. There was often a fine art bias which centres should seek to redress in order to fully cover the banner heading.

- Except where specialist practitioners had been invited to work with the students, the equipment and facilities used for 3D were usually general purpose and basic. At this level of qualification, this can be acceptable if ingenuity is used, and informative maquettes and successful outcomes were presented in more centres this year than last.

- With the exception of clay (most popular material for craft items) teachers often said they had little access to a wealth of vocationally-relevant resources sited within other departments in the centre.

- Modroc was once more extensively used (though rarely correctly spelt!), sometimes as a poor substitute for other 3D materials. Its inappropriate use sometimes highlighted a lack of understanding of 'others' use of materials, techniques and technology', when no explanation was given as to what a candidate's prototype structure would be made of in reality. Occasionally, however, results were impressive and well-finished.

- Health and Safety was usually evidenced in some way, although it was not always specific to individual candidates' needs. The responses ranged from teacher handouts, witness statements and written tests to student-generated PowerPoint presentations, posters and storyboards. At best, the evidence contributed to the portfolio in a design context as well as guaranteeing marks available for the necessary Health and Safety aspects.

Identify, in Writing or Visually, How Others Use Materials and Techniques

- The response to others' work in this context was stronger than for Unit 1: how others' used visual language. Unfortunately, there was still much copying from books and the internet with few bibliographies, and transcriptions which did little to inform the development of ideas in unsuitable choices of materials (e.g. Van Gogh in coloured pencils).
  However, at best candidates had responded with personal comment and empathy.

- By far the most meaningful experience was working with a practitioner, which introduced students first hand to the possibilities of various materials and techniques. A close second was a well-structured visit to an art gallery or museum. Work placements are not a requirement of this qualification, but in some instances were used to their fullest potential, for which centres are commended.

Comment on How You Have Used Materials and Techniques

- The use of materials and techniques is best recorded as a narrative of the process. This can be in a written or visual format or a combination of both. Some centres produced rough notes in sketch books; some produced photographs or excellent storyboards of step-by-step instructions using correct technical terms, but generally correct vocabulary was the exception not the rule, which led to this strand often being leniently assessed.

- The use of screen shots for recording ICT process has expanded and PowerPoint is proving a useful presentation tool for process and H&S. Both of these practices are commendable, but facilities need to be provided for moderators to easily view evidence on CD or hard drive, not in another room, or department. ICT files and folders **must** be clearly labelled.

Unit 3 (5303) - Working to Project Briefs

The theme for the 2007 Unit 3: Working to Project Briefs externally-set assignment was 'Go See!' The theme was devised specifically to incorporate readily accessible primary source material and to encourage candidates to take a fresh look at the attributes of their community and locality, by having to consider what aspects would be appealing to students visiting from around the world.

A clearly-defined vocational requirement, the series of postcards of the final outcome, was a new addition this year, in direct response to the lack of vocational consideration seen in some centres' submissions in 2006.

The Paper was generally well-received. A very few centres were confused over whether part of the fictional scenario, (the setting up of the 'Go See!' website) was, in fact, a requirement of the brief for all candidates. This was **not** stated anywhere in the Candidates' or Teachers' Paper, but those centres that contacted Edexcel for advice are applauded for their commitment to the project.

Results indicate that the paper was neither easier nor more difficult than in previous years. 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. The same mark was often arrived at for work with very different strengths and weaknesses, highlighting the flexibility of the assessment grids.

Raising Standards:

What are vocational considerations and 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 role-play the client. Rehearse working to vocational scenarios in units 1 and 2. Find opportunities (eg library, cafeteria) within the centre if real-life briefs are otherwise impracticable.

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.

Produce Work in Response to a Brief

- Most moderators reported that Unit 3 was the pinnacle of achievement and provided valuable evidence to boost the portfolio units. By far the most popular choice was the 2D fine art option, although designs for sculpture for traffic roundabouts proved a popular alternative!

Raising Standards:

Where do your centre strengths lie? Work to them. New skills do not have to be introduced in Unit 3. An option does not have to be offered to candidates if it is inappropriate for your centre.

- At best, results were impressive, with a few above the expected level of achievement for this qualification. Sometimes, however, the project got off to a strong start, but the final making process was rushed or unresolved.

- This may be due to centres' insistence on setting it as an 'exam' within the centre's recognised GCSE examination timetable.
- The externally-set assignment is **not** a timed examination. Its strength as an assessment tool lies in its flexibility. Centres are urged to reconsider this practice. Assessment strand 4, in particular, suffered as a consequence of this, as there was little time for evaluating, presenting and exhibiting work.

Raising Standards:

Centres are reminded that delivery can begin at any time after the paper is posted on the Edexcel web site in early September. A suitable time for introduction to candidates is early in term 2, so allowing teachers ample time to plan a structured delivery, incorporating relevant review points which allow for ongoing critical analysis. If teachers do not want to give up time on the GCSE Examinations timetable, they could complete all practical work before this, and use the time for a presentation as if to a client.

- Generally, success seems to have depended on the timing and preparation given. Some centres only really introduced the idea of working to a vocational brief for this unit with resulting lack of experience leading to weak planning and evaluation. Vocational projects introduced earlier prepared candidates for working to the design cycle, leading to stronger work in Unit 3.

- Where a weakness in the design cycle was seen, it could be partially attributed to a centre's reliance on methodology carried over from the Single Award GCSE: Even the fine art option, the most free option, required ongoing evaluation against the needs of the client and potential audience, and a well-targeted outcome.

- The clause within the scenario 'or one you know well' relating to location was sometimes misused, allowing tenuous links with one-off holiday destinations or well-known (as opposed to local) football teams, but it proved of great value in other cases, encompassing residential trips and candidates who lived part-time with separated parents.
  Dwelling on negative aspects of a community was also counter-productive to achieving the positive, in-depth, 'publicity' approach which was clearly requested in the brief, which most candidates achieved.

- In most cases, the theme and scenario were well considered, with visits to well-chosen sites and venues informing ideas development. Just a few centres made mistakes regarding theme, deadline and the need for the project to be discrete from the other units. A very few complained that they were unable to take candidates out for research gathering activities: The brief had made allowance for this, as school clubs and activities could be interpreted as the candidates' 'community'.

- Some interesting supplementary briefs were devised to take advantage of unique opportunities, such as linking with real-life clients or working with a local practitioner. Many centres didn't add to the externally-set brief as they considered the local interest focus was sufficient; they successfully produced an appropriate response.

Raising Standards:

A successful assignment requires substantial planning on the part of the teacher, prior to distribution to candidates, right through to the anticipation of suitable outcomes.
The teacher 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.

Meet the Constraints of a Brief, Including Time and Material Constraints

- At best, centres offered supportive structure to help all abilities achieve. This involved careful and often time-consuming planning by the staff involved, but it reaped benefits by ensuring that all aspects of the unit banner heading were well-covered. Assessment was then entirely reliant on individual candidate achievement rather than being hampered by centre deficiencies.

- In some cases, little evidence of planning was seen other than mind maps (which remained largely un-investigated) and the occasional unmonitored action plan. This has been 'flagged up' by moderators as being an area for improvement in many centres. 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 display and evaluate their work, presenting it '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.

It is realistic to expect that at least half the time given to the project will be involved with the final making process, display and evaluation. The first half should be carefully structured to allow time for gathering research, developing ideas and trialling materials and techniques. Giving candidates a pre-arranged timescale will not detract from their marks. Rather it will enable them to make the most of the allocated time and give opportunity for them to consolidate their progress at cut-off points. Encourage the more able candidates to take responsibility for own planning and monitoring of progress within the given framework. Provide suitable templates. Use the Candidate checklist - preferably as part of your tutorial/review system.

- Materials used within the qualification are becoming more exciting and were often vocationally relevant (eg increased use of canvases for paintings, manipulated photos to show sculpture in situ, etc.) Some centres were still finding it difficult, however, to offer candidates more than the most basic materials and facilities, which resulted in a dilution of the quality of work produced. This was most evident in Unit 3, the 'showcase' of the qualification.

- There was an increase in sculptural responses, usually in maquette form: These were often ambitious with strong visual impact, but it was rare to find the materials for a real-life resolution mentioned - as in a weatherproof, durable, full scale piece, which would have added to marks. Within 2D projects this was better addressed. Often students stated that a mural would have to be a certain size, how it would be weatherproofed/graffiti proofed, etc.

Raising Standards:

Centres are reminded that the Teachers' Paper clearly stated 'students should indicate how finished pieces might be produced commercially if they are not 'one-off' items, or how individual items might be produced to a high standard of finish'. This requirement carries through from year to year.

- The postcard requirement was generally highly successful. At best, results were stunning and gave style and sophistication to the work. Production methods included: Colour printouts of digital images (some laminated), commercially developed photographs backed onto card, and direct photocopies of the actual outcome. Some included descriptive text on the back, or were mocked up as actual postcards, with space for a message and address. A few centres investigated postcard design before designing their own. Teachers reported that students were delighted by the results and felt a real sense of pride.

- A very few centres failed to cover this requirement, which indicated poor time management. Some got it *slightly* wrong, producing a series as a group effort, which was deemed acceptable. Many teachers reported to moderators that they would definitely consider incorporating this requirement in their own future briefs.

Collect Primary and Secondary Source Information. Use primary and Secondary Source Material to Understand and Respond to the Brief

- Most centres took advantage of the theme to look at their local area first hand. The focus was largely literal, on interesting and unusual landmarks, architecture, etc. but some candidates managed to capture the cultural flavour of the community within their work. A few centres inventively used questionnaires to the targeted age group to determine which aspects to home in on.

- Some extremely effective photographic images of the locality were seen, largely due to the increased use of digital photography. The transcription (ie copying) of these photos, which did not move ideas forward, seemed to waste valuable time, but Photoshop was seen to be a valuable tool in layering and manipulating images and photos were often collaged, very effectively, to contribute to the range of work produced.

Raising Standards:

Centres are reminded that, just as with any other process, candidates should record each stage of the process in producing an ICT outcome.

- The increasing access to digital photography had ensured the provision of primary source research for all abilities of candidate. However, centres should be wary that direct observational studies are not neglected as a consequence.

In some centres drawing was largely absent. By contrast, where the project relied heavily on good quality drawing for primary research, it led to original and exciting outcomes.

Raising Standards:

A well-rounded submission should use drawing in various ways to create and record development of ideas. Photography is a valuable information gathering tool when drawing is not an option, but in most cases both are advantageous.

Remember, it is the collection and **use** of both primary and secondary source material that gains marks. If prescribing subject matter teachers should only select primary source material that has direct relevance and potential in idea development. When research material is selected for development, candidates should justify their decision for choice or rejection.

- Many leaflets and internet information on the locality were presented, usually with no analysis. This was a missed opportunity as they could be regarded both as sources of factual information and of examples of design layouts, produced for a target audience.

- References to a named artist/designer were often relevant as secondary sources and were used to develop ideas. Artist references, at best, involved similar subject matter to that on which the candidate was working, or included visual reference to the locality. Sometimes, a contemporary practitioner was referenced, who was contacted or even invited to the centre for a workshop activity, which was commended by moderators.

- Although very obvious choices of artist popped up time and again – prescribed 'old favourites' who had little relevance to the flavour of the locality or activity, moderators reported that a more individual choice of artist(s) was growing. However, it was still usually an **artist** who was included, very rarely **designer**, even for design-based outcomes. There was still much inappropriate biographical detail, rather than a focus on their use of visual language or materials, techniques and technology.

Raising Standards:

An original and individual response by a candidate may well include reference to others' work, but this should not **lead** the response to the brief. Rather it should inform the development of the candidate's own ideas.
There is no defined requirement in the Paper to include the work of an artist or designer. If well-used it is invaluable: but used inappropriately it leads to a mere pastiche of their work, and can even raise copyright issues.
The requirement for secondary source research material can be met in many diverse ways. Excessive written evidence is arduous for the candidate and does not gain marks. Visual interpretation always takes precedence over written.
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.

Use Tools, Equipment and Technology Safely and Effectively to Meet the Requirements of the Brief

- Where sufficient time had been allowed for the final making process the use of tools, equipment and technology was often very skilful. Murals and 3D pieces were scaled-down for practical reasons. It was rare to see the use of a recognised scale (eg 1:10) to convey actual measurement, but visual representation was usually included, sometimes to great effect.

- Often process was recorded within a written evaluation. This was problematic as it confused the real aims of that evaluation. It is more appropriate to record process earlier in the project, linking it to Health and Safety. Photographs were more in evidence this year (usually by the teacher showing the candidate working) and were briefly annotated as step-by-step instructions by the candidate. This is completely acceptable. Where candidates had videoed presentations there was substantial reference to how the work had been produced.

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. As last year, the coverage of Health and Safety varied enormously: Some of the PowerPoint presentations seen were superlative and very specific to individual candidates' work. In contrast, no coverage was seen within the project or elsewhere in the portfolio for some candidates. Between these two extremes some clear storyboard instructions combining process and Health and Safety, centre devised handouts, log books and the use of candidate-devised symbols were seen.

Display the Work

- A wide range of responses was seen, and was interpreted by moderators to include all work produced from the inception of the project. They reported instances of almost no consideration of display with loose uncollated sheets of varying sizes being presented, to carefully considered layout in sketchbooks, on design sheets, in portfolio cases and within candidate-planned exhibitions for other students and staff, parents and friends.

Raising Standards:

Some students had mounted displays for the moderator as part of the brief. It is unfortunate that as these exhibitions took place after the OPTEMS deadline they could not be allowed to influence the mark for assessment strand 4. It is recommended that centres bring forward delivery of the project, so that this can take place, and be suitably recorded, before the 15th May deadline.

- The postcard requirement added a vocational constraint, and was an opportunity for all candidates to gain marks. Most centres fulfilled this requirement. Some centres with no access to Photoshop cut and pasted work on

to a background photograph to show it in situ, and close-up shots brought detail of paintings to life. Some used it as an opportunity to show work in alternative colour ways.

Evaluate Own Response to the Brief

- Summative written evaluations are still the most popular way to cover this requirement. However, there is still a misconception in some centres, that must be remedied, that an evaluation is a narrative of the process involved, rather than an analysis of the candidate's response to the brief; the needs of the client and target audience.
  The most successful written approaches were in the form of a letter to the client or a spoof newspaper report on the candidate's work. The most basic approach was a writing frame to coax relevant observations. In some centres evaluation checklists from the Single Award qualification were being used, which explained the emphasis on use of materials, processes and the candidate's personal journey, rather than on response to the vocational brief.

Raising Standards:

Centres are urged to focus the evaluative process closely on the requirements of the vocational brief, as fully explained in the Teachers' and Candidates' Papers. Evaluation is not necessarily a summative process. It can be recorded as brief annotation at relevant stages of the brief.
From the start of the programme be definite about what you require from annotation, both in recording process and in providing critical analysis. Supply word lists and examples of good annotation. Encourage references to formal elements and the use of technical terms.

- Many students maximized mark potential by presenting work at group critiques, giving an oral evaluation of their response to the brief. Some adopted a commendable, tightly structured approach to this, constantly referring back to the brief. Presentations were recorded by means of video, stills photos, peer assessment sheets, student notes or teacher witness statements. Unfortunately, a few teacher assessors referred to presentations on the assessment grids, but had not evidenced the event in any of the above ways, jeopardising candidate marks.

Raising Standards:

Plan the presentations 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.

- The evaluative process was assisted in some cases by candidates' questionnaires or mini-interviews on the final choice of subject or layout, aimed at the target age group. This imitates market research in the real world, and is encouraged.

- The Candidate Checklist, supplied in the Candidates' Paper, was usually absent from portfolios. Next year this checklist (or a suitable alternative) will become a formal requirement of the project.

Assessment

- In a few cases the assessment grid front sheets (portfolio index sheets) were well used and aided the moderation process greatly.

- Assessment grid annotation was often helpful in the location of evidence. However, the grids were not as well used as last year, often with just the marks entered. Many teachers have cited lack of time given over to assessment for this omission.

Conclusion

Good practice was well evidenced this year. Teachers 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.
Shortcomings were seen in a minority of centres. Most can congratulate themselves on the delivery of a successful programme.

The growing use of local practitioners to lead workshop activities is commendable. Centres that have not yet 'taken the plunge' are urged to make contact with local practitioners. Teachers have found that the organisation needed is well rewarded by the enthusiastic candidate response and greater understanding of the difficulties and delights of professional practice.

Those who invested a substantial amount of time and energy in the Unit 3: Working to Project Briefs assignment, benefited from the wealth and quality of evidence that could be cross-referenced back to Unit 1 and Unit 2. Centres are urged to consider alternatives to the 'exam' situation, to make the most of the opportunities this unit offers.

General Information

A programme of INSET meetings in London plus other regional, centre and consortia-based INSET activities were planned for the GCSE in Applied Art and Design during the last year, to cover aspects such as curriculum planning, assignment writing, preparation for the externally-set assignment, assessment, and feedback on the previous moderation series.

Attendance at these events was sometimes disappointing. Teachers reported difficulties in obtaining cover to attend INSET events. Some applied to attend at the last minute, only to find the event had been cancelled due to lack of demand.
Edexcel has given careful consideration to these problems. In response, INSET in the coming year will comprise of one event only, removing the need to select the subject matter most relevant to a centres' needs. Delegates will be asked to choose which issues are discussed at the start of the full-day event. At the end of the day each will receive a CD which deals comprehensively with major aspects of delivery. It will therefore be suitable for both new and established programmes and teachers.

The INSET CD will also be available at customised INSET events, (for individual centres or consortia) which will be held at suitably located centres.
Centres are requested to contact Edexcel if they wish to host such an event. The Chief Examiner will assist in its planning and realisation.

Last year, a 'CD to Centres' containing portfolio samples, plus commentaries on content and assessment, was issued to every centre registered for the qualification. For the second year running a DfES-funded DVD of contemporary practitioners working within centres was also issued. These 2 DVDs contain a total of 4 case studies of artists and designers. If a centre is unable to forge its own links with practitioners they provide a valuable alternative, to use within projects.

Throughout the year the general Edexcel website carried a Specification addendum, details of INSET, revised assessment grids and the 2006 Chief Examiner's report. This practice will continue.

There has also been an exciting development for Art and Design teachers within the Edexcel website. On visiting the homepage of www.edexcel.org.uk teachers can select 'Art and Design' from the drop down menu of Edexcel websites (top left hand corner): They can then register for email alerts every time a new entry is added to this micro-site. It is hoped to build on the informative content during the coming year.

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