Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE in Applied Art and Design (2301)

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Introduction

The Examiners' Report is an amalgam of moderators' summative reports, including the views of the Principal Moderator, the Chief Examiner and the Chair of Examiners. 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 responses shown by centres have varied enormously. Strengths in some centres are areas for improvement in others, and *vice versa*.

Teacher-assessors should evaluate their own performance against each point raised in the report, highlighting areas for improvement in their centres.

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

General information

All units in the qualification were centre-assessed and the marks were moderated by Edexcel's visiting Moderators, who based their decisions on the marks given for a sample of student portfolios from each centre.

Two Edexcel INSET meetings in London plus DCSF-funded centre and consortia-based INSET activities took place 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.

Participants in every event received a CD dealing comprehensively with **all** major aspects of delivery, suitable for both new and established programmes and teachers.

Throughout the year the Edexcel website carried a Specification addendum, details of INSET, revised assessment grids and the 2007 Examiners' report.

On visiting the homepage of www.edexcel.org.uk teachers can now access the 'Ask the Expert' scheme, where by they can email their queries and problems direct to the Chief Examiner, receiving an answer within 48 hours.

A 'CD to Centres' containing portfolio samples, plus commentaries on content and assessment, was issued to every centre registered for the qualification. For the third year running a new DVD on the work of contemporary practitioners was also issued. This year, case studies of a jeweller, a ceramics company and a graphic design/multimedia partnership were featured. If a centre is unable to forge its own links with practitioners the DVD provides a valuable alternative. Teachers who have not received their copy should contact the Chief Examiner, via the 'Ask the Expert' scheme.

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 normal (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 to focus on available resources and centre strengths. Evidence from Unit 3 will normally 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 can be very significant and justifies allocating the project **more time than the required minimum of 30 hours**. Given that Unit 3 carries the same mark potential as Units 1 and 2, it is only reasonable that a very substantial amount of time should be dedicated to it. 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

As for last year, moderators had been instructed that the absence of 3D work in Units 1 and 2 should not result in withholding 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 and a lack of 2D work).
A similar ruling was applied to a lack of relevant primary-sourced research. The latter, this year, was almost unheard of, thanks to the easy availability of primary sources for the Unit 3 *'Totally Trees'* project.
Also within the *'Totally Trees'* project, the absence of the specific vocational requirement, the A2 presentation sheet, (or a digital equivalent) precluded candidates from achieving in Mark Band 3 for assessment strand 4.

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 is gaining in popularity.
Authentication Forms must be signed by all candidates. Missing signatures caused a problem in only a few centres, and these were as likely to be the teacher's as the candidate's.

The continued practice of showing asterisks on the OPTEMS sheets to select random candidates, whose work was required for the moderation sample, gave little problem. As the system for moderation of the Applied programme is different from that for the Single award (in that the portfolios are viewed holistically for Units 1 and 2), this included a requirement for the whole portfolio to be presented for every candidate asterisked – even if they were nominated for only one unit.

5303 (Unit 3): Working to Project Briefs

- The theme for the 2008 Unit 3: Working to Project Briefs externally-set assignment was *'Totally Trees'.* The theme and scenario were chosen primarily to facilitate easy access to primary source research material, as this has been a major deficiency in previous responses to Unit 3 papers.
- The options within the briefs were formulated to cover all major areas of expertise within centres.

- The title *'Totally Trees'* was chosen as being fairly 'obscure', to limit direct gathering of material from the internet. Indiscriminate collection of printouts has been a problem in past years. The theme was coupled with a very clear, literal scenario based on The Timber Commission's aspirations for several regional recreational centres for the general public across the country.
- Following the success of the postcard requirement last year, a clearly-defined vocational requirement, the presentation of attributes of the final outcome on an A2 sheet, (or digital equivalent) was intended to replicate the uniform submission of ideas a client may ask for and to support centres in their achievement of professionally viable submissions.
- The Paper was generally well-received.
- Performance in the *'Totally Trees'* project was very slightly stronger than last year's Unit 3. Ease of access to relevant sources was a major contributor to this, although other factors were seen that restricted mark potential, such as a poor response in some centres to the requirement for the A2 presentation sheet. These factors tended to balance each other out, and a strong parity with performance on last year's grade boundaries was observed.
- 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 (e.g. 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.

Unit 3 Assessment Evidence:

Produce work in response to a brief

- Many moderators thought the Unit 3 project *'Totally Trees'* was the pinnacle of achievement in most portfolios. They reported that it was the most mature work and provided valuable evidence towards Units 1 and 2. The substantial body of work generated in some centres could have provided most evidence for all 3 units.
- 'Rehearsals' for Unit 3, in the form of vocational projects (sometimes past Papers) were seen in portfolios. Centres usually worked to their strengths. Many centres invested time and effort into making Unit 3 successful. Some centres, however, used previously untried materials and techniques, to boost the range for Units 1 and 2, running the risk of less skilful responses. For instance, in some cases *'Totally Trees'* contributed the only 3D work in the portfolio.

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. Distribute the Paper in its entirety to candidates, but explain why your centre is not able to offer, e.g. the graphic design option, (lack of specialist staffing, lack of IT resources, and so on).

- Most centres are now aware for the need for advance planning and adequate delivery time for the Unit 3 project. The 30 hour minimum is now treated exactly as that. However, it is still disappointing to see the insistence on setting a final 'exam' in centres. This tends to be 10 hours maximum, insufficient for the final making process, which deserves approximately half the delivery time to ensure an unhurried and skilful resolution.

- It must be stressed that 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, may suffer as a consequence of this, with little time for evaluating, presenting and exhibiting work.
- It cannot be stressed too strongly that success in this unit depends greatly on the approach taken by teachers delivering the project. Where the Paper had not been thoroughly read and analysed prior to distribution to candidates, or where a pared-down version had been issued without the consultation and negotiation requested, deficiencies were likely to occur in the candidate response. A prime example of this was the response to the requirement for the A2 presentation sheet. Next year's Paper will include a similar specific requirement. Careful vocational consideration will be required.

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 or imaginative evaluation presentation.

- Overall, the response to the theme seemed stronger than last year (*Go See!*), simply because interpretation could be so literal. Centres seemed more committed to producing a cohesive 'final major project'. Many teachers said that they found the theme accessible and appealing, and the Paper clearly worded. They found primary research, an essential element of the response for Assessment Strand 1, easy to source and utilise. Some centres enlisted the help of a practitioner to work with the candidates, inspiring a strong response.
- A few teachers said the theme was boring: In the commercial world practitioners often have to work on projects outside their own realms of interest. Some teachers did not read, or misread requirements which were clearly listed. Some admitted 'skimming' the Paper. This led to candidates being penalised for the teachers' misinterpretation. In a few centres the project was rushed and relied upon 'obvious' sources of inspiration. Staffing problems were often cited in these cases. These centres did not score so highly, giving rise to a span of marks across the range.
- Some centres investigated and produced more than one outcome within the art, craft or design contexts (e.g. 2D mural <u>and</u> 3D sculpture in fine art) in order to access Mark Band 3; a 'wide range' of work produced. In the time available this often diluted the focus and arguably the quality of the work. Even when it had not, it was often not made clear which of the options had been chosen as the final outcome. This <u>must</u> be made obvious. Ongoing critical analysis should result in the rejection of all but one possibility and the further development of the chosen option to bring the brief to its full resolution.
- In extreme cases, **teachers had taken the word 'brief' to encompass the whole Paper, rather than a chosen option**. The contexts of art AND craft AND (not or) design were investigated, resulting, certainly, in a wide range of work. This, however, does not represent vocational practice and so was not what was intended in the Paper. It MUST be dissuaded in the future.

*Raising standards: Consider in advance how **a wide range of work can be generated within one chosen option: Each stage of the project can contribute**.*
The collection of primary and secondary source material can employ visual rather than written mind-maps and culminate in the design of annotated mood boards.

The development of ideas from this information should not be linear. Candidates should be encouraged to investigate several ideas, with drawing/maquette-making used as applicable to show the development of ideas, using sketch books and design sheets.
Rather than a basic log, Health and Safety can be recorded in the form of a storyboard, as candidate-devised symbols, or even as a PowerPoint presentation. The making process can be recorded as annotated photographs.

The final outcome, once made, should be mocked up in situ for added effect, and a final evaluative presentation made as if to the client, either orally or written. Written evaluation could be in the form of a letter to the client, or publicity material.
All these aspects will contribute to 'a wide range' of work.

- Fine art was once again the most popular option, often with success. Practical skills in fine art were often indicative of Mark Band 3, but it was the adherence to the brief that differentiated between grades. For example, the link between candidates' paintings and their use either as designs for murals or to sell in the Visitor Centres gift shops needed to be specified and resolved to maximise mark potential.
- The graphic design option brought variable results. Where teachers were not specialists, the response did not have the discipline, especially in typography, commensurate with this level of qualification.
- Adherence to the Paper in assessment strand 4 had a huge bearing on the success of submissions. (Moderators had been directed that no A2 presentation sheet, a specific vocational requirement of the brief, should preclude marks in MB3 for that strand.)
- Timing and preparation varied considerably. The Paper was released on Sept. 1st, yet some teachers failed to grasp the potential of seasonal changes, and many responses were Winter-themed, as most centres started delivery after the New Year. It would have been perfectly acceptable to work on a mini research project in the Autumn, then leave the brief for other work, then return to it in the New Year. The more committed candidates could have gone on adding their independently sourced material.
- Few supplementary briefs were seen this year. On occasion they would have helped provide focus for candidate 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. These centres are commended.
- 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 year after year 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 interim 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 often vocationally relevant (e.g. increased use of canvases for paintings, manipulated photos

to show sculpture in situ, etc.) However, 3D skills were often embryonic compared to 2D and it was rare to find the materials for a real-life sculpture mentioned.

Raising Standards: Centres are reminded that the Teachers' Paper clearly stated 'candidates 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.

- There was an increased and more purposeful use of ICT, especially in relation to digital photography, and less indiscriminate collection of internet references. (An internet list of contemporary references was issued to aid research; look out for the same next year.)
- The requirement for the A2 presentation sheet (or digital equivalent) was met with wide range of responses, comparable with that for last year's requirement for a series of postcards. At best, the response was superlative, at worst it was not done at all, or the wrong size, or without annotation. **This was the most common barrier to Mark Band 3 achievement in assessment strand 4.** Where it had been done well, it enabled candidates of all abilities to achieve well in this strand.
- **Unfortunately achievement was as dependent on the delivery of the project as on candidate ability.** A few teachers claimed not to know of requirement for presentation sheet; some admitted they hadn't bothered with this part of the Paper, indicating poor time management, or careless scrutiny of the Paper.

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

- More centres started the brief with a visit; to a local stately home, arboretum, park, or nearby countryside. Those that didn't often only had to look out of the art room windows. Leaves and twigs were collected, frottage, and direct observational studies undertaken. It must be said that responses from a few centres were trite and commonplace. Little consideration of anything except leaf shapes and tree silhouettes, with the natural growth of trees poorly observed in lower marked work. Fortunately these were balanced by some exceptional work seen at the top of the mark scale. Although visits were often undertaken and good use was made in sourcing tree references, the business aims and organisation of the establishments visited were rarely analysed to inform the scenario of the Paper.
- Some excellent photographic images, usually digital, supplemented observational drawing and seem to have given candidates confidence and freedom in recording images. These were often manipulated for effect and used, e.g. in tee-shirt design. Photos and internet printouts were often collaged, sometimes effectively, to contribute to the range of work produced. However, the transcription of photos, which did not move ideas forward, and therefore wasted valuable time, was still in evidence this year.

Raising Standards: Centres are reminded that digital photography should not be regarded as a replacement for observational drawing, but rather as an additional method of recording information.
Candidates should record each stage of the process in creating an ICT outcome just as with any other process.

- The heavy reliance on secondary sources seen in previous years was reduced this year. A good primary/secondary balance was often evident. Artist/designer references were relevant and used to develop ideas. Goldsworthy and Klimt seemed to be this year's favourites. Although obvious, these were often well used.
- Sometimes, a local artist, who could be contacted or invited into the centre, was referenced. Individual choice of craft workers is growing. Some superb examples of craftwork were seen, e.g. using glass, in liaison with local practitioners.
- References to the Green Man, Tree of Life, and so on, were seen to extend lateral thinking. Teachers praised the internet research list posted on website.

*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 can be invaluable: but used inappropriately it leads to 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. 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 project.

- Design-based outcomes, and references to designers, were still very much in the minority.
- In a few centres there was a considerable amount of irrelevant source information, branching out into food (for the restaurant), etc.

*Raising Standards: 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.*

Use tools, equipment and technology safely and effectively to meet the requirements of the brief

- Safety was recorded in only about half of the centres, restricting the mark in assessment strand 2 if information relevant to techniques used could not be found elsewhere within the portfolio.
- 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 (e.g. 1:10) to convey actual measurement, but visual representation was usually included, sometimes to good 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. Combine with safe practice, an important vocational consideration. PowerPoint presentations, specific to individual candidates' work, are adventurous and ideal. Storyboard instructions combining process with Health and Safety; centre devised gapped-handouts, log books and candidate-devised symbols are all relevant.

Display the work
- Some superb presentation was seen: crisp, clean, and very professional. However, a few centres did not realise the importance of display right from the inception of the project, in sketchbooks and on sheets.
- The A2 presentation sheet requirement was an opportunity to gain marks regardless of quality of the actual work produced. Where presentation skills had been taught, and the vocational purpose identified, the sheets were attractive and meaningful. Candidates modelled tee-shirts, bags etc. for photos, to bring interest to the sheets.

- Some centres with no access to PhotoShop-type image-manipulation software cut and pasted work on to a background to show it in situ, as requested. Generally computer facilities were better and more accessible.
- Some candidates had mounted exhibitions for other students and staff, a few had held an open evening for parents and friends. Many videoed final presentations to the peer group.

Raising Standards: Some candidates 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 display and exhibition can take place, and be suitably assessed and recorded, before the 15th May deadline.

- The requirement for an A2 presentation sheet showing finished work added a vocational constraint, to represent what a client may ask of practitioners responding to the brief. It was a major opportunity for all candidates to gain marks. Most centres fulfilled this requirement, but inaccuracies were seen in the content and size of sheet in some centres. Those centres that missed the requirement and did not present the sheet as part of the range of work produced were duly penalised.

Evaluate own response to the brief

- The misconception that an evaluation is a narrative of the process involved is being corrected in many centres, especially those who have received INSET. Written evaluations still the most popular, but more reference to the requirements of the brief is being included.
- Interesting approaches observed included a letter to the client or spoof newspaper/magazine reports.
- Some candidates had presented work at group critiques. The recording of this varied from lengthy video tapes or stills photos to peer assessment sheets, student notes or teacher witness statements, or was non-existent, jeopardising candidate marks.
- The A2 presentation sheet had evaluative value as it focussed on the attributes of the final outcome.

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 solely 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.

- The Candidate Checklist, supplied in the Candidates' Paper, was often absent from portfolios. This checklist (or a suitable alternative) is a formal requirement of the project.

Assessment

- Assessment of Unit 3 was judged most often to be accurate to slightly lenient. Sometimes it was significantly lenient. If so, (refer to your moderator report) teacher-assessors are urged to seek guidance from Edexcel before the next moderation series.
- Generally assessment was consistent across the moderation sample, although leniency was sometimes more pronounced at the top end of the marks scale.
- In some cases the assessment grid front sheets (portfolio index sheets) were well used and aided the moderation process greatly.
- Assessment grid annotation was often informative and helpful in the location of evidence. Some grids had obviously been used as aids to formative assessment, which is

recommended practice. However, some were hastily completed, with just the scores and no comment to justify decisions to the assessor themselves, their teaching team and the moderator.

5301 (Unit 1): 2D and 3D visual language

Some centres have been running this programme since its inception in 2002 and have settled into a successful pattern of delivery. Much good practice is seen in the range of evidence generated, in particular:

- Skills-building workshops to extend the portfolio of skills and approaches
- Well written projects and activities with outcomes across several disciplines and opportunities for differentiation.
- The provision of trips to galleries and museums (both local and national) to inform research.
- Involvement of professional practitioners
- The constructive use of ICT as a 'directed' tool.

However, there are deficiencies in the range in some centres:
- A fine art bias at the expense of craft and design intentions and applications. A close similarity to Single Award approach is sometimes noted, with themes investigated rather than definite vocational projects. Artist influences can often seem to be merely pastiche.
- A 2D bias, with formal elements for 2D being introduced and investigated in some depth, with experiments, exercises and labelling using appropriate vocabulary; but in 3D applications scant attention to formal elements, and work of a much lower standard.
- Low relief work is often interpreted as 3D, possibly because it is easier to handle than true 'work in the round'. Also observed; the 2D use of materials that are associated with 3D, such as clay for plaques, etc. In some cases garment designs are submitted as 3D, where in fact the only design consideration given to them is that of the 2D decoration, not how they interact with the human form.
- Often, after a strong induction to the formal elements, they are put to one side and rarely referred to again, instead of becoming an indispensable and natural part of the vocabulary. Influence is then mainly visual and sometimes tenuous.
- 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.

Unit 1 Assessment Evidence

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

- Digital photography is fast becoming accepted method of gathering primary source evidence. Sometimes the mass of photos can be overwhelming, both to candidate and moderator. A process of selection and discrimination is necessary.

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.)

- 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.

- Primary sources were more in evidence this year because of Unit 3. However, the <u>use</u> to which both primary and secondary sources are put in the development of ideas was still lacking in many portfolios. The collection of sources was sometimes treated almost as a discrete activity that could be discarded once done.
- Secondary-sourced images from the internet were commonly seen. 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.

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.

Use combinations of formal elements, mark-making and object-making and use drawing to develop ideas and intentions
- Drawing was often well employed in mark-making exercises and observational studies (still life, portraiture) to increase skills and sometimes for meaningful research.
- Range of abilities in drawing, especially from observation, was extremely wide, sometimes below the level commensurate with the level of qualification, and encouragingly, occasionally above.
- Drawing as a design communication tool seemed not to be taught widely. Few instances of technical drawing and other graphic visualisations to inform 3D design development were seen. Storyboard techniques to describe process are increasing, however.
- A wealth of 2D materials was used to explore mark-making. Both dry and wet media were utilised to varying levels of achievement.
- The increase in 3D evidence seen last year, as centres made every effort to achieve a balance with 2D exploration, seems to have slumped this year, with many moderators reporting an imbalance. The evidence was usually in non-resistant materials such as clay, papier-mâché or mod-roc. Cutting, carving and construction techniques and the identification of the 3D formal elements generally, were largely neglected.

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. 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. Ensure that the banners of Units 1 and 2 are covered by your particular combination of projects and activities.

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

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

Identify formal elements, and techniques used in work candidates have studied and describe how others have used visual language

- Assessment Strand 3: Others' use of visual language, for Unit 1, was usually much better addressed than the equivalent Strand in Unit 2: Others' use of materials, techniques and technology. References to the work of others were widespread and often appropriate; but in many cases have again suffered from problems noted in previous years, namely:

  - fine-art focused

  - historical and often hackneyed references rather than accessible contemporary practitioners' work. (Some centres do forge strong links with local practitioners. Practical response usually strong and inspired, process recorded well, but poor in terms of visual language.)

  - much irrelevant biographical detail

  - direct copying from the internet and books

  - failure to analyse visual language in others' work

  - a 'contextual studies' approach, where 'artists' are seen as sources for pastiche, or direct copying

  - lack of imagination in the choice of sources or presentation of findings

- Centres are reminded that although leniency is allowed in candidates' spelling generally, care MUST be taken to identify and spell technical terms correctly (e.g. perspective, not prospective).

- 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, are becoming more popular and reaping rewards. Recording of these varied from witness statements by teachers, notes/photos by candidates, 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, 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 elements such as form, structure, balance, rhythm, flow, texture, volume and mass to produce work 'in the round'.

- 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 how visual language has developed candidates' ideas

- Refinement of ideas in the final stages of a project were often not given due consideration.

- 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 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.

Assessment

- Assessment of this unit was often seen to be accurate to slightly lenient, sometimes significantly lenient, but rarely severe.

5302 (Unit 2): Materials, techniques and technology

Unit 2 Assessment Evidence

Explore 2D and 3D materials
Produce responses and ideas in a range of media

- There is still room for improvement in the 2D/3D balance: centres were becoming more adventurous, introducing digital photography and film making, PowerPoint presentations, PhotoShop-type image manipulation and glass techniques to extend the range and to enthuse candidates, but experiments, in resistant materials especially, were often lacking.

- Vocationally, the use of computers is essential in many applications of art and design. Fortunately this is now being realised in many centres with an input of funds to increase facilities.

- In 2D contexts, especially fine art, there was often creative and extensive media experimentation, with well-executed final outcomes. Some print outcomes were exceptionally good, whereas others were below the level of expectation for this qualification, diluting the quality of the portfolios.

- 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.

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.

- 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 seen in centres.
- 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.
- The inappropriate use of materials 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, well finished and well justified.
- Health and Safety was usually evidenced in some way, although it was not always specific to individual candidates' needs, which rendered it of little practical value. 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 consideration of safe practice.

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

- This presents a very straightforward means of gaining marks: simply by recording the materials, tools and technology used by others, candidates can easily meet the evidence requirements. Sadly, this seems to be beyond many centres. There is plenty of material on the above-mentioned DVD which can provide candidates with information about the materials and tools used by practitioners.
- 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 understanding.
- 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 involved. 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, sample boards or excellent storyboards of step-by-step instructions using correct technical terms. Generally, correct vocabulary was the exception, not the rule, which led to Strand 4 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.

Assessment

- Assessment for the unit was largely reported to be accurate and consistent, or with a slight leniency.

Conclusion

Good practice was once again well evidenced this year. This qualification has now reached the stage where teachers have responded to previous moderation reports to remedy deficiencies in their provision and have built upon their strengths and specialist areas to maximise potential. However, a degree of apathy is seen in some centres, where reports raise awareness of the same deficiencies year after year. Teacher-assessors must realise that this is a barrier to candidates realising their full potential and reflects upon delivery as much as the ability of the candidates.

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.

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.

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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