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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Art and Design (Fine Art)

Externally Set Task 42022

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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GCSE Art and Design (4201-4207, 4211)

General Report (for information specific to 42022 see page 7)

In this transition year from Legacy to the New Specification, moderators have seen only a very limited number of New Specification entries. These, in the main, have been for Art and Design Short Course (4211) as certification is available in 2010. Very few centres entered candidates for Full Course units. However, the overall atmosphere is one of anticipation and eagerness for 2011 (with possibly a little apprehension about the new marking criteria and revised Assessment Objectives) when all candidates will be entered for the New Specification.

Discussions with teachers at moderation visits and area moderation meetings during June, indicate that the opportunities opened up to centres with regard to the flexibility of Unit 1 Portfolio of Work, and the removal of the set four week preparatory period for Unit 2 Externally Set Task have been warmly welcomed. Some teachers have stated that they intend to keep the best practice of their existing course model, whilst exploiting opportunities for their candidates to gain experiences of workshops and one-off activities. For example the intention is to allow time for focused drawing sessions as an end in themselves. Experimentation and learning by 'what happens if' sessions, and opportunities to experience art for its own sake without needing to fully justify its place within a project or assignment. The necessity for candidates to select and present work for moderation (under the guidance of their teachers) is also welcomed as a way of giving them more ownership and responsibility for ensuring that they have evidenced all four Assessment Objectives in both units. Some teachers said that they had piloted this idea already this year, and were pleased with the results. Others confirmed that they viewed the New Specification as an opportunity to plan afresh with the aim of developing more open-ended projects and increasing opportunities for greater self-direction. Teachers have also welcomed the opportunity to ensure continued vocational experiences for candidates through the single award Applied endorsement. Some centres have indicated that they will enter their candidates for two endorsements to allow them to gain two GCSE qualifications in Art and Design.

Teacher Standardisation Meetings

Attendance at Teacher Standardisation Meetings was reported to be an excellent and valuable training experience that provides teachers an opportunity to see work from all the endorsements, and to view alternative approaches to both Portfolio of Work and Externally Set Task requirements. The meetings also provide an opportunity to meet fellow teachers and talk to senior AQA examiners. 'Reminder Notes' are available on the website after the last meeting, act as a welcomed resource and are widely used as an aide-memoire when assessing candidates work in centres. Teachers' feedback has suggested that the sets of work used in the 2010 series of meetings were "excellent" and "possibly the best ever".

The main areas of concern raised at Teacher Standardisation and at moderation this year were with regard to 'interpretation' of the New Specification requirements. Some teachers were particularly concerned about how much 'help' or 'feedback' they can give to candidates during the course. Their fears were allayed by the response that as part of the taught course teachers will 'teach' techniques, provide feedback and advice and assess and monitor work in accordance with centre policy and the Specification. Assistance that is given to individual candidates over and above this will continue to be documented (as in the Legacy Specification) on the Candidate Record Form. In this way, teachers can be secure in the knowledge that what is submitted for assessment is the candidate's own work. In addition, the recommendation that candidates submit approximately 45 hours worth of work for their Portfolio of Work submission was explained as guidance to give teachers and candidates the opportunity to select work for

final marking from that produced during the course, rather than as a requirement to monitor or record the hours and minutes spent on the Portfolio. Fears, therefore, that candidates may have to somehow restrict work evidenced in sketchbooks to reflect the time limit, or only work on loose sheets to allow for the selection process to take place are totally unfounded.

Administration

With a few exceptions, centres met the deadline of 31 May for sending Centre Mark Forms to both AQA and to the moderator. This is very important as late receipt of marks leads to a delay in centres receiving notification of the sample from the moderator and possibly little time to prepare for the visit.

Administration by centres was reported as being generally very good. Exceptions were found in centres working on more than one site, or where there had been changes of teaching or administrative personnel. Few serious errors were noted, however, and accurate marks were recorded on both Centre Mark Forms and on the Candidate Record Forms attached to Unit 1 Portfolio of Work and Unit 2 Externally Set Task samples. It is essential that centres double check candidate marks when entering them on to the forms, to ensure that candidates receive accurate results.

At Teacher Standardisation Meetings, centres are reminded of the deadline for submitting estimated and final entries to AQA and procedures for completing paperwork important to the examination process. It is vital that teachers keep a check on these deadlines to ensure that the procedures are followed. This will be particularly important in the coming year since late estimated entries could result in question papers not being received by centres in December in readiness for possible distribution from early January.

It is important for centres to ensure that they send both pink and yellow copies of Centre Mark Forms to the allocated moderator which is vital for samples to be selected for moderation and for the yellow copy to be returned speedily to the centre. Centres should also ensure that EDI printouts contain centre names and numbers. Using recorded delivery or incorrect postage, however, will cause delays in the process.

Candidate Record Forms were reported to have been signed by candidates and teachers, but there appeared to be few examples of the ‘Supporting Information’ box being completed. This is an opportunity for teachers to explain the marks awarded and to expand on information about candidates’ work and any additional assistance given.

Subject Advisers will still be allocated for the New Specification to assist centres with advice on course related queries. The procedures for this will change slightly, but centres will be informed by AQA in the Autumn Term of who to contact and how to contact them. Centres can also contact the AQA Art subject office or access frequently asked questions and submit questions via Ask AQA.

Assessment and Moderation

Accurate teacher assessment is dependent on a number of factors. Internal standardisation and cross moderation between teachers in a centre is vital when a number of people teach the same endorsement. This is a *Code of Practice* requirement and centres must complete a Centre Declaration Sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place. Similarly it is essential that reference is made to the full version of the assessment criteria grid as detailed in the Specification and that these are accurately applied in respect of both Portfolio of Work and

Externally Set Task submissions. This is where the line between achievement and attainment is made and it ensures that parity of marking takes place.

The use of the guiding words of ‘Just’, ‘Adequate’, ‘Clear’ and ‘Convincing’ should provide extra help when determining exactly where to award the correct mark and to discriminate when awarding marks across the Assessment Objectives based on the evidence provided in the candidate’s submission.

Conditions for moderation visits were deemed to be generally good to excellent this year, indicating that centres are well aware of the requirement for quiet and uninterrupted surroundings for this important, confidential process to take place. From 2011 centres will continue to be given the choice to select either area or visiting moderation. Centres will be asked to register their request for area moderation in the autumn term.

Mounted exhibitions or carefully labelled folders are both equally effective in ensuring that candidate submissions can be viewed. Work was generally well labelled, easily accessible and well organised to allow for effective and thorough moderation to take place. It is important that work is divided into the separate units to ensure that there is no ambiguity within Unit 1 and Unit 2 submissions.

Unit 1 Portfolio of Work

With very few exceptions, the Short Course entries this year were either from centres that teach candidates out of school (in units dedicated to specific learning or behavioural difficulties) or from Year 9 students in main stream education who have been fast-tracked to attain GCSE qualification. In addition to this, due to the fact that candidates could only claim certification in 4211 Short Course, entry numbers were very limited for the Full Course units. Some candidates were entered for one of the two Full Course units, but this was a rare occurrence.

Since the majority of entries this year were for the Short Course (42111), most of the work seen comprised one project, usually from a starting point suitable for, and accessible to, candidates of all abilities such as ‘Cakes’ or ‘Identity’. Sources used by candidates rarely appeared to move beyond examples of art, craft and design work, their own cultures and the world around them, although there is now the opportunity to investigate a much wider range of sources (Assessment Objective 1). Moderators reported that well designed projects gave candidates of all abilities the best opportunities to fulfil the course requirements. Candidates must also recognise the need to evidence all stages of their creative journey whether they have followed a linear or non-linear route when addressing the Assessment Objectives as determined by their course of study.

Within Portfolio of Work submissions, the use of sketchbooks, journals or ideas books was seen to fall into two areas; those that had been used as a means of recording ideas and findings, samples, techniques, journeys of exploration and design ideas, and those that were predominantly scrap books of magazine cuttings and downloaded information that did not inform or support the candidate’s work. Some candidates presented their work as mounted boards where work was selected from both sketchbooks and loose sheets, but other submissions showed no evidence of any selection having taken place, and in some cases moderators saw Portfolios full of multiple photocopies and repeated downloaded images. Vital evidence of attainment may not, in such instances, be obvious.

Unit 2 Externally Set Task

The question papers this year generated enthusiastic responses where topics covered provided opportunities for candidates of all abilities. As is advised in the rubric to the question paper, most candidates had clearly discussed their ideas with their teachers before deciding on their starting point. Some centres had provided support to their candidates by way of PowerPoint displays and additional material to accompany the question papers. In the best instances, this allowed candidates to develop personal responses that reflected their own interests and ideas. In some cases, however, candidates produced very similar or almost identical work which runs contrary to the 'independent' work requirement. Moderators reported that some centres had directed candidates to one or two questions restricting their choice. Teachers will consider the accessibility of resources, availability of materials and candidates' skills and experience, but it must be noted that all candidates should have access to the published question paper in its entirety. It is essential that this requirement is adhered to.

Assessment Objectives

Candidates are expected to demonstrate a response to all four Assessment Objectives in both Unit 1 and Unit 2, but these can be evidenced in any appropriate manner. The Teacher Resource Bank document 'Interpreting the Assessment Objectives' is available from the AQA website to assist teachers.

Assessment Objective 1

Work presented under this objective showed that some candidates had benefited from opportunities to handle a range of materials with which to explore their ideas, evidencing a 'journey' of development. It was predominantly the work of familiar and easily accessible artists and designers that provided the context for much of the work seen. Some candidates used their own cultures and popular culture to source their ideas, but moderators reported that few examples were seen where candidates had explored a wider range of sources. The use of search engines on the Internet is now widely used to access sources, but candidates must show how they have processed and applied the information accessed. Simply finding the materials and including it as part of a submission is not sufficient to demonstrate development of ideas and analytical and cultural understanding.

Assessment Objective 2

Moderators reported that in many cases there was little evidence of candidates refining ideas and the submissions seen showed more evidence of one-off responses than an in-depth developmental journey showing selection and rejection of ideas. Some of this was believed to be the result of candidates working in a very limited time frame.

Assessment Objective 3

The increasing prominence of the use of digital cameras as a tool for recording has been welcomed by many and has been used effectively for a variety of purposes. In the same way that drawing and sketching are judged for their appropriateness and level of competence, the quality of these images must be considered when awarding marks in relation to the assessment criteria. Annotation was seen to have been used with a degree of success in some submissions where candidates had recorded their thoughts and findings as their project progressed.

Assessment Objective 4

Moderators reported that the most effective personal responses were presented by candidates who had undertaken a developmental journey taking into account Assessment Objective requirements. Some presented finished pieces in a range of styles, sizes and media showing informed links with selected sources. For some candidates the 'outcome' was the most important part of the process and showed real engagement with media. For others, responses were merely pastiches of the work of others. It is important that candidates' responses are enriched rather than restricted by engagement with the sources they access and that critical understanding is embedded in the progress of their work as it develops.

Fine Art 4202

A small number of centres opted to enter candidates for Unit 2 of the New Specification, the Externally Set Task. Moderators reported that centres had chosen to take advantage of the unlimited preparation time available under the New Specification for this unit by distributing the question paper in January, with the ten hour period of sustained focus study taking place in May. It was clear that some candidates had benefited from the longer preparation period, with evidence that they had taken advantage of the extra time to develop ideas and experiment with media resulting in detailed personal research into sources. However, the work of the lower attaining candidates suggested that they had lost momentum during the preparatory period, resulting in a considerable amount of repetition.

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Question 3, 'Image and Text', Question 4, 'Ceremonies' and Question 6 'Layers' seemed to be the more popular questions on the Fine Art question paper.

In response to 'Image and Text,' some candidates referenced the work of the named artists, Barbara Kruger and Tom Phillips whilst others researched the use of image and text in Banksy's work as well as the political cartoons of Gerald Scarfe. Personal responses included self-portraits combining words cut out from magazines and fantasy style creatures in the style of Scarfe.

Some candidates responded to 'Ceremonies' by using images of traditional objects from their own cultural backgrounds as a starting point and manipulated photographs as a basis for a painted personal outcome.

Where the starting point 'Layers' was attempted, candidates had clearly spent considerable time exploring a variety of media and textures that could be used to create different layers, using photography to modify and refine ideas when realising intentions.

Responses to Question 7, 'My World' included reference to the work of Andy Warhol and candidates produced paintings in a Pop Art style, drawing from different aspects of their own world.

Mark ranges and award of grades

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