



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Art and Design – Textile Design                      42041**

**(Specification 4204)**

**Unit 1 : Portfolio of Work**

***Report on*** the Examination

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## **GCSE Art and Design (4201-4207, 4211)**

### **General**

This was the first year candidates could enter for both Unit 1 and Unit 2 as a full course award and claim certification for the new specification in all GCSE Art and Design endorsements.

Moderators reported that many centres had taken the opportunities presented by the specification to restructure courses and offer more flexible approaches to teaching and learning. Others had been more cautious, retaining the best practice from legacy course models, sometimes with the addition of workshops and one-off activities, to reflect the individual needs of their own candidates. Overall, whichever approach was taken, it would appear that the specification and its enhanced opportunities have been very well received by schools and colleges.

For Unit 1 there is no prescribed approach to development of work, but for the full course the submission must show the coverage of all four assessment objectives through “more than one extended collection of work, or project”. For some centres the portfolio ethos was actively pursued with teachers encouraging candidates to take a lead role in the selection and organisation of work to be presented for examination. For others, candidates submitted two or three complete projects, as in previous years, with little selection.

Work for this unit may also be produced in the form of one sustained project supported by work generated by other experiences such as visits, workshops, experimental exercises in handling media and engagement with a wide variety of sources from which to develop individual responses. Alternatively, two or more projects of similar or different scope and complexity could fulfil the assessment criteria. Therefore, themes for projects, assignments and briefs were often wide ranging and varied and candidates were able to engage with a wealth of possibilities and developmental opportunities. In many centres, the use of starting points from the previous year’s test paper was common practice.

For Unit 2, the extended preparatory time available for the externally set task, was well received. More time allowed centres to select a delivery approach to suit individual candidates’ needs and working practices. Some centres chose to use the full lead-in time available from early January, allowing candidates the time to explore their ideas and intentions in greater depth. Other centres opted for a shorter preliminary time followed by a much longer period over which the 10-hour supervised sessions were spread to support candidates’ ‘momentum’. The flexibility afforded by the extended preparatory period was deemed to be a major factor in the success of this unit of work.

The externally set task papers for each endorsement were also well received, with many centres welcoming the familiar paper format, which allows candidates the choice between focused questions with suggested sources, or an open-ended starting point. Each paper is designed to ensure candidates have access to a range of different, equally valid, ways to achieve the assessment objectives. Please remember that candidates should be allowed to select their own question from the full range in the paper. Teachers should not pre-select questions on behalf of learners or offer them a narrower range to choose from. AQA regards this as a form of malpractice.

In both units, visually engaging assessment evidence in the form of sketchbooks, ideas books or journals, as well as mounted loose sheets were seen.

### **Teacher Standardisation Meetings**

The meetings not only illustrate standards, but give teachers the opportunity to view a variety of practices in all specification endorsements from both Unit 1 and Unit 2. The generosity of centres in loaning work for training purposes at teacher standardisation meetings is gratefully appreciated.

Attendance at teacher standardisation meetings was deemed essential this year for centres new to the specification. At moderation, those centres that did not send a representative do not appear always to have fully grasped how to evidence the new assessment objectives.

Delegate feedback indicated that fundamental issues such as the administration of paperwork, deadline dates and reminders of the support available were a vital part of the meetings, but that the emphasis on standards and training through the marking of 'live' work is why the AQA teacher standardisation sessions are so highly valued. Understandably the absence of grade boundaries in this first year of full course certification was an issue for many delegates. Presenters endeavoured to allay fears and confirmed that although the raw mark boundary may change, the overall standard will stay the same and be carried forward.

The provision of CDs, for delegates to take away from the meetings, that included a 'visual reminder' of the training and marking sets and associated attainment commentaries was welcomed. This compensated for delegates now being unable to photograph the exhibition for copy-right reasons. Please note, the reminder notes and all other Teacher Resource Bank information are also available through the AQA website.

### **Administration**

Administration was generally good this year, although in a few instances moderators did receive paper work after the 31<sup>st</sup> May deadline. It is essential that centres send two copies of their Centre Mark Form (CMF) or EDI printout to the moderator. This ensures the moderation sample is selected in good time, and the centre's copy is returned in advance of the agreed moderation date.

Transferring marks on to forms still posed some problems, for example, confusing Unit 1 with Unit 2 when adding marks on the CMF or adding up the marks incorrectly on Candidate Record Forms (CRF). Generally, however, inaccuracies such as these were dealt with by moderators during centre visits.

Please remember, it is a mandatory requirement that CRFs are signed by both the candidate and the teacher responsible for delivering the course of study. This is to signify that the work submitted is solely that of the candidate and is an essential part of centre administration. Thankfully, there were very few instances this year of incomplete forms, although the supporting information boxes (to expand on information about candidates' individual circumstances or to explain the awarding of marks) were rarely used.

### **Assessment and Moderation**

The change to the sample selection process caused some confusion in centres this year. A single sample of candidates' work is now chosen according to the range of marks submitted across Unit 1 and Unit 2 for each endorsement. For this reason, it is much less likely that both units of work of the same candidate will be seen. The selection is also proportionate to the number of units entered for each endorsement. So if a centre enters equal proportions of Unit 1 and Unit 2 for an endorsement, for example, 20 Unit 1 and 20 Unit 2, 15 units will be selected for moderation, 8 for Unit 1 and 7 for Unit 2 or vice versa.

In terms of the accuracy of centre marking, where centres had sent a representative to a teacher standardisation meeting, used the assessment criteria appropriately and with reference to AQA's standards, marking judgements were generally sound. Where this had not been done and where there appeared to be a lack of internal standardisation marking appeared to be erratic. In these cases, the use of marks that were too high or too low in the four-mark band was a common problem. Where teachers had marked to the requirements of the assessment objectives, using the key words of "Develop", "Refine", "Record" and "Present", and the distinguishing characteristics "Just", "Adequate", "Clear" and "Convincing" in the four-mark bands, they were better equipped to differentiate when proposing marks for their own candidates.

Moderation meetings and visits were generally very successful this year, with fewer instances of inadequate provision and/or presentation of samples. Whether submissions are presented in the form of an exhibition or carefully labelled folders, a quiet, undisturbed area is essential if the moderation process is to be effectively conducted.

## **Assessment Objectives**

In both Unit 1 and Unit 2 candidates are required to evidence all four assessment objectives through appropriate means. The document “Interpreting the Assessment Objectives” offers valuable guidance for centres and is available through the AQA website.

### **Assessment Objective 1**

The combination of instructions to “develop ideas” with the wording “informed by contextual and other sources” saw many candidates move beyond the frequently accessed artists typical to previous years’ submissions. The breadth of possibilities under the heading of “sources” has been evidenced through what one senior moderator described as “an eclectic mix of increasingly contemporary and very stimulating practitioners” as well as song lyrics, dance displays, objects and artefacts, cultural gatherings, trips, visits, exhibitions, poems, posters and films. Where candidates had simply downloaded information from the Internet, little evidence of analytical or cultural understanding was seen, and their own work was rarely “informed” as a result.

### **Assessment Objective 2**

In some cases, refinement was simply evidenced through the eventual selection of one version of the same image that had been replicated in a range of media with little consideration of alternative possibilities. In others, candidates had experimented extensively to evidence the creative selection and rejection of a wide range of media in a journey of exploration through a project or series of stand-alone experiences. Digital media was in evidence across all ability ranges, with candidates often using software packages such as ‘Photoshop’ to good effect in considering a range of possibilities. Screen shots were also used by some candidates to effectively demonstrate the manipulation and refinement of ideas.

### **Assessment Objective 3**

Recording in a wide range of both two and three-dimensional media was seen this year, with digital recording used effectively for a variety of purposes, and a balance of primary and secondary sources was noted in the most successful portfolio and test submissions. These included documenting work in progress, design ideas and working drawings, as well as recording through drawing. One moderator reported that “drawing as a recording tool appears to be as strong as ever” whereas another reported that drawing continues to “wither on the vine”. Candidates also evidenced their own insights and opinions through written annotations, with thoughts and reflections complementing associated visual materials. Once again however, the presentation of written information that had simply been downloaded from the internet or copied from books without subsequent development rarely formed evidence for the marking criteria.

### **Assessment Objective 4**

Personal responses were varied, with some showing ambition and creativity as a result of individual journeys of enquiry. Many candidates progressed their ideas through a wide range of projects or client-orientated briefs, often showing sound understanding of process and intention. Encouragingly, fewer examples of pastiche were reported this year. Please remember, an “informed and meaningful response demonstrating analytical and critical understanding” does not have to be seen as a separate outcome, and there was more evidence this year of candidates showing personal responses through collections of related work centred on a particular theme, sketchbook investigations and/or design sheets. Equally some excellent examples of fully resolved outcomes were submitted in a wide range of styles, media and sizes that evidenced the candidates’ abilities to handle materials sensitively and with a clear understanding of their appropriateness, given intended purposes.

## **Textile Design 4204**

The Textile Design endorsement has continued to draw from a variety of areas within the curriculum. In most cases courses were delivered by art departments, but there was growing evidence of successful programmes of study evolving from KS3 technology courses. At times these tended to follow prescriptive briefs, but a number adopted an open approach with freely developed themes generating more individual outcomes. Some courses were based on the assessment criteria, others grew from a focus on learning technical textile techniques and some had a primary emphasis on the creation of an end product. This year there appeared to be an increase in the number of students choosing fashion as their area of study.

### **Unit 1: Portfolio of Work 42041**

Many centres continued to follow an existing formula of two or three projects, although some work of a more stand-alone nature was also being produced. This was mainly in the form of experiments and exercises in specific techniques or investigations into the work of particular artists or designers, and a number of centres used past papers to formulate schemes of work and structure courses. In many instances coverage of the new assessment criteria was excellent with candidates using the language of the objectives more frequently and fluently in annotations. Experimental work tended to be the dominant feature of the portfolio with candidates using different materials and creating samples. Workbooks, sketchbooks and journals were much in evidence with some outstanding examples presented for moderation. A clear engagement with themes, and books filled with trials, materials, samples, observations and individual ideas evidenced pathways to exciting outcomes in many submissions. However, in weaker submissions, there tended to be an over reliance on creating samples which did not provide effective coverage of all the assessment objectives.

Portfolio submissions varied in terms of approach and quantity. When considering the requirements of controlled assessment, centres should encourage candidate awareness of the need for careful selection, organisation and presentation of work in relation to the assessment objectives and specification requirements. This was not always the case where copious sheets of superficial or limited quality work and loose samples were included in portfolios.

Evidence of visits to galleries museums and studios visits was presented in a number of centres and candidates' submissions. These inspired projects based around the visual elements or specific techniques and processes used by contemporary textile artists and designers. For example, a visit to Kew Gardens to record observations formed another starting point and collections of cultural artefacts inspired the study of ethnic textiles, particularly those of Indian and Eastern European origins.

The provision of appropriate materials and media was diverse and broad. In many centres teachers felt that the new specification had afforded candidates the opportunity and time to experiment in a less directed and more investigative manner. Less traditional media such as twisted and coiled wire, recycled objects and mixed media were in evidence. Ambitious presentations exhibited a willingness to take risks, with some specific examples successfully using rusty metal and twisted sheeting as a ground for collage and stitching.

The need to review and refine work as it evolved and progressed was seen in the most successful submissions. Digital photography proved a vital and accessible tool for recording observations and ideas, as well as suggesting possibilities for further development through image manipulation and the use of image transfer processes.

The range and scale of resolved outcomes was varied. Some candidates created cushions, wall hangings and panels whilst others produced silk paintings, batik narratives and traditionally styled prints depicting a variety of motifs and patterns. Accessories such as hats, shoes and bags were submitted, as were fashion and costume pieces including skirts, dresses, t-shirts and headaddresses. Conceptual work comprised fabric sculptures, panels and textiles for use as body adornment. Moderators commented favourably on well planned approaches to the creation of final pieces where time plans, self devised garment patterns and carefully assembled mock-up garments were seen.

Weaker portfolio submissions were often the result of poorly structured courses, under resourced projects and too many unrelated pieces of unedited work. An overreliance on poor quality second hand imagery was seen, and there was sometimes limited understanding of the need to address all the assessment objectives.

Marking of portfolio submissions by centres was often fair and accurate, particularly when teachers had attended training sessions and a standardisation meeting. Many commented that they found the terms of 'just, adequate, clear, convincing' very helpful when evaluating work and placing it at the appropriate level within a distinct mark band.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available at [www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html](http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html) . The UMS conversion calculator can be found at [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion) .