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General Certificate of Secondary Education
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Art and Design – Three-Dimensional Design

(Specification 4205)

Unit 2: Externally Set Task

42052

Report on the Examination

GCSE Art and Design (4205)

General

It has been another successful year in which centres embraced the flexibility and diversity of the GCSE Art and Design Specification within each endorsement. Many centres developed new courses that accommodated a variety of teaching approaches and were tailored to suit available facilities, staffing strengths and creative enthusiasms, as well the needs of students. In other centres, courses similar to those used during the legacy specification were retained.

Teacher Standardisation allayed any uncertainty about the requirements of the 'new' specification, and as a result many courses have become more holistic and less rigid or linear in design. Examples included initial skills-based experiences allowing students to investigate such things as the use of materials for different purposes; specific visual elements; mark-making and sources of design. Workshop-style approaches allowed students to build up a bank of skills in readiness for extended collections of work or projects, designed to show coverage of the four Assessment Objectives. Even where all students followed the same project, moderators reported evidence of much more diverse journeys of enquiry and personal responses building on confidence gained during the introductory phases of their courses of study.

Unit 1 portfolio work showed appropriate and well-structured responses to the Assessment Objectives. Moderators reported a good range of tasks evident in projects across the endorsements. Themes were wide-ranging and varied from familiar schemes based around the natural world, portraiture and landscape, to issues-based topics and individual assignments based on students' personal interests, identities, cultures and beliefs. Sources were, in the best instances, integrated within the theme and provided rich focuses for investigation, exploration, research and analysis. Past paper starting points featured extensively, and allowed centres to refresh the themes used with students on an annual basis instead of re-presenting the same projects year on year.

There were fewer reports of students experiencing visits to galleries and exhibitions, especially where travelling great distances was required. Some centres made better use of local visits, and there was evidence of extended "sources" being integrated into schemes and programmes of study, where local woodland, city centres, ports, harbours and seashores were used to engage students and inform the development of ideas.

Visiting artists made a valuable impact on some courses, to provide stimulus and lead workshops, involving activities such as life drawing, printmaking, 3D construction and the exploration of textile techniques.

Sketchbooks, working logs, ideas books, design sheets and mounted boards were all very much in evidence, each offering students a way of working and style of presentation that suited their individual needs. It was pleasing to see fewer cases of sketchbook pages or worksheets labelled as "recording"; "AO..."; "Artist Research" etc.

In some instances, sketchbooks were deemed to be "stunning examples" of how students had worked through the creative process and documented their thoughts, ideas and findings in a wide variety of visual means. In other cases, they were seen as problematic in terms of selection of work for moderation. Some students chose to select and mount up work from their books whilst others accepted that they represented a journey of personal development and maturity and presented them as that within their portfolio.

Some moderators highlighted 'selection' of work as an issue in a number of centres. It is a requirement of the specification that students present "a selection of thoughtfully presented work that demonstrates the breadth and depth of the course of study". In some cases no selection had taken place and work from the entire course was submitted, whilst in others there was too much, so submissions were sparse and disjointed.

In Unit 2, the unlimited preparatory time available was used by teachers to tailor the time to students' individual needs. It was the case that in a number of centres' students overlapped some weeks with

work for both Unit 1 and preparation for Unit 2. In others, students were given the maximum time available. Flexibility was deemed to be the key to success, by allowing centres to organise timing for the preparatory period and the 10-hour sessions to meet the wider needs of both the centre and the students.

The Externally Set Task papers for each endorsement were well received. It was evident, though, that some centres had restricted access to some questions from papers. Whilst there may be reasons why students might be guided in their choices, it is a contravention of Awarding Body rules if students are not issued with a full copy of the E.S.T. paper.

Teacher Standardisation Meetings

Delegate feedback this year indicated that the distribution of a CD containing even more extensive 'visual reminders', as well as sections containing information about dates and deadlines, administration details, copies of important documents and links to specification materials, was very well received. The process is an on-going one; ideas and suggestions received have been taken on board, to continue to improve what is already seen to be a highly valued AQA resource.

The fundamental focus of each meeting was to illustrate standards by giving teachers the opportunity to see examples of 'live' work from each endorsement and both Unit 1 and Unit 2. "Training rather than testing" was one comment received following the decision not to collect in marks. The inclusion of an "anchor set" for the purpose of group marking in both the Training and Marking exhibitions was also unanimously welcomed. Reinforced at Teacher Standardisation, and used much more effectively by teachers during centre marking this year, were the terms "just", "adequate", "clear" and "convincing" for awarding differentiated marks within each Assessment Objective band.

The initiative for meetings to be hosted in schools and colleges was generally successful. Funding received for this was positively used by participating centres for a wide range of educative purposes. During moderation, samples used at previous Teacher Standardisation Meetings, illustrating different approaches within endorsement presentations, were seen to have influenced both portfolio work and responses to the Externally Set Task. Teachers had, on occasions, encouraged students to move away from traditional responses and to integrate new materials or new ways of working with media. Soft sculptures to accompany work within Graphic Communication portfolios as well as three-dimensional presentations of photographic material were seen, and students had been more adventurous in their choice of media within three-dimensional design submissions.

Administration

Administration was deemed to be good this year despite problems caused by national holidays. The majority of centres ensured that moderators received the necessary two copies of mark sheets by the 31 May deadline. This in turn guaranteed that centres received sample information in good time for visits and Area Moderation Meetings. Very few instances of missing or incomplete Candidate Record Forms or Centre Declaration Sheets were reported, and fewer cases of incorrect transference of marks were seen. Any occasions where administration was problematic were generally dealt with by moderators at the time.

Arranging dates and times for visits and meetings was reported to be increasingly difficult. It is hoped that more use will be made of e-mail in future to reduce the problems of contacting teachers during the school day.

Assessment and Moderation

Marking each unit out of 80 is now established and in the majority of cases, marking was deemed to be fair and accurate. Where the assessment criteria were used regularly during teaching sessions, shared with students and seen as an integral part of the course, a familiarity with terminology and interpretation of requirements led to confidence in pitching marks accurately within bands. For some students, an emphasis on the language of art was started during Key Stage 3; this led to excellent foundations for GCSE courses and the coverage of Assessment Objectives.

Most centres had understood the process of sample selection across both units and the principle of marking and moderation taking place in numerical order from lowest to highest, regardless of whether they were portfolio or Externally Set Task samples. In the majority of cases, centres had taken on board the requirement for quiet and uninterrupted conditions for effective moderation to take place. Problems arose when work had been exhibited in areas that were difficult to access or samples had been poorly or incorrectly labelled. Whether samples are presented in folders of work or as an exhibition, or in some cases as electronic portfolios, ease of access is essential.

Area Moderation Meetings were generally successful and provided centres with an alternative moderation process.

Assessment Objectives

Students are required to evidence all four Assessment Objectives in both Unit 1 and Unit 2. By using the terms "develop", "refine", "record" and "present", students showed an understanding of the requirements in their submissions. A better understanding of the integration of the Assessment Objectives enabled a more flexible approach and evidenced more holistic submissions of work.

Assessment Objective 1

Many subjects provided the starting point from which ideas were developed, including images; artists; craftspeople; artefacts; visits; materials and techniques. Evidence seen exemplified the breadth of sources that had been made available to students or that they themselves had selected. Relevant contextual influences informed very individual personal journeys of enquiry, and in the best examples, students independently discovered contemporary references that both enhanced and extended their work. Less successful submissions relied heavily on downloaded biographical narratives, much of which had been neither read nor understood and made little if any connection to the student's own work. As a result there was little evidence of how work had progressed or ideas had been developed in relation to the findings.

Assessment Objective 2

This was seen to be the most successful in some submissions and the least successful in others. The most successful students had accessed a wide range of media, materials, techniques and processes with which to progress and expand their developmental journey.   Evidence of thoughtful review and refinement through clear and considered selection and rejection of media and processes was a prominent feature. Digital media had been used both to chart the progress of work and also to show discriminating changes and decisions made during 3D and textile construction, large-scale paintings and assemblage.   In less successful cases, media, techniques and processes had been simply addressed by way of repeated images in a range of media and colour-ways with little evidence or reference to judgements or decisions made.

Assessment Objective 3

Recording in its widest sense was seen this year. The cross-over between endorsements where students have used wide-ranging techniques and media manipulation to record ideas, thoughts, developments and outcomes, was noticeable. These took the form both of traditional drawing techniques through the use of graphite, charcoal and other dry materials, to drawing with wax, sand, glue and mud. Sewing machine stitching, carving and modelling, constructions in paper and card as well as printing and mixed media techniques were all used to record from both primary and secondary sources. Above all, digital recording was at the forefront as a tool to record progress, intent, development and realisation. The instant access to a visual record was used to excellent effect in the most successful submissions and offered a whole new dimension to the concept of recording. Highly rendered drawing still featured, as did drawing for design purposes and as personal responses to projects. Recording through annotation was in the best examples insightful and expressive whereas in other cases it was merely descriptive. In some instances, annotations were simply re-presentations of existing information copied directly from secondary sources such as the internet.

Assessment Objective 4

In both Unit 1 and Unit 2, personal responses varied from well-executed and considered outcomes resulting from extensive exploration and development of ideas, to unrelated pieces that showed no links with the focus of study. Projects, assignments, briefs and starting points generated some exciting, innovative and inventive responses. These included collections of related work, large scale paintings, detailed and decorative books, story boards, textiles, sculptural forms, ceramics, mixed-media and digital displays by way of photographs, animation and show reels. Students responded to a range of critical and cultural sources in well-organised and reflective submissions where connections had been thoughtfully embedded in the work and materials had been chosen appropriately.

Three-Dimensional Design 4205

Unit 2: Externally Set Task

This year's paper was well received by centres. The range of starting points, combined with the accessibility of the named sources, enabled a range of students to successfully apply the knowledge and understanding that they gained from following Unit 1 course of study. Most centres gave their students the question paper between six and eight weeks before sitting the timed test. This seemed to allow the students more time to research ideas, visit museums and art galleries, find sources for first hand study and test materials, techniques and processes.

It is worrying that many moderators commented that centres were restricting students' access to the full range of questions on the paper, with all the students in certain centres producing work derived from just one or two questions. They saw similar sources given to students, the same approaches adopted and very similar outcomes, with the only difference being individual levels of attainment. There is a fine line between effective advice and preparation and what is in effect censorship. This dictatorial approach is not acceptable and all students must have access to all the questions on the paper.

Students who had been encouraged to explore a wide range of materials, techniques and processes in their preparatory studies often did much better than those who just concentrated on one or two aspects. As in previous years many of those who had recorded primary sources through digital camera work and more traditional methods achieved high marks. Maquettes, trial pieces, test tiles and scale models provided explicit evidence of students' engagement with process, their development of ideas and levels of understanding.

Question 1 - Sense of Place

This was a popular question where students had generally responded to aspects of their own locality. Most had studied the work of the named artists, but other sources accessed included the work of Christo and Jeanne Claude, Roger Hiorns, Daniele Del Nero and Jim Robison. This initial research proved vital and enabled students to put their response to the starting point in context. Many had then made first hand observational studies in the locality. Digital cameras were generally used to gather information before students returned to the art department to work on their ideas. The range of starting points varied from city centres to forests and from harbours to disused industrial sites. Students studied such elements as surface textures and the structure of buildings. . Other sources included boats and cranes and found objects from the beach. Outcomes were often built from found objects or, cast and assembled from surface textures. Some students developed site specific works for significant places.

Question 2 - Animals in Art

The availability of first hand sources made this a popular question for students. Information was gathered in Wildlife Parks, the domestic environment, city farms and aquariums. Students not only explored the form and shape, but also the surface texture of their chosen animal. Named sources in the starting point were included with the intention of highlighting the use of different materials and this was recognised as a significant feature by many students. It was interesting to see that those who explored a range of materials often did better than those who simply decided to sculpt animals out of clay. Experimentation into casting, press moulding and building with found objects enhanced submissions and allowed many students to apply what they had learnt in their Unit 1 course of study. Examples of first hand observational drawing and an emphasis on surface texture were seen in most samples of work. Final pieces were varied and there was often a clear correlation between quality of outcome and the effectiveness of preparatory work. Welded and wire animal forms were popular together with work made from found objects including detritus from the forest floor, drift wood from the beach and discarded plastic packaging.

Question 3 - Archaeology

Despite the initial lead given by the question, very few students actually went out of the classroom to visit a museum, art gallery or archaeological site. Most relied on second hand sources downloaded from the internet. A wide variety of cultures were used as sources such as the Incas and Aztecs in South America, Greeks, Romans in Europe, the Egyptians and the Benin kingdom in Africa. One centre encouraged students to use artefacts from the Maoris in New Zealand. The images sourced were generally copied and used to inform students' work but the development into anything of real quality was rare. A range of materials were used and there was some investigation into surface quality and finish although this was generally uninspiring. Outcomes were varied with students in another centre using plastic laminates and a laser cutter to build final pieces. Students in the vast majority of centres recreated the work of others in clay, plaster or wood.

Question 4 - Music

This was not a popular question, despite the opportunity for plentiful first hand observation. However, those students who did attempt it successfully followed a generally traditional linear journey and produced some impressive outcomes. Music concerts, rehearsals, festivals, carnivals and the instruments themselves were all used as starting points for the development of ideas. The quality and range of first hand observational studies impressed moderators and high marks were awarded accordingly. Students progressed through the design and developmental process by using a range of historical and cultural influences to inform their work. They used a full range of materials to explore their ideas informed by the sources that they had used. Large scale forms made from willow and bamboo covered with tissue paper or thin cloth were seen. Three- dimensional still life constructions based upon Cubist works as was the construction of set designs made to scale. Masks were a very

popular outcome with students using paper mache, plaster impregnated bandage and clay to construct a rich variety of forms.

Question 5 - Food and Drink Containers

Surprisingly there were very few students who attempted this question. Those who did found that relevant sources were readily available. Many started with observational studies of the consumables that the containers were to hold, gathering information in the form of drawings and digital photographs. Venues visited included supermarkets, grocery shops and markets. Some had visited museums to study artefacts for holding and serving tea and coffee and this had clearly informed their subsequent work. One centre had used the Japanese lunch boxes as a source and had produced some varied outcomes whist others used artists such as Kate Malone, Bernard Palissy and Wedgewood pottery to inform their designs. Research into suitable glazes was evidenced in the form of test tiles. Final pieces were often rich in texture, colour and pattern.

Question 6 - Composition

This was the least popular question on the paper and very few responses were seen. However, those students who did attempt it had great success producing a variety of final pieces that showed deep understanding. The key to the question was to find appropriate sources relevant to individual students' chosen areas of three-dimensional design. . Starting points varied. Some students studied traditional Greek and Roman pottery concentrating on the way that decoration was applied to fit the form. Others looked at garden design, creating plans for large scale pieces to be sited at strategic locations such as, in one case, around a local stately home. One centre produced work following a visit to the cast room at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Moderators commented that students who undertook this question had very strong design work on paper. Models, maquettes and trial pieces enabled students to experiment with size and scale before attempting to create a final piece in the timed test period.

Question 7 - Here and Now

The plethora of national and international events that are going on this year really appealed to centres and students alike. The celebrations to mark the Queen's diamond jubilee, the Euro 2012 football tournament and the Olympics all gave students opportunities to develop their ideas. Others chose to focus on particular concerns such as conflict and world poverty, or were inspired by the issues-based content evident in the work of certain contemporary practitioners. However, some centres commented that the open ended nature of this question did not suit their particular students and in consequence s, guiding them towards those of a more prescriptive nature.

a) The open ended nature of the theme allowed many students to create much more personal pieces and enabled them to reflect on their work as it progressed. Whilst many students produced pedestrian work, the more creative produced impressive outcomes demonstrating complexity and greater understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Visits to venues such as to local war memorials, sculpture parks,   museums and art galleries, and events such as commemorative ceremonies, often reinforced initial ideas and led to some thought provoking responses. Works by artists such as Stanley Spencer, Oskar Kokoschka, Otto Dix, Francisco de Goya, and Henry Moore also provided sources of inspiration. . References and comparisons to World Wars and the current conflict in Afghanistan allowed students to comment personally on their observations. The riots of last summer also gave opportunities for students to comment on the world around them, as did global contrasts between wealth and poverty. The internet provided a significant resource. Many used this in a unique way, posting comments on social network sites and asking for replies in return. Students were able to develop their ideas through the use of traditional and found materials. Some students constructed innovative large scale work using mixed media collage. Others had built installations in site-specific locations. A number who engaged in depth with society's issues often produced more thought provoking work.

b) There were no specific responses seen to this suggestion. . Students had decided to use a more general approach, encompassing additional elements in their responses.

c) Those students who followed a course that specialised in sculpture found this question really engaging. Many had looked at some of the work being produced by local and national art organisations to celebrate the Olympics as a source of inspiration. Research into specific exhibitions, such as one being held at the British Museum, that are celebrating the Olympics was carried out through visits. Monumental public sculptures from around the world had inspired some, whilst others had studied smaller works. First hand study was noted with students recording their friends participating in a number of sports. Digital camera work proved to be invaluable for capturing moments of movement. Students' digital manipulation of their own images charted progress and helped moderators to follow the creative journey. They used a range of materials in their submissions, but clay and plaster dominated. Various aspects of the Olympics were evident with many students electing to reference a number of events as they realised their intentions.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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