GCSE

Art and Design

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J160 – J167**

Examiners' Reports

June 2011

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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Art and Design (J160 – J167)

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

Chief Examiner's Report

General Comments

- In this second year of the 'new' GCSE Art and Design specification a very positive reception from teachers and candidates alike highlighted the evolving strength of this qualification. Indeed, the number of entries across the endorsements for this year showed a marked increase. The flexibility of a unitised qualification has clearly made a strong impression on some Centres with considerable numbers of candidates undertaking either the Portfolio or OCR-set Task in Year 10. This suggests that Centres were seeking to take best advantage of the 'new' specification by maximising pupils' achievement with two GCSE's over the course of a two-year programme.

- Many teachers had attended the introductory 'Get Started' INSET meetings during 2010-2011. OCR welcomed the high degrees of participation, appreciated the encouragement received and had responded to the suggestions made when producing support materials for teachers and candidates.

- The majority of candidates had benefited from well delivered courses, which had been carefully designed to retain the strengths of the preceding legacy qualification. Unendorsed and Fine Art pathways remain the most popular approaches to study. The other endorsements, often supported by subject specialists, continue to be the main area of delivery in some Centres, which also make full use of appropriate specialist facilities. Notable was the number of Centres who made entries in Critical and Contextual Studies (J166) and Applied Art and Design (J167).

- Work for moderation was usually very well displayed, accurately labelled and in quiet and secure accommodation appropriate to the moderation process. Moderators commented positively on this continuation of good practice and were appreciative of the time and effort that staff and candidates had invested in facilitating moderation in this manner. Looking to the future, Centres submitting work for moderation in more than one endorsement are reminded that displays should be in merit order *by unit.*

- Centres' staff are to be thanked for their co-operation in making visit arrangements and willingness to loan work for the purposes of Grade Award, INSET and Standardisation. As regards the latter OCR fully recognises that the dispatch of 'samples' was a major undertaking on this occasion and is especially thankful for the kind collaboration in ensuring work is available for a variety of purposes.
- Centres' administration was generally accurate and efficient. Most Centres met the May 15 deadline for the dispatch of mark-sheets to OCR. Similarly, the majority correctly forwarded the Unit Assessment Form (GCW930) and the Centre Authentication Form (CCS160) with the MS1s to the moderator. Nonetheless, the Centre Authentication Form was frequently completed for each Unit rather than the qualification overall.
- More Centres are taking advantage of the 'inter-active' Unit Assessment and Centre Authentication forms with the result that the incidence of 'arithmetical or transcriptional error' was infrequent.
- Orders of merit were generally dependable. However, the levels of assessment of some Centres was on occasion unreliable and thus required adjustment to re-align these with the agreed standard.
- Centres' staff generally welcome the feedback given by moderators on the accuracy of the levels of assessment in relation to the agreed standard. The transparency of this aspect of the moderation process continues to be applauded.

CHIEF EXAMINER'S COMMENT

Download and use the Assessment Summary Form GCW520, which is available on the OCR web site. This option allows for the entry and addition of marks, thus avoiding arithmetical errors.

Display the Portfolio and Set Task in two separate rank orders.

*Clearly identify individual units and highlight final outcomes.*

Centres are reminded that in addition to the work sampled for the purposes of moderation all submissions must be readily available.

ART AND DESIGN PORTFOLIO

- The majority of work seen was for the Art and Design A110 and Fine Art A111 units. The other areas of study were also represented with Critical and Contextual Studies A116 and Applied Art and Design A117 being well supported. Increasingly photography is much in evidence across all endorsements whilst work in three dimensions is often a feature of Unendorsed and Fine Art submissions, which reflects the multi disciplinary approach adopted by many candidates.

- The requirement for a single project in the Portfolio gave access to a full GCSE qualification to all candidates of all abilities.

- The range of skills, media and techniques employed by candidates in the production of the Portfolio units left a positive impression with moderators. Most candidates had followed courses with a clearly defined structure. Centre determined themes were noted for their scope, originality and suitability for the needs of candidates with the widest range of abilities. The themes undertaken, rather than being prescriptive, encouraged candidates to make purposeful departures in individual directions, which culminated in truly personal, informed and meaningful outcomes.

- Candidates did not appear to be inhibited by the time frame for the production of this unit. Indeed, the approach to the Portfolio was usually robustly thematic, focused and well-sustained with the requirements of the Assessment Objectives being met in equal measure.

- The use of worksheets, rather than sketchbooks, for preparatory studies was perhaps rather more prevalent. This approach may promote greater selection in the choice of work presented for assessment. Certainly weaker candidates were less inclined to substantiate submissions by including superfluous material. Now, irrespective of the means of presentation, with the emphasis on 'quality rather than quantity' this tendency appears to be in decline.

- Whilst some candidates continue to make excellent use of sketchbooks, journals and diaries others can become somewhat obsessive with presentation and the decoration of pages. When this is excessive the true content can become obscure and candidates' intentions unclear. Moreover, inconsistency of achievement within sketchbooks, journals and diaries can be detrimental to accurate assessment. In this respect, Centres are reminded that the purpose of moderation is to assess the best of candidates' achievement through the Assessment Objectives and not pass judgment on the progress individuals may have made over the duration of their programme.
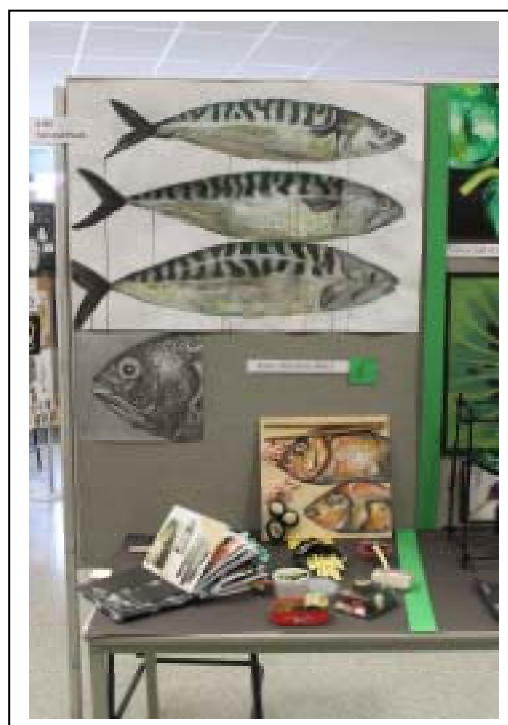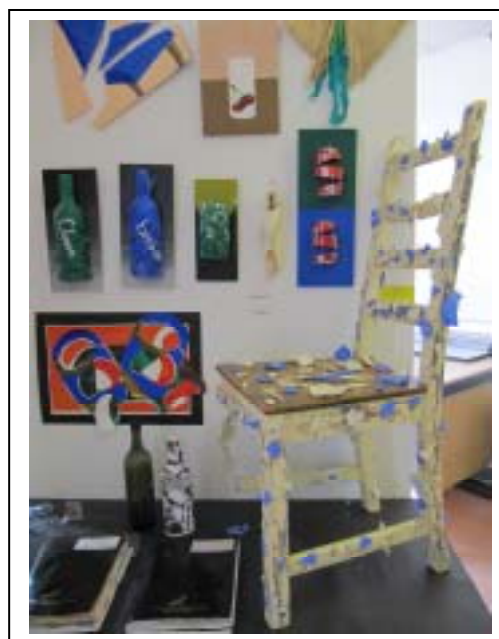
- Moderators also reported that some candidates in their Portfolio submissions had presented sketchbooks filled with collage and magazine 'cut outs'. This practice is at best questionable as frequently the link between this secondary resource and the candidates' own work was tenuous.
- Centres should impress upon candidates the importance of distinctly acknowledging sources. Candidates may utilise research, quotations and other evidence in their submissions but they must name their references. Similarly, they must clearly differentiate between their own work and that of other practitioners.
- Whilst the Portfolio submissions entered in 2011 were predominantly visual, Centres are reminded that when communicating in writing candidates should ensure that text is legible and spelling, punctuation and grammar accurate so that meaning is clear.
- Furthermore, Centres are reminded that candidates are required to present information in a form that suits its purpose by using an appropriate structure and style of writing.
- Developing ideas and recording sources and experience often combine seamlessly with the study of artists, craftspeople and other practitioners. Invariably the types of recording undertaken will be predetermined by the creative journey to be followed.
- Moderators commented positively on the visits that some Centres arranged to galleries, museums and other venues. These included national institutions such as Kew Gardens, the Hayward Gallery, the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, Tate Britain, Tate Modern and the Whitechapel Gallery. Significantly many regional resources like the Black Country Museum or the Jackfield Tile Museum proved just as stimulating.
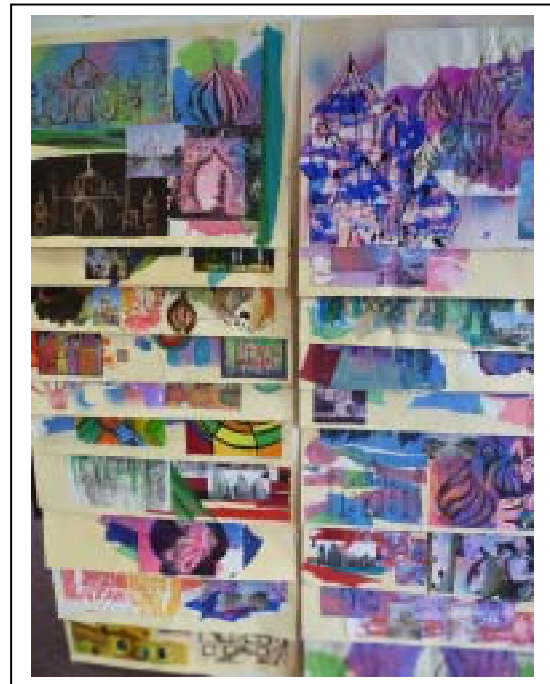
ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 1 – DEVELOP

- Moderators reported that in some Centres there was an inconsistent interpretation of this Assessment Objective across Centres. AO1 (Develop) rewards candidates' achievements in the development of their ideas, informed by contextual and other sources.

- In this respect the ways in which candidates' respond to AO1 continue to be diverse. In this session moderators noted a wide range of context and stimuli being used. Naturally, the well established great masters from the world of 'Art History' are frequently referred to but increasingly lesser known and more contemporary practitioners are the source of inspiration.

- Ethnic themes founded on the study of a variety of sources, including African masks, Indian miniatures, Japanese prints, and Moresque ceramics prompted lively responses.

- Guided and appropriate use of the Internet promotes a widening of research opportunities. The strongest candidates use search engines as a preliminary research tool and reinforce their understanding by reference to books and other printed materials. Marks awarded when Internet research is used must be based on candidates' use and processing of information rather than their ability to find it.

- In some Centres the use of 'mind-mapping' and detailed annotation of imagery was purposefully applied in ways which encouraged candidates to develop their ideas and record thoughts. However, moderators were concerned that in some instances lengthy tracts of prose, factually focused and mindlessly transcribed from the Internet or other sources was a poor substitute for a more personal response that showed genuine critical analysis and understanding.

- It is candidates' responses to 'artworks' in which critical evaluations are made and appreciation of context shown that positively informs the development of ideas.

- The examples illustrated within show how some candidates developed their ideas through investigation into a pleasing diversity of contexts and practitioners, such as African masks, Francis Bacon, Edward Burne-Jones, Jennifer Collier, Cubism, Japanese prints, Edouard Manet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Tate Britain.

CHIEF EXAMINER'S COMMENT

Use a wide range of sources to develop ideas and establish a balance between the use of media and photographic imagery. Avoid too much reliance on secondary sources from the Internet or magazines.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 2 – EXPERIMENT

- Centres' staff and candidates were commended on the range of materials, media, techniques and processes employed and the ingenuity and inventiveness shown in the use of recycled materials.
- In this respect some candidates adopted a mixed media approach whilst others experimented with colour, composition and scale.
- Printmaking was undertaken successfully by other candidates. Relief (lino-cuts, card 'plates'), monoplanic (monoprints) and intaglio (card plates, dry point on surfaces such as Perspex) were all used to good effect.
- Textiles candidates as always employed a diversity of techniques and media and demonstrated a keen and well-informed interest in designers. Whilst Fashion is an aspect of the endorsement the thrust of approaches tended towards the expressive and decorative rather than purely functional garment making.
- Increasingly it is not only Photography candidates that use Photoshop or image manipulation programs effectively. Some candidates found PowerPoint and approaches to 'animated imagery' particularly stimulating.
- Critical and Contextual Studies candidates showed not only sound research skills but the ability to be experimental and selective when refining ideas towards practical outcomes.
- Applied candidates displayed much imagination and creativity in resolving design problems and presented convincing practical solutions when responding to vocationally orientated or commercially orientated briefs.

CHIEF EXAMINER'S COMMENT

Make the most of local resources:

1. **Museums or galleries.**
2. **Botanical gardens, parks and zoos etc**
3. **Artists and designers**
4. **Community Arts Centres**
5. **Workshops or artists in residence**
6. **Exhibitions or studio visits**
7. **Carnivals, fairs and parades**

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 3 – RECORD

- Moderators commented positively on the amount and quality of drawing seen during this year's moderation session.
- Working from direct observation in a wide variety of drawing, painting and other media both in 2 and 3 Dimensions continued to be good practice. However, to be wholly effective this must be relevant to intentions and inform the directions taken in the work.
- Many candidates go to a great deal of trouble to obtain good quality and exciting source material for recording. Resourceful fieldwork sometimes had a benign impact on Assessment Objective 3 with candidates being encouraged by their teachers to take advantage of the immediate environment. In contrast , weaker candidates tend to be over reliant on secondary sourced material. Whilst it is recognised that this can provide a resource which would otherwise be inaccessible it is a poor substitute for first-hand experience. When 'found' imagery is gathered from the Internet or elsewhere candidates should acknowledge their sources.
- Photography, particularly digital, continues to be a major method of recording across all endorsements. A moderator observed, *"Mobile 'phone cameras often enable candidates to record useful material that they 'stumble' on."* Whilst another added, *"The more thoughtful students took the primary sourced photographs and used these as a foundation for strong drawing and some accomplished print-making."*

- Candidates may record their ideas, feelings, insights and observations in any way that is appropriate to intentions and this is not the sole domain of drawing and photography. Indeed, successful candidates often record their thought processes, opinions and responses to experience coherently through writing. A moderator commented, *"The best examples of photography included annotation to explain composition, colour, balance and lighting."*

- The annotation of weaker candidates is often simply factual, no more than a basic statement of what has or will be done and does little amplify what is already visually self-evident.

- Centres are reminded that the quality of written language is assessable. A moderator reported with some concern, *"Unfortunately the frequency of poor spelling, grammar and punctuation was alarming."*
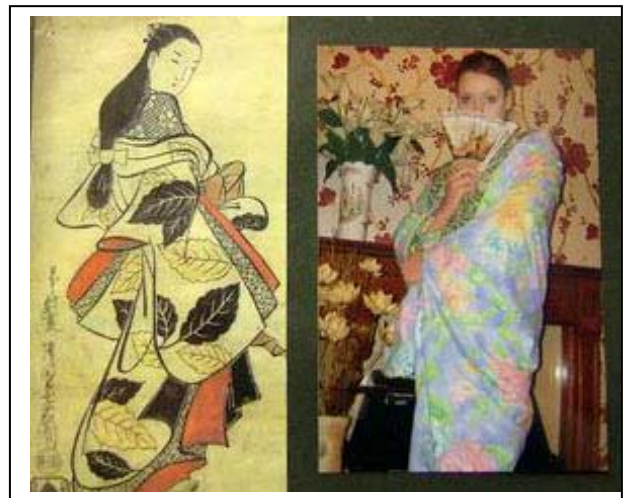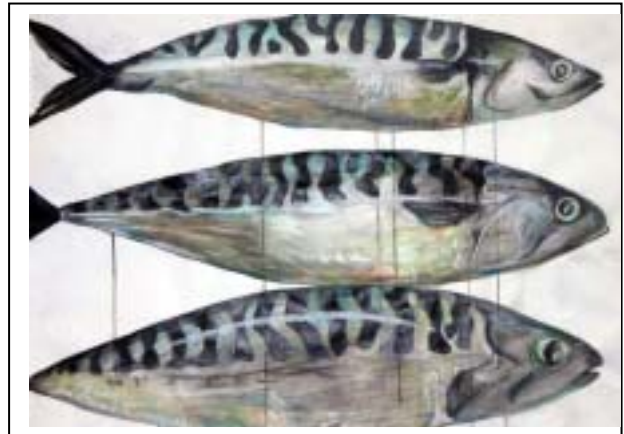
CHIEF EXAMINER'S COMMENT

Present the work in a way that clearly shows the creative journey through the Assessment Objectives.
Empty plastic bottles, cans, packaging and other throwaway items are just some of the free materials used by Centres in respect of AO3.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 4 – PRESENT

- Although the majority of candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of Assessment Objective 4 the more subtle nuances continued to evade some. In a cohesive body of work the responses to the Assessment Objectives overlap and inter-relate. Thus, 'Present' is applicable from the outset of the creative journey until its conclusion and should be evidenced throughout. It is worth emphasising that those who regard the Objective as relating solely to the final outcome, rather than the whole submission, are misguided.

- There are unfortunately still some instances of candidates presenting all of their coursework for assessment. Whereas being discriminating would have been were advantageous in terms of meeting the requirements of Assessment Objective 4. Moderators' judgments of Centres' levels of assessment are founded on the evidence placed before them and the responsibility for being selective rests entirely with candidates.

- Stronger candidates submitted informed and personal responses presented with clarity of purpose and a well-resolved and imaginative realisation of intentions. Such candidates made connections with contexts and the work of other practitioners that demonstrated insight and sound critical and analytical understanding. Weaker candidates were reported to have been more successful with their final outcomes than in previous in years but the contextual links continued to be somewhat superficial. In some instances final outcomes merely replicated 'found' images with total disregard to 'refinement'. Others candidates simply reproduced an image from the preparatory phases and, although sometimes well executed, this did little to disclose the narrative of the creative journey.

- Centres are urged not to be too prescriptive in the advice and guidance given to candidates as this may restrict the opportunity to make a meaningful personal response (*"each candidate created a similar piece, on a similar scale and in the same media"*).

CHIEF EXAMINER'S COMMENT

In the OCR-set Task candidates should avoid using unfamiliar materials or techniques in the production of the final outcomes, especially during the ten hours supervised period when guidance by the teacher may not be given.

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OCR-SET TASK

- The OCR-set Task paper met with a positive reception from candidates. Teachers reported that the range of starting points provided sufficient creative opportunities for candidates to fully demonstrate their various abilities.
- Centres frequently took advantage of the potential offered by the 'early release' paper to give candidates a longer preparatory period. Moreover, most candidates acted conscientiously upon their teachers' advice and guidance, which encouraged working to strengths and thorough research. Consequently most submissions were well sustained with achievement across the Assessment Objectives being even.
- For the majority of candidates, the Set Task represents the culmination of their GCSE programme. The best submissions built on previous experience and learning and displayed thoughtful planning and in-depth preparatory work. Stronger candidates presented final outcomes that were not only technically accomplished but also memorable for their striking innovation and creativity.
- In contrast, weaker candidates could be equally ambitious in their intentions but did not resolve problems encountered during the initial stages of investigation and correspondingly end pieces were lacking in conviction. Such candidates opted for immediately obvious solutions, often simplistic copying of secondary sourced material, and pursued little in the way of development or exploration.

Candidates' choice of starting point from Section 1 was particularly even:

'**Interesting Numbers**' – a well subscribed starting point, which prompted much lateral thinking. Many sound contextual links were made to film, literature and typography as well as with artists such as Jasper Johns.

'**Gone Fishing**' – a popular starting point often selected by candidates who recorded effectively from first-hand experience.

'**Family Tree**' – led to many highly individual responses frequently sensitively linked with social and historical events.

'**Candle-lit**' – the most popular starting point encouraged a wide variety of approaches across the endorsements. Much contextual referencing was excellent with focus on the great masters of chiaroscuro from Caravaggio to Joseph Wright.

CHIEF EXAMINER'S COMMENT

Teachers should open the paper when it arrives in the centre to enable them to prepare teaching and learning resources to support the candidate in the preparatory period.

'**Rural Landscape'** – was favoured by many, especially Photography candidates, and sponsored work from direct observation with considerable scope for making particularly pertinent links.

'**The Jester'** – interesting work based on silent movies, Punch and Judy, pierrot and pantomime showed intelligent development and exploration being realised in well resolved outcomes. This served as an antidote to the surfeit of rather thoughtless reproductions of Batman's near nemesis.

'**Aerobics'** – found some followers who purposefully exploited their interests in healthy living and sporting activities.

'**Green'** – surprisingly not as popular a starting point as 'colours' have been on previous papers. Nonetheless, it promoted lively interpretations, some quite literal and others delving deeply into environmental and other themes.

The Section 2 Visual Starting Points have yet to fully capture candidates' imaginations. However, both '**Dancing'** and '**People at Work'** were taken up in equal measure with candidates capitalising on the overt contextual referencing for Assessment Objective 1.

In Section 3 all three starting points found favour but '**Angels, Gargoyles and Imaginary Creatures'** for many Critical and Contextual Studies candidates proved the starting point of choice.

Applied candidates responded across the range of briefs in Section 4 with option 5, the '**Design for a 2D or 3D Artwork'** being the most popular. In the main candidates developed their chosen starting points effectively, with the strongest submissions demonstrating much originality of thought and interpretation.
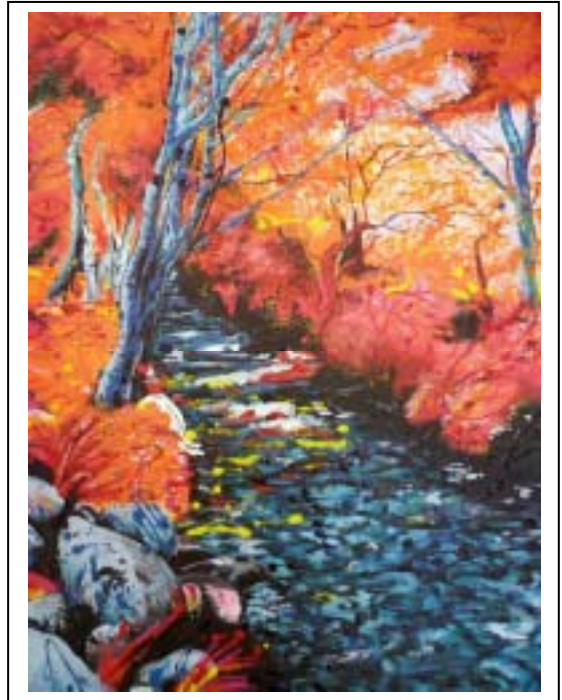
Critical and Contextual Studies

- This endorsement again attracted a good following especially from those Centres wishing to offer their candidates the opportunity to undertake two GCSEs in Art and Design.
- Moderators commented positively on the wide variety of approaches to study witnessed. Predominantly candidates made highly personal responses to art and design works through their own practical work.
- This was frequently supported by thoughtful written observations that demonstrated commendable levels of critical understanding and appreciation.
- It was encouraging to note that most candidates successfully avoided regurgitating factual information gathered from the Internet and other sources and made a genuine attempt to be interpretive and insightful. Not surprisingly candidates' performance in Assessment Objective 1 was almost invariably strong.
- Whilst the historical luminaries of art and design were sometimes deservedly the source of inspiration candidates proved just as likely to respond to the works of contemporary, often quite obscure, practitioners.
- Some Centres encourage candidates to reduce the amount of historical information gathered and concentrate on documenting, critical analysis and personal evaluations.
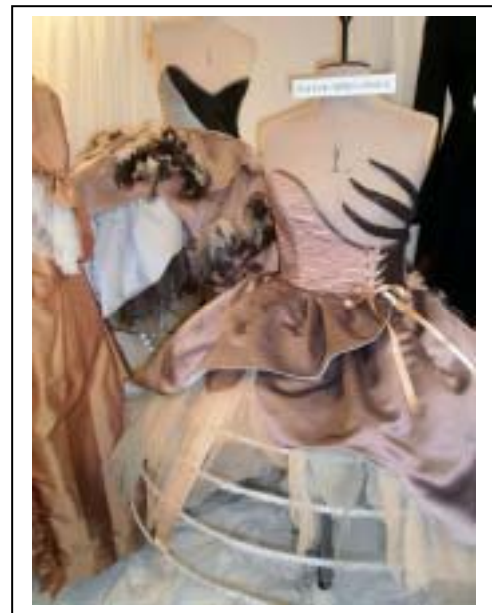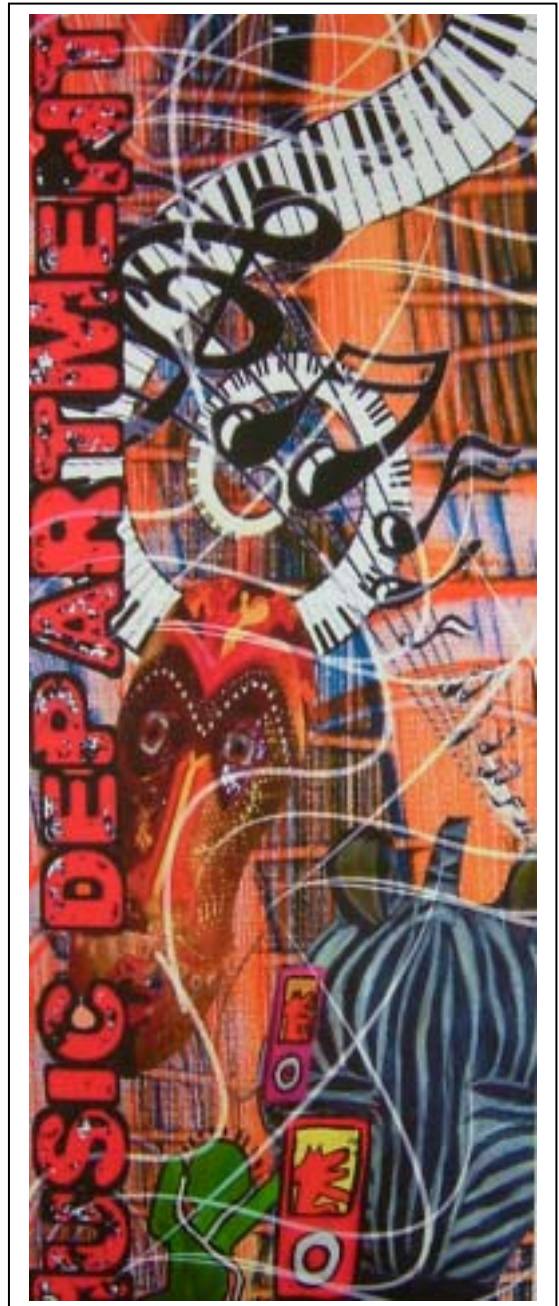

CHIEF EXAMINER'S COMMENT

Introduce a programme of research using a range of different approaches, from sketching, to photography, to collecting pictures and items. Ask your candidates to edit and annotate their research.

Applied Art and Design

- A growing number of candidates are undertaking this endorsement.
- Centres showed much ingenuity in devising vocationally orientated or commercially orientated briefs, which often established realistic clients and target audiences with whom candidates could readily identify. Working within such parameters far from being restrictive spurred the creativity of many candidates who displayed much originality of thought in resolving design problems and presenting convincing solutions.
- Candidates researched a broad spectrum of contexts and made connections with a considerable array of practitioners, equally from the fields of Design and the Fine Arts. Although candidates had the latitude to work within the broad areas of study identified by the endorsements the approach was frequently multi-disciplinary with candidates demonstrating much versatility in exploring the potential of an impressively extensive assortment of 2D and 3D media, resources, materials, techniques and processes.
- Teachers in some Centres established a series of deadlines throughout the year of work for candidates to follow. It is quite acceptable to go back over projects in order to improve the depth of research and development.
- Annotation in Applied Art and Design can refer to specific design issues: to such things as materials, structure, alternative approaches to making, with references to specific fashion or textile or graphic design, or architectural or product design terminology.
- Candidates should give proper attention to the design process so that the gap between research and final outcome is bridged by developmental stages.


CHIEF EXAMINER'S COMMENT

Candidates should remember that the work should be seen 'in a vocational context' and that the 'work must be supported by relevant work of their own'.

SUMMARY AND GUIDANCE

- All Centres should find it reassuring that this examination series confirmed that the changes to GCSE Art and Design greatly helped candidates, not least because the quality of the work seen equalled in every respect that produced for the 'legacy' specification.
- The benefits of change will take time to become fully embedded but Centres have already taken advantage of a wider range of endorsements and candidate entries in Year 10. Moreover, the opportunities for greater flexibility in designing course structures and delivery and a lightening of the assessment burden by reductions in the amount of work and space required for moderation have been warmly embraced.
- Most importantly the good practices and standards of excellence established by the 'legacy' specification, of which all parties; candidates, teachers and moderators alike justly celebrate, will be carried forward with confidence and expertise.
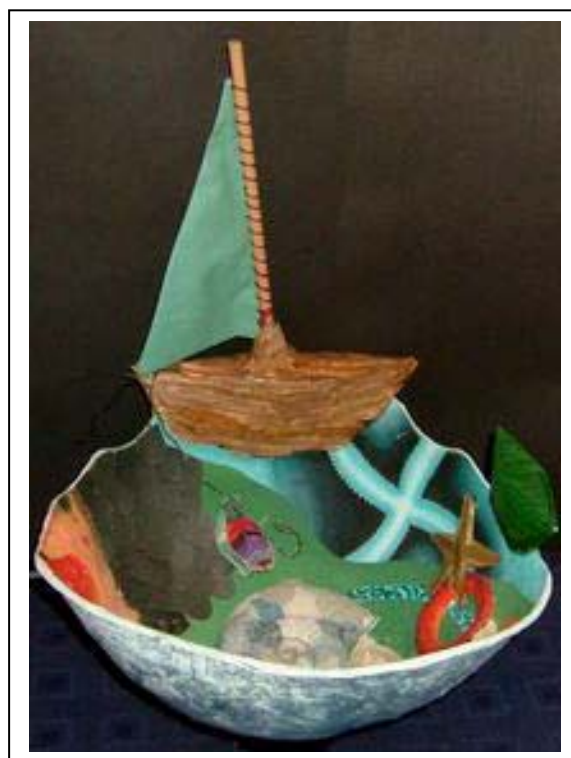
- In this second year of the 'new' specification informed teaching, well conceived 'Portfolio' structures and appropriate resources ensured that many candidates performed to their full potential in both Units. Teachers in the vast majority of Centres achieved this and they are commended for the constructive help, support and guidance given to their candidates.
- Centres are reminded that applications for Special Consideration must be made well in advance of the moderation visit. This responsibility lies entirely with Centres as the moderator cannot activate the procedure. It is advisable to notify the moderator of such cases when forwarding documentation for the May 15 deadline.
- OCR thanks the many teachers who attended the INSET meetings for introducing the new specification during 2010 – 2011. Their encouragement was much appreciated and the suggestions made greatly informed the support materials for both candidates and teachers.

- Further INSET meetings are scheduled to take place in the Autumn and Spring terms with particular emphasis on **'Get Started'** for successful delivery of the new specification. Teachers are encouraged to participate in these full-day sessions that will examine the structure, content and future assessment methods. Details of the INSET meetings can be found in the Art and Design Training Programme Booklet sent to Centres in July and September 2011 on the OCR website, www.ocr.org.uk or by contacting OCR Training on 02476 496398 or by email to training@ocr.org.uk

- Teachers are reminded that they can join the OCR Art and Design e-list via the OCR website. The e-list covers all Art and Design specifications and can be used as a forum to ask questions, share good practice and resources and to contact colleagues delivering the OCR specifications in your local area. All OCR senior examining and moderating personnel are members of the e-list and would welcome any comments or feedback from teachers regarding this report, as well as questions.

The exemplar photographs used in this report show a small selection of the work displayed for moderation and they are reproduced with the permission of the Centres concerned. OCR would like to thank all the candidates, teachers and moderators for making this possible.