AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

*Design and Technology
 (Textiles Technology) Full Course
3547F*

Report on the Examination

2007 examination – June series

Full Course Foundation Tier

General Comments

Candidates used the theme as inspiration for a wide variety of products; being allowed a free choice did not appear to have had any detrimental effect on candidates' performance. Examiners were, at times, disappointed with the results as it seemed that many candidates had not researched the topics given on the Preparation Sheet thoroughly and this lack of preparation affected performance in a number of questions. Basic knowledge of fabric properties and construction was surprisingly lacking in the answers given to some questions. It would appear that many candidates do not use knowledge and experience gained in coursework to help them when answering questions requiring knowledge of manufacturing processes.

Many examiners reported having awarded some very low marks, more so than in previous years, suggesting that some centres had incorrectly entered candidates for Higher Tier papers. However, most candidates responded well, attempting all of the questions, and producing some very original design ideas. A wide variety of products was seen across all four papers; there were many novel designs, practical and otherwise, using the theme in imaginative ways. There were also many predictable designs such as shorts, bags and cushions made from cut down denim jeans, and some inappropriate use of components, e.g. sweet wrappers, old CDs, plastic bottles. A minority of candidates seemed to lose sight of the fact that this is a textiles examination, producing designs made completely from metal, plastics and card.

Although the majority of candidates understand the importance of showing colour as opposed to simply labelling it, there are still some candidates who do not use coloured pencils, even though it is stated on the front cover of the paper that this is necessary. Full colour is an important feature in the presentation of the final design.

There are still concerns that some centres are teaching to the Preparation Sheet only, and not to the specification as a whole; this does not help candidates achieve high marks on papers which are designed to test broad knowledge and understanding of textiles technology. Many candidates also rely far too heavily on Preparation Sheet images when presenting their ideas for the design question; centres are reminded that the Preparation Sheet should be regarded as a starting point, and that candidates are expected to research beyond what has been presented to them as inspiration.

Full Course Foundation Tier

Question 1

This was generally well answered.

(a)   This part gave the most problems in Question 1. The quality of answers varied considerably from a few candidates who had obviously done a great deal of research and were able to mention designers by name, to those who gave generalised and vague answers.
The majority of candidates referred to the making of a new garment from recycled fabric / denim or components, but often failed to give enough detail or an example of how this would be done.

(b)   Well answered, with most candidates gaining full marks.

(c)   This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. A few misunderstood and wrote about old fashioned clothing. In a very small minority of cases, candidates confused sections (b) and (c).

(d)   Well done on the whole with most candidates understanding one-off and able to give two acceptable reasons. The most common answer was that the product would be unique or individual, and many referred to the re-sale value.

Question 2

(a)(i)   Ideas and sketches were generally good with most candidates generating two significantly different ideas. Very few showed the same product with different decoration or two different products with no decoration. The designs were occasionally original but most were not; shorts and bags from recycling a pair of denim jeans were common.
Some weak sketches were very difficult to understand but, in general, sketches were fully annotated and shown in colour. Candidates should be reminded that coloured sketches are not required at this early stage. Some candidates had obviously spent a lot of time on this and labelling was often better than on the ideas presented in (b).

  (ii)   Reasons for choice were often fairly basic with responses usually referring to products being colourful, fashionable or looking attractive.
Explanations of reasons were often vague and related to candidates' own preferences rather than why the product would sell well. There were some references to environmental issues and recycling .

(b)   The standard of presentation was quite good with the vast majority of candidates showing a coloured front and back view of their design, together with annotation and some exploded views. There was a fairly equal split between garments / accessories and furnishing products. Many candidates clearly indicated where they had used recycled products and gave the source, but few referred to the fibre content or fabric type. Marks were lost here because of limited references to recycling
The majority of designs were quite unimaginative with many being variations on existing products and using denim recycled from jeans. Examiners saw very few exciting and imaginative ideas.
A small minority of candidates included products made from metal, wood and plastic, losing sight of the fact that it was a textiles examination.

Question 3

        Answers to this question were of a very mixed standard.

(a)(i)   The vast majority of candidates were able to name an appropriate decorative technique with appliqué and patchwork the most popular. Many referred to decorations rather than a technique, however.

  (ii)   Explanations of suitability were, on the whole, poor with only simple statements given, such as "it looks good", rather than a detailed answer.

(b)   This tended to be answered either extremely well, or very badly. Many candidates gave a list of materials and equipment required but failed to show instructions for how work the technique selected. Diagrams were generally of a poor standard and showed little care in presentation.

Question 4

(a)   Responses seen were poor, with many candidates simply repeating the statement in a different format or just referring to "pollution" for each section without recognising the differences between each type of pollution.   Some candidates appeared to be quite knowledgeable about environmental issues, including specific terms such as bio-degradable and carbon emissions.
Animal and human welfare were often incorrectly given as reasons why pesticides should not be used, and many candidates referred to fumes, rather than effluent, as a problem when dyeing fabrics. Surprisingly, a significant number of candidates did not attempt this question.

(b)(i)   Very well done with the vast majority of candidates gaining full marks.

  (ii)   Not as well done as part (i), as reasons were often given in vague terms. Some candidates knew the term "environmentally friendly" but most answers were limited to "non-biodegradable" and "cannot be recycled". Here again, there were many references to animal life and welfare.

  (iii) The majority of candidates were familiar with the recycling symbol but many failed to gain two marks as they did not explain anything other than recycle. Many candidates referred to the product rather than the packaging.

Question 5

(a)   Many candidates had little knowledge of fabric construction resulting in them achieving only one or no marks; many answers appeared to have been guesswork.

(b)(i) & (ii) These questions were answered very badly. Many candidates gave the advantages of CAD and CAM rather than explaining how they might be used by the designer and fabric manufacturer; others referred to cutting and sewing the product rather than the printing of the fabric.

(iii)   Weak responses made many references to sewing rather than printing the fabric.

Question 6

(a)   There was a very mixed response to this question and evidence that many had struggled to work out the correct stages of manufacture. Some candidates gave an order of work that was impossible, e.g. the zip was applied before the seam was stitched, whilst others achieved full marks.
The quality control checks were answered much better with the majority of candidates achieving higher marks in this section than on the stages of manufacture. There were some references to classroom safety, such as "do not cut yourself" or "be careful not to stab yourself with a needle". There were many repetitions in the two columns.

(b)   Generally well answered, with most candidates achieving marks for "high quality", "preventing mistakes" and "safety".

(c)(i)&(ii) Although very few candidates were sure what sub-assembly meant they were able to give a correct example.

(d)   This question was answered quite well but there was some confusion between classroom and industrial safety practices. Most candidates were aware of how to improve the safety of workers when using a band-saw / band-knife and gave points specific to them rather than general answers relating to machinery. A high proportion of candidates gained full marks.

(e)(i)   Candidates identified that there would be less decoration and fewer processes but were unable to articulate that this would mean the manufacturing stage would be quicker or more efficient. On the whole the question was well answered but few achieved full marks.

   (ii)   The similarities were correctly identified but the majority of candidates were unable to clearly explain how the similarities would help in the production of the new cushion.

(f)   This part was mostly answered correctly, although some candidates had difficulty with the calculations, especially relating to the quantity of fabric needed. This was sometimes incorrect, or the wrong unit of measurement given or omitted entirely.

(g)(i)   Stock control was sometimes confused with quality control, possibly as a result of not reading the question correctly. Stock control systems were largely understood with most recognising the need to prevent hold ups in manufacture.

   (ii)   General knowledge of ICT helped many candidates to gain marks. They were familiar with spreadsheets and databases, and counting stock in and out, but some had difficulty in expressing the knowledge sufficiently well to gain full marks.

Question 7

(a)(i)   Most candidates were able to give some relevant qualities of cotton which make it suitable for the cushion but little detail was included. There was a tendency to refer to the construction of the fabric, cost and perceived weight.

   (ii)&(iii) There was little evidence of knowledge of fabric finishes and there were very few answers which merited credit. Most answers referred to adding other fabrics, using softeners or ironing the fabric.

(b)   The washing and ironing symbols were generally well known but candidates often failed to give the correct ironing temperature or to even refer to it. Few showed knowledge of the no bleaching symbol with the majority thinking that it referred to tumble drying.
The 100% cotton symbol rarely identified; most referred to it as indicating an environmentally friendly fabric or something "to do with trees".