AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Design and Technology (Graphic Products) 3553 Short Course

Higher Tier Written Paper

3553/H

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - June series

General

- The paper was well received with no major problems regarding carrying design specification and generation of ideas over a number of question sheets.

- The slight change in format did not present any discernable problems. Future written paper will continue to follow the basic structure of a 'mini-project' but the positioning of a certain type of question may alter as the demands of the contexts and themes change.

- This year much attention was placed on justified reasoning; candidates were asked to explain the reasons for their choices. Many responses did not address this requirement and so full credit was seldom awarded.

- The Preparation Sheet had been used as intended and this benefited the majority of candidates. However, some candidates appeared to have only superficially studied the topics and did not investigate them fully within the context of the examination.

- Centres generally prepared candidates well for the designing questions and the quality of such work continues to impress the examiners. There were many excellent examples of generation of ideas and presentation drawings on the paper.

- One-word answers were rare in written responses but adequate when applied to a given table or chart.

Question 1 - Marketing and Product Analysis

This question was usually well answered with many candidates achieving near full marks. The identification of a typical user and aesthetic features of the given mobile phone designs was usually well done although there was the usual confusion between aesthetic and function. Some responses were repeated and so maximum credit could not be awarded. The function symbols were well known and presented no problems to the majority of candidates.

Question 2 – Lighting Effects and Computer Aided Design

This question tested the candidate's ability to render a given drawing and it is pleasing to note that many were as successful as they were with the understanding of the CAD icons.

(a) (i) The top left of the drawing was the most popular position for the light source which allowed many candidates to show the top surface features of the phone in clear relief. A minority misunderstood the question and assumed that the symbol was a light bulb or LED to be added to the body of the phone.

(ii) The quality of the rendering was very good and was usually compatible with the position of the light source.

(b) (i) There were many successful attempts at this question. However, some candidates missed marks when describing the use. They tended to repeat 'zoom in' rather than give a fuller application e.g. to magnify part of the screen, to show small details or merely 'rotate', without being specific e.g. through 90 degrees, from portrait to landscape. The ABC icon was thought to be 'use capital letters' instead of 'select text' by a sizeable minority with an obvious effect on the final mark.

(ii) The printer icon section was poorly done. Whilst the sketching space was used by many to finalise a design, some did not transfer their idea to its required position in Table 2. Also, some designs were not in the same style as required with many attempting to show too great a detail on a small 3D thumbnail sketch. A simplified, 2D recognisable printer profile was all that was wanted. Marks were awarded according to merit.

Question 3 – Letter styles

This question produced a wide range of responses. The naming of the parts of the letters was well done with many attaining full marks, but the sketching and evaluation of two different letter styles presented difficulties to some.

(a) The correct identification of the bar and the serif was common. Some candidates did confuse the serif with the curve, but they were in the minority.

(b) (i) The majority of candidates were successful and gained maximum marks. Marks were lost by some who did not use the grid when drawing their letter S despite the green lines in part (i) and the grid on the given example. Untidy line work also affected the mark awarded.

(ii) Most candidates gained half marks for their evaluation of the chosen letter style and some picked up the maximum of three marks because they gave a fuller reason for their choice. Perhaps more response lines on the question paper would have encouraged more detailed answers.

Question 4 – Development of ideas

Many candidates responded well and gained good marks on this formative designing question. Initial ideas were asked for, one of which was required to be developed into a final concept. This preferred idea was to be taken through to the presentation drawing in question 5.

(a) (i) There were many different interpretations of the theme 'emergency use' and most responses could be recognised as such and rewarded. Some candidates had a problem with the term 'range of different images' and offered only one or two designs. A few candidates relied on ideas taken from revision websites which showed variations of letter styles for the word 'emergency' or other similar text.

(ii) The majority of candidates indicated the colours used in their images. For these marks, only an indication of colour was necessary but labels, swatches or full coloured drawings were all accepted. Some centres may note that for marks available perfect rendered drawings were not expected. In the few

cases where this was evident, the candidate gained the marks but penalised themselves by using up time.

Most candidates gained two of the three marks but failed to give adequate reasons   for their choices and so access maximum credit. Too many students merely described their images, without any explanations, and could only get one mark.

(b) (i) All candidates carried one idea through from part (a).

(ii) It was in this section where the biggest loss of marks occurred. Hardly any candidates used this space to develop their designs. They all gave a single sketch with minimal changes from their original version without any noticeable differences, and without evidence of incremental modifications. This oversight was common to all papers and tiers.

(iii)As in other questions insufficient evaluations prevented many gaining maximum marks. Centres should encourage their candidates to address the 'why' and 'because' when evaluating a design. Here it was not enough simply to describe the differences, detailed reasons were required explaining 'why' changes had been made.

Question 5 - Layouts and Presentation Drawings

This question represented the later stages of the design process. Candidates were given the opportunity to apply a specification, consider the layout of the specification's components and then produce a presentation drawing. There were many high scoring candidates who displayed sound graphical skills.

(a)   Many candidates successfully sketched a layout for the given specification. Some used labelled rectangles and squares to represent the three elements. Others gave themselves a time penalty by giving a near presentation quality drawing when it was not required.

(b) (i) The line quality was good with neat, dark pencil or graphic liners used.

(ii) The quality of colouring was good with some candidates attempting the higher level skill of tonal control.

(iii) A well answered question. Most candidates were able to neatly apply their design in isometric.

Question 6 – Materials and Components.

This question produced marks at both the higher and lower ends of the range, and few in the middle. Candidates usually had some ideas of the solutions or very little. Again this suggested that some centres do not cover these aspects of graphic products.

(a)   Very few candidates realised that the locking flaps lined up with the straight edge of the folding end flaps and so interlock. Some sketches left a lot to be desired. Many candidates simply copied the given figure.

(b) (i) and (ii)
There were many attempts at this part, and most had some success. The cut out line rectangular folds were usually well done. Many attempts carried the cut diagonals to the corners of the out line. This was generally well applied but neatness was frequently lacking with many poor freehand attempts.

(c) British Standard dimensioning remains a mystery to many centres and candidates. There were many attempts at placing sizes on the drawing but very few followed the basic requirements of an international standard. When attempted, most could not recognise that the dimensions of the card were required and not the length of side, width or any other favoured feature. A few candidates dimensioned everything with the same inappropriate conventions. Continuous lines, leader lines, arrow heads, positioning of numbers all were very poorly presented. This type of question has been common for many years but the examiners reported little general improvement in applied knowledge.

Question 7 – Cultural, Social Issues and Environmental Issues

Many candidates reached this last question and achieved some success. But as a general comment, many responses were too superficial for maximum marks.

(a) Most candidates were able to recognise the general themes of the two symbols but as answers tended to be one or two words, full marks were rare. Sometimes the meanings were not within the given context e.g. do not light fires, no bins allowed. Likewise, popular reasons frequently did not fit the question such as, 'must be disposed of another way', or 'it will explode'. The focus should have been on, as stated on environmental dangers, pollution, land contamination, toxic gases etc.

(b) This CE mark appears on many packages but few recognised it as a European safety symbol.

(c) Most scored over half marks by explaining why the given symbol was appropriate for a European Union eco-label. Most recognised that the letter E was either Europe, the Euro or the environment. Very few placed the stars or the colours in context.

(d) The use of the designing space to experiment with ideas was well done and most successfully transferred their idea into the given space for the symbol. Common errors included not following the same style as Table 3, mixing 2D and 3D styles and use of single line arrows. Wherever possible, credit was given if the meaning could be deduced.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Please see the following link:

http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html