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Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCSE

GCSE Design & Technology: Textiles Technology (1971/3971)

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Contents

GCSE Design & Technology:
Textiles Technology Examiners' Reports

GCSE Design and Technology: Textiles Technology
Principal Moderator's Report - June 2009
1971, Paper 01 (Coursework)

General Comments

The overall standard of coursework submitted by centres was good this year. Assessment decisions tended to be generous. Many centres submitted good quality coursework where candidates had generated work that could be assessed against the specification. There were however some centres that seemed to encourage candidates to complete work that did not generate marks, particularly in criterion four (industrial application) and criterion five (work safely).

Many centres rightly encouraged candidates to limit their portfolios to 20 pages, the recommended amount, but there are some centres who do seem to encourage candidates to complete far more work than is necessary to achieve high marks.

Coursework portfolios were generally presented appropriately on A3 sheets, either spirally or ring bound although there were still lots of centres that continued to use plastic wallets and folders or portfolios which are very bulky to store and post during the moderation process. Centre assessors do need to be mindful that this process is completed in people's homes so reducing the volume of parcels is much appreciated by the moderation team.

Criteria 1

Identify needs, use information sources to develop detailed specifications and criteria.

Needs

Some centres tended to struggle to encourage candidates to produce sufficiently in-depth work to achieve high marks in this criterion. Those centres that did consistently well tended to encourage candidates to write a customer profile as part of this criterion. This criterion tended to be assessed generously.

Information

Most candidates were able to access marks for this criterion, with most information being sourced from the internet. There were often cases when the information did not seem to have any bearing on the design process and teachers should encourage candidates to really consider what they need to know to take their project forward. Sourcing three very useful pieces of information is both less time consuming than sourcing lots of irrelevant information and more useful in progressing the project. This criterion tended to be assessed accurately.

Specification

These varied considerably from centre to centre, with some encouraging candidates to write lengthy passages about they product the intend to design and some only producing a few bullet points. There also seemed to be trend for candidates to be very specific about the product to such an extent that some appeared to have been written after the products were made. There were some centres that appeared to

encourage candidates to write the specification after the design process, meaning it could not inform how the product developed nor could it be reviewed against during the design process. This criterion tended to be assessed generously.

Criteria 2

Develop ideas from the specification, check, review and modify as necessary to develop a product.

Ideas

Most candidates complete this criterion well, often with more design ideas than is necessary. Three drawings with detailed annotations is quite sufficient and should give enough inspiration to be developed into a final design proposal. This criterion was usually assessed in line with Edexcel guidelines.

Develop

There seems to be a general misconception about what this criterion is about. There were some portfolios where it was quite difficult to identify how the 'ideas' and 'develop' stage differed as design sketches were produced in a similarly random way without any problem solving being undertaken. Some centres seem to encourage candidates to produce a toile or mock up merely to check skills rather than it having any impact on the design process. It would be more fruitful for a candidate to sample several different decorative techniques in relation to their design process and/or ways of completing a particular feature with a variety of suitable fabrics, review and evaluate them and then make an informed choice. Some candidates produced a final design proposal that was vague, this would have an impact on assessing the final product in criteria five. This criterion was generally assessed generously.

Review

There appeared to be a trend to encourage candidates to write reams of text, which often only described the product and did not review it against the specification. Seeking others opinions was often an under utilized review tool. This criterion is often assessed generously by the centres.

Criteria 3

Use written and graphical techniques including ICT and CAD where appropriate to generate, develop, model and communicate.

This whole section was generally assessed accurately. There were a few cases where ICT was harshly assessed as most candidates were able to provide sufficient evidence for medium to high marks.

Criteria 4

Produce and use detailed working schedules, which include a range of industrial applications as well as the concepts of systems and control. Simulate production and assembly lines using appropriate ICT.

Systems and control

The majority of flowcharts sampled were at a medium level, they included inputs, outputs, processes and quality checks but rarely were actions identified when a response to a quality check was 'no'. Candidates need to be encouraged to consider what they will need to do if something goes wrong, this might include unpicking a section before returning to the main flowchart activities.

Schedule

This criterion was usually assessed in line with Edexcel guidelines however it is important to encourage candidates to identify the amount of time in hours/minutes that they anticipate a task taking. Those schedules that also included comments about: safe working practices; problems being solved; and photographs of the activity were of the most benefit to candidates as they were able to generate marks for criteria five as well.

Industrial applications

There seemed to be a misconception about the amount of work required for this criterion as many candidates seemed to be encouraged to write a lot about factory processes. The most frequently utilized piece of equipment was an overlocker, however some candidates were also just as successful at achieving high marks by designing, producing and inserting garment/ care labels onto their product by using a digital embroidery machine as were candidates that made swing tags with a standard computer and laser printer. Some candidates seemed to be under the impression that by just inserting a sample of overlocked fabric was adequate for a low mark, there does really need to be some indication on how /where this it likely to be used, the most likely place to find this is on the plan of making. Centres are strongly advised to take photographs of candidates using this equipment as part of the making of the final product: staged photographs with a part of a garment just 'sat underneath' the foot of an overlocker is not appropriate.

Criterion 5

Select and use tools, equipment and processes effectively and safely to make single products and products in quantity. Use CAM appropriately.

Select and use

Those centres that had encouraged their candidates to produce visual photographic diaries or insert photographs into their schedules clearly demonstrated candidate skills. Annotations alongside these images were as important as the candidate was able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the task and skills involved. Centres did tend to mark this part a little generously.

Make products

To achieve high marks the candidates must provide photographic evidence of the final item made. Photos must show that the item relates fully to the features of the design proposal. Candidates must be encouraged to review their final design proposal at the end of the making activity and identify if changes have been made. High quality products have processes such as surface decorations, embellishments, fastenings and complexity in structure appropriate for KS4. High quality can not be verified if there are no internal photographs either in the portfolio or on the CMRB. In general moderators see a great variety of products skillfully completed by candidates.

Work safely

There was a trend in this section for candidates to generate a centre style generic list of safety rules which does not link to the actual actions the candidate was undertakes in the making of their product. It was therefore easier to identify when a candidate had understood how to work safely when it was included as part of the schedule or a 'select and use' diary. One mark can be awarded if the teacher has written on the CMRB that the candidate was observed working safely.

Criterion 6

Devise and apply tests to check the quality of candidates' work at critical control points. Ensure that products are of suitable quality for the intended use. Suggest modifications that would improve their performance.

Tests and checks

Many candidates failed to achieve high marks in this criterion, this is often due to the lack of checks and tests written into the specification. Some centres rely on a formula of tests that each candidate must complete. For example each candidate completes a washing test in a washing machine (even though the product is a evening garment that would be usually dry cleaned); completes a burn test (even though the product is not going to be in a fire risk area or worn as nightwear); wears the product and comments on its comfort; and then asks the rest of the class for some feedback all of which are positive comments about how great the garment is.

Those teachers that encourage candidates whilst writing their specification to identify three or so tests/checks that they will need to complete are usually most successful in this area. These tests are usually specific and involve: seeking 'critical' customer feedback; testing the functionality e.g. will the bag hold a specific list of products; providing all the receipts and checking the cost and the estimated value; measuring the product to check it is a specific size etc. Evidence of these tests and checks are usually backed up with photographs.

Evaluate

This section is again often generously assessed and appears to be misunderstood by some candidates. Many write long essays about how well the project went and what problems they had to solve along the way; this might be valuable information that could support skills and knowledge in 'select and use' and if completed should be filed alongside the diary.

Those candidates that achieve well in this section appear to have been instructed by their teacher to quite clearly only review the product against the specification and use the results of their tests and checks to back up any comments.

Modifications

For the high mark here candidates should present more than one modification, each of which should arise from a different evaluation. Many candidates suddenly introduce suggested modifications that are not responses from evaluations or tests and checks. Assessors need to be mindful of this.

GCSE Design and Technology: Textiles Technology
Principal Examiner's Report - June 2009
1971, Foundation Paper 2F

Foundation Tier

Candidates obviously found the paper much more accessible this year as there were fewer blank answers. However, answers were sometimes not related to the question asked, with candidates seeing a word or context and writing all they knew about that. There were few in-depth answers when questions referred to aspects of the specification they may not have come across in their everyday lives.

The presentation of candidates' papers continues to improve, but they need to be reminded about the need for clarity, in the presentation of both their written and design work, and also working within the physical framework as set out on the paper. The number of lines for writing is a good guide as to the length of answer required. We have tried to give a little more space to allow for work to be scanned correctly so that it can be marked on the computer effectively.

Question 1

Q01a Mean score 8.03 from 10 marks

Most candidates made a good start to the paper with this question, the weakness was the Velcro which they described as sticking together items rather than being used as a fastening.

Q01b Mean score 0.96 from 2 marks

Most candidates answered the safety rules when using a steam iron correctly but some talked of burning the fabric rather than safety.

Q01c Mean score 1.04 from 3 marks

It seemed that few candidates had experience of pressing velvet but many gave sensible answers such as pressing on the wrong side and using a low heat, whilst others gave totally unrelated answers.

Q01d Mean score 0.78 from 2 marks

There were very few correct answers to the question regarding laying pattern pieces on fabric with a nap, the majority gave general rules rather than specific rules for fabric with a nap. This was possibly the worst performing question on the paper.

Q01e Mean score 1.11 from 3 marks
Q01f Mean score 0.79 from 2 marks

All the computer related terms (ICT, 2D/3D modelling and CIM) were generally confused so that one answer was put in to cover all eventualities, showing a lack of understanding of the different processes. These answers tended to be 'quicker and cheaper' so the answers were not always in context or relating to the specific nature of the questions

Question 2

Q02a Mean score 3.29 from 4 marks

Candidates were able to choose which were manufactured and which the natural fibres were.

Q02b Mean score 0.40 from 2 marks

There were very few correct answers for characteristics of knitted and woven fabrics. It was clear they did not understand the term characteristics or that the question referred to all different types of woven and knitted fabric so answers such as strong were incorrect.

Q02c Mean score 0.46 from 3 marks

Again few could name three types of weave with many naming types of fabric instead.

Q02d Mean score 0.80 from 2 marks

Candidates performed better on the reason for knitted fabric to make sweatshirts, possibly because many wear them daily. They mainly concentrated on the warmth aspect but could not always give a good reason which was linked.

Q02e Mean score 0.51 from 2 marks
Q02f Mean score 1.58 from 3 marks

Whilst there were some reasonable answers presented to the morality of fashion trends for one season some approached the question from the manufacturer's point of view saying they may go out of business when items are not sold. Linked to this, there were also good answers relating to recycling garments. This was a high scoring question.

Q02g Mean score 0.74 from 2 marks

The safety label question was less well answered with candidates confusing them with washing labels.

Q02h Mean score 0.51 from 2 marks

Equally the furnishing label was not at all well answered with very few recognising the resistance to cigarette ignition. Most said it was fire and smoke resistant, so few marks were scored.

Q02i Mean score 0.27 from 2 marks

The CAM question again generated answers such as quick and neat. It was evident that candidates had not read the question with the focus on the *consumer.* One mark was sometimes gained but rarely two as a description was not given.

Question 3

Q03 Mean score 12.71 from 22 marks

The quality of work produced for this question varied in presentation, so that some marking points were easier to find than others. Annotation varies from none at all to so much that is not relevant to the specification points. Candidates should be encouraged just to label the eight points required in the specification only. It is clear that those teachers who have been to Edexcel inset training are helping their candidates annotate well. This approach not only saves the candidate time and ensures nothing is missed but is also helpful to examiners when allocating marks.

Separate section for books and pens

Any sections were acceptable but these needed to be labelled clearly and be different on each design. Most candidates did this well.

Fasten securely and easily

Most candidates used a variety of fastenings, all of which were acceptable unfortunately some repeated the use of fastenings in their second design.

Be easy and comfortable to carry

Candidates lost marks in this section if they did not show how the bag was comfortable to carry. Many did put padded pieces on the straps or made the straps adjustable which gained marks.

Be made from materials and processes suitable for production in School's Textiles Room

One mark was gained for evidence of processes in the drawing which did not need to be annotated, and the second for a suitable fabric named. Few candidates actually named a fabric and often the same fabric was used in the second drawing which was not creditable.

In the evaluation section candidates often repeated the information for the design in this section rather than evaluating what they had drawn. Marks were gained by candidates who failed to annotate their designs initially. Examination techniques, such as using "link" words (e.g. because, therefore), need to be taught to encourage pupils to extend their answers and to focus on giving reasons for choices in their design.

Question 4

Q04a Mean score 1.98 from 6 marks

The response to the specification point question was disappointing. In many cases candidates were only gaining 2 out of the 6 marks. Some candidates placed “needs” in the “quality” section or vice-versa, e.g. durable and comfortable. The environmental section was sometimes completely misunderstood, especially with regards to recycling. However, the environmental response was better than last year. Whilst quality was considered generally, specific answers were very limited. A few mentioned “well-made”, but did not give examples. More practice in this type of question which will continue to appear for one more year would be beneficial to candidates.

Q04b Mean score 1.22 from 2 marks

Candidates seemed to relate to the Polartec jacket scenario and therefore there was a good response. Many candidates had knowledge regarding the suitability of Polartec for the fleece jacket so this question was answered well.

Q04c Mean score 0.73 from 2 marks

The bonded seams did prove a little more difficult and so gained a poorer response.

Q04d Mean score 1.82 from 4 marks

On the whole candidates could suggest properties of polyester with a weatherproof coating referring mainly to protection from the rain so the wearer doesn’t get wet. They did not always refer to properties as such.

Q04e Mean score 0.21 from 2 marks

Little understanding of what is involved in quality control checks was evident and so candidates struggled with this question. Most wrote about desirable fabric qualities rather than specific checks.

Q04f Mean score 0.64 from 2 marks

Candidates also struggled with the CNC machine question and so the response was poor, they relied on their ‘fast and easy’ responses.

Q04g Mean score 2.26 from 4 marks

Candidates did well in explaining how the jacket achieves its specification points. In the first part candidates gave several features but sometimes failed to explain why. In the second part, “be seen in the dark”, the reflective parts of the jacket were well listed, but the necessity for a form of light to shine on them was sometimes forgotten.

GCSE Design and Technology: Textiles Technology
Principal Examiner's Report - June 2009
1971, Higher Paper 2H

Higher Tier

The great majority of candidates attempted all the questions. The response to the product design and design questions continues to be good, but again some aspects of the paper showed a lack of knowledge of the specification.

The presentation of candidates' papers continues to improve, but they need to be reminded about the need for clarity, in the presentation of both their written and design work, and also working within the physical framework as set out on the paper. The number of lines for writing is a good guide as to the length of answer required.

Question 1

Candidates seemed to relate to the Polartec jacket scenario and therefore there was a good response overall to the product design question.

Q01a Mean score 2.81 from 6 marks

Some candidates didn't appear to take much notice of the sub-headings in the specification question and there was quite a lot of cross-over between 'needs of the user' and 'quality' and so marks could not be awarded. Some candidates confused environmental considerations with meaning environmental in terms of the weather. However, others had a good understanding of the use of plastic bottles to make Polartec and answered the environmental section well. More practice in this type of question which will continue to appear for one more year would be beneficial to candidates.

Q01b Mean score 1.41 from 2 marks

Candidates had a good understanding of the qualities of the polar fleece and a common answer was warm and comfortable. Some candidates misunderstood and thought it needed an answer which included something about recycling.

Q01c Mean score 1.07 from 2 marks

Candidates understood and answered the bonded seams question well but some thought it was bonded so that the seam would not fray.

Q01d Mean score 2.37 from 4 marks

A few candidates cannot make the distinction between a property with an explanatory reason, and simply repeat the property in the reason. However this was answered well by many.

Q01e Mean score 0.70 from 2 marks

Little understanding of what is involved in quality control checks was evident even at Higher level. Candidates answered this question mostly regarding the seams strength for example; 'sewn properly', and also 'components attached securely' were popular answers.

Q01f Mean score 1.16 from 2 marks

Some candidates still have little understanding of the operation of a CNC machine and gained only half marks. Even at Higher level they relied on their 'fast and easy' responses.

Q01g Mean score 3.24 from 4 marks

Candidates did well in explaining how the jacket achieves its specification points. In the first part candidates gave several features but sometimes failed to explain why. In the second part, "be seen in the dark", the reflective parts of the jacket were well listed, and understood that to reflect they would need a light source. However, some thought 'glow in the dark' was sufficient.

Question 2

Q02a Mean score 0.71 from 2 marks

Candidates could often name felt as a non-woven fabric but couldn't always gain a second mark.

Q02b Mean score 1.06 from 2 marks

The best prepared candidates could give a range of chemical finishing processes, whilst others confused biostoning as a chemical finish.

Q02c Mean score 3.06 from 4 marks

Most candidates had a good understanding about how to tie dye. The description mostly related to how to tie dye in a classroom using elastic bands and leaving the fabric to dry. Good marks were gained by the majority of candidates.

Q02d Mean score 0.49 from 3 marks

It was clear that most candidates did not understand what was required from this question regarding the size of the design/pattern and there may have been some confusion with the fabric pattern and pattern pieces.

Q02e Mean score 0.57 from 2 marks

In the high volume production question many candidates mentioned the information given in the stem i.e. large quantities and identical - showing once again that candidates need to read their questions carefully. Candidates gave one word answers for example 'quick'; however many had a good understanding of this process especially that 'it ran continuously'.

Q02f Mean score 0.83 from 3 marks

Again in the use of ICT to speed up data communication at the point of sale, candidates did not always read the question properly. Seeing ICT, the candidates did not read the “at point of sale”, and referred to all aspects of ICT used in the textile industry. Some thought that this was about adding up and working out the cost of items at the point of sale. However, many had a good idea about the re-ordering and stock level communication.

Q02g Mean score 1.69 from 4 marks

For the CAD/CAM questions most candidates knew that the designs could be altered, modified and changed but they were not specific about how they can be rotated, stretched etc. None answered with ‘the knitting/weaves can be simulated’. Many understood that the process meant that you did not need to make a sample. For computerised sewing processes, candidates only answered ‘accurate as no human error’ otherwise they did not have a good understanding of this process. Despite the question stating other than speed some wrote ‘it will save time.’ Candidates do now have a better understanding of industrial manufacture however.

Q02h Mean score 0.80 from 2 marks

For the quality assurance question some candidates referred to products being made to “specified standards”, which is in the stem, rather than being more specific about the actual process. Many candidates mentioned it should be sewn correctly and no loose threads. They generally had a good understanding that the products should be checked for quality but they said ‘it should be checked’ or ‘they’ rather than ‘a sample’.

Question 3

Q03 Mean score 14.95 from 22 marks

In general candidates are now better prepared for this question. They sometimes annotate the eight specification points**,** without duplicating answers in the two designs. Numbering and clear annotations help the candidate to cover all the marks and helps examiners when allocating marks. Some responses with annotations written in different directions on the page are very difficult to mark.

Be smart and identify the staff working for the business

Most candidates had no problem coming up with ways to make their designs smart & identifiable, with many choosing a combination of correctly labelled smart skirt/trousers/jacket/ shirt etc. Evidence of identification mainly took the form of a logo, but some candidates used colour, or ties.

Be comfortable and easy to care for

These were the two less well defined areas - sometimes "comfortable" was not mentioned in the design, but did feature in the evaluation. Easy to care for, in terms of machine-washable, crease-resistant and non-iron, were the most popular. Simply annotating "comfortable jacket" was not enough and needed qualifying as to what makes it comfortable. Shoes and bags were occasionally drawn which seemed a waste of time.

Be suitable for hot & cold weather conditions

Some candidates tried to use one item for both weather conditions, e.g. long sleeves for cold, rolled-up for hot, rather than give two separate items. Other suggestions such as rolling up trousers meant that the outfit no longer looked smart.

Be easily suitable for batch production

Very few candidates actually gave two reasons and this was the main area of weakness.

In the evaluation many candidates simply described what they'd already drawn and/or annotated in their design and therefore failed to gain marks. More thoughtful evaluations (and perhaps an easier way to gain marks here) were those that wrote about how their designs could have been improved in each of the categories. Examination techniques, such as using "link" words (e.g. because, therefore), need to be taught to encourage pupils to extend their answers and to focus on giving reasons for choices in their design.

Question 4

Q04a Mean score 0.89 from 2 marks

Candidates knew the characteristics of filament fibres and so this question was well answered, many candidates gaining full marks.

Q04b Mean score 0.11 from 2 marks

However, very few could describe the structure of wool fibres; exceptionally few students got the full correct answer but a few gained one mark when they mentioned overlapping or scales. Most gave the answer as hairy, curly, crinkly and wavy.

Q04c Mean score 0.81 from 3 marks

Properties of acrylic fibres were fairly well known and so most did well most giving strong as an answer. Wrong answers included warm, thick, smooth, absorbent, stretchy, washable and crease resistant.

Q04d Mean score 1.07 from 4 marks

Candidates understood some features of warp and weft knitting but many found this question difficult and failed to gain many marks. Most were familiar with the warp/vertical and weft/horizontal information, but very little else. Some understood that warp was only an industrial process. A small number understood and struggled but attempted to describe the structure. None understood that warp is mostly made from filament yarns.

Q04e Mean score 2.05 from 3 marks

Candidates mostly understood that care labels showed them how to care for the garment correctly. Generally they answered this question well. Most gave a correct answer to the course of action they should take if a product doesn't perform although a few wrote 'sue the manufacturer'.

Q04f Mean score 1.95 from 4 marks

Most candidates had a good understanding of the moral issues of manufacturing in the Far East and gave a clear answer. Some candidates expressed some very strong views in this section, especially with regard to consumers feeling 'guilty' about bad working conditions and limited pay, in relation to large profits made by middle-men. Some incorrectly thought the product would be bad quality and the designs would be out of fashion by the time it reached the UK.

Q04g Mean score 1.80 from 4 marks

Most candidates gave good answers and understood the question regarding the negative effect the production of manufactured fibres could have on the environment. However, some needed to think more carefully about this question, rather than writing all they knew about CO_2 and the Greenhouse Effect.

GCSE Design and Technology: Textiles Technology (short course)
Principal Moderator's Report - June 2009
3971, Paper 01 (Coursework)

General comments

There are only a handful of centres that complete this award so generalised statements about assessment patterns are difficult to identify. Since the content of the short course is very similar to that of the full course, recommendations and comments made with reference to the full course are relevant also to the short one.

GCSE Design and Technology: Textiles Technology (short course)
Principal Examiner's Report - June 2009
3971, Foundation Paper 2F

Candidates obviously found the paper much more accessible this year as there were fewer blank answers. However, answers were sometimes not related to the question asked, with candidates seeing a word or context and writing all they knew about that. There were few in-depth answers when questions referred to aspects of the specification they may not have come across in their everyday lives.

The presentation of candidates' papers continues to improve, but they need to be reminded about the need for clarity, in the presentation of both their written and design work, and also working within the physical framework as set out on the paper. The number of lines for writing is a good guide as to the length of answer required.

Due to the small entry the comments given are the same as for the full course paper. The mean scores, however, are those scored by short course candidates.

Question 1

Q01a Mean score 5.80 from 6 marks

Most candidates made a good start to the paper with this question, the weakness was the Velcro which they described as sticking together items rather than being used as a fastening.

Q01b Mean score 0.60 from 2 marks

Most candidates answered the safety rules when using a steam iron correctly but some talked of burning the fabric rather than safety.

Q01c Mean score 1.20 from 2 marks

It seemed that few candidates had experience of pressing velvet but many gave sensible answers such as pressing on the wrong side and using a low heat, whilst others gave totally unrelated answers.

Question 2

Q02a Mean score 3.80 from 4 marks

Candidates were able to choose which were manufactured and which the natural fibres were.

Q02b Mean score 1.00 from 2 marks

However, there were very few correct answers for characteristics of knitted and woven fabrics. It was clear they did not understand the term characteristics or that the question referred to all different types of woven and knitted fabric so answers such as strong were incorrect.

Q02c Mean score 0.00 from 3 marks

Again few could name three types of weave with many naming types of fabric instead.

Q02d Mean score 1.80 from 2 marks

Candidates performed better on the reason for knitted fabric to make sweatshirts, possibly because many wear them daily. They mainly concentrated on the warmth aspect but could not always give a good reason which was linked.

Question 3

Q03a Mean score 4.00 from 6 marks

The response to the specification point question was disappointing. In many cases candidates were only gaining 2 out of the 6 marks. Some candidates placed "needs" in the "quality" section or vice-versa, e.g. durable and comfortable. The environmental section was sometimes completely misunderstood, especially with regards to recycling. However, the environmental response was better than last year. Whilst quality was considered generally, specific answers were very limited. A few mentioned "well-made", but did not give examples. More practice in this type of question which will continue to appear for one more year would be beneficial to candidates.

Q03b Mean score 1.60 from 2 marks

Candidates seemed to relate to the Polartec jacket scenario and therefore there was a good response. Many candidates had knowledge regarding the suitability of Polartec for the fleece jacket so this question was answered well.

Q03c Mean score 1.00 from 2 marks

The bonded seams did prove a little more difficult and so gained a poorer response.

Q03d Mean score 3.60 from 4 marks

On the whole candidates could suggest properties of polyester with a weatherproof coating referring mainly to protection from the rain so the wearer doesn't get wet. They did not always refer to properties as such.

Q03e Mean score 0.80 from 2 marks

Little understanding of what is involved in quality control checks was evident and so candidates struggled with this question. Most wrote about desirable fabric qualities rather than specific checks.

Q03f Mean score 1.40 from 2 marks

Candidates also struggled with the CNC machine question and so the response was poor, they relied on their 'fast and easy' responses.

Q03g Mean score 3.20 from 4 marks

Candidates did well in explaining how the jacket achieves its specification points. In the first part candidates gave several features but sometimes failed to explain why. In the second part, “be seen in the dark”, the reflective parts of the jacket were well listed, but the necessity for a form of light to shine on them was sometimes forgotten.

GCSE Design and Technology: Textiles Technology
Principal Examiner's Report - June 2009
3971, Higher Paper 2H

Higher Tier

The great majority of candidates attempted all the questions. The response to the product design and design questions continues to be good, but again some aspects of the paper showed a lack of knowledge of the specification.

The presentation of candidate's papers continues to improve, but they need to be reminded about the need for clarity, in the presentation of both their written and design work, and also working within the physical framework as set out on the paper. The number of lines for writing is a good guide as to the length of answer required. We have tried to give a little more space to allow for work to be scanned correctly so that it can be marked on the computer effectively

Question 1

Candidates seemed to relate to the Polartec jacket scenario and therefore there was a good response overall to the product design question.

Q01a Mean score 3.70 from 6 marks

Some candidates didn't appear to take much notice of the sub headings in the specification question and there was quite a lot of cross-over between 'needs of the user' and 'quality' and so marks could not be awarded. Some candidates confused environmental considerations with meaning environmental in terms of the weather. However, others had a good understanding of the use of plastic bottles to make Polartec and answered the environmental section well. More practice in this type of question which will continue to appear for one more year would be beneficial to candidates.

Q01b Mean score 1.90 from 2 marks

Candidates had a good understanding of the qualities of the polar fleece and a common answer was warm and comfortable. Some candidates misunderstood and thought it needed an answer which included something about recycling.

Q01c Mean score 1.00 from 2 marks

Candidates understood and answered the bonded seams question well but some thought it was bonded so that the seam would not fray.

Q01d Mean score 2.60 from 4 marks

A few candidates cannot make the distinction between a property with an explanatory reason, and simply repeat the property in the reason. However this was answered well by many.

Q01e Mean score 0.90 from 2 marks

Little understanding of what is involved in quality control checks was evident even at Higher level. Candidates answered this question mostly regarding the seams strength for example; sewn properly, and also 'components attached securely' were popular answers.

Q01f Mean score 0.90from 2 marks

Some candidates still have little understanding of the operation of a CNC machine and gained only half marks. Even at Higher level they relied on their 'fast and easy' responses.

Q01g Mean score 3.10 from 4 marks

Candidates did well in explaining how the jacket achieves its specification points. In the first part candidates gave several features but sometimes failed to explain why. In the second part, "be seen in the dark", the reflective parts of the jacket were well listed, and understood that to reflect they would need a light source. However, some thought 'glow in the dark' was sufficient.

Question 2

Q02a Mean score 0.80 from 2 marks

Candidates could often name felt as a non-woven fabric but couldn't always gain a second mark.

Q02b Mean score 1.30 from 2 marks

The better prepared candidates could give a range of chemical finishing processes whilst others confused biostoning as a chemical finish.

Q02c Mean score 3.10 from 4 marks

Most candidates had a good understanding about how to tie dye. The description mostly related to how to tie dye in a classroom using elastic bands and leaving the fabric to dry. Good marks were gained by the majority of candidates.

Q02d Mean score 0.20 from 3 marks

It was clear that most candidates did not understand what was required from this question regarding the size of the design/pattern and there may have been some confusion with the fabric pattern and pattern pieces.

Question 3

Q03a Mean score 0.50 from 2 marks

Candidates knew the characteristics of filament fibres and so this question was well answered, many candidates gaining full marks.

Q03b Mean score 0.10 from 2 marks

However, very few could describe the structure of wool fibres; exceptionally few students got the full correct answer but a few gained one mark when they mentioned overlapping or scales. Most gave the answer as hairy, curly, crinkly and wavy.

Q03c Mean score 1.10 from 3 marks

Properties of acrylic fibres were fairly well known and so most did well most giving strong as an answer. Wrong answers included warm, thick, smooth, absorbent, stretchy, washable and crease resistant.

Q03d Mean score 1.00 from 4 marks

Candidates understood some features of warp and weft knitting but many found this question difficult and failed to gain many marks. Most were familiar with the warp/vertical and weft/horizontal information, but very little else. Some understood that warp was only an industrial process. A small number understood and struggled but attempted to describe the structure. None understood that warp is mostly made from filament yarns.

GCSE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY: TEXTILES
(Full Course: 1971)

Grade Boundaries – June 2009

Overall Grades

The figures given below are the minimum subject marks required for each overall grade in the summer 2009 examinations.

Both foundation and higher options are out of 100 marks.

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Foundation				55	45	35	25	15
Higher	82	71	60	50	40	35		

Component Marks

The figures given below are the minimum marks required for each component grade in the summer 2009 examination.

(Coursework 01 out of 102)
(Paper 2F out of 88)
(Paper 2H out of 88)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Coursework	92	80	68	56	45	34	23	12
Foundation				48	40	32	25	18
Higher	61	53	45	38	30	26		

GCSE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY: TEXTILES
(Short Course: 3971)

Grade Boundaries – June 2009

Overall Grades

The figures given below are the minimum subject marks required for each overall grade in the summer 2009 examinations.

Both foundation and higher options are out of 100 marks.

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Foundation				54	44	34	24	14
Higher	81	70	59	49	39	34		

Component Marks
The figures given below are the minimum marks required for each component grade in the summer 2009 examination.

(Coursework 01 out of 84)
(Paper 2F out of 44)
(Paper 2H out of 44)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Coursework	76	66	56	46	37	28	19	
Foundation				23	19	15	11	7
Higher	29	25	21	18	14	12		

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