

Examiners' Report November 2008

IGCSE

Art and Design (4310, 4311, 4312, 4313)



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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the IGCSE Art and Design 4310 - 4313 to help and support centres in future submissions. This is the third year the qualification has been running and once again the number of candidates entered for the November 2008 series has increased significantly from the previous year's entry. There are also a number of new countries entering candidates for the first time.

It may be worth noting that IGCSE Art and Design training events will take place in the middle of January 2009. The events will take place in the following countries: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Jordan, Cyprus, Kenya (OL) Egypt, Dubai, Oman, Malaysia, Spain, China and Hong Kong.

The IGCSE specification aims to provide all centres with the framework to develop and devise courses for Art and Design across all four endorsements:

- Fine Art
- Textiles
- Photography
- Graphic Design

Not surprisingly fine art continues to be the most popular specification chosen by centres followed by graphic design, textiles and photography. A key feature is the specification allows teachers the freedom to approach the Assessment Objectives in the way which best suits them and their students.

Entries for this year's IGCSE came from many parts of the world including Bermuda, China, Cyprus, England, Greece, India, Kenya, Libya, Mexico, Sri-Lanka, Spain, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Submissions this year whether they were for coursework or exam showed the rich cultural and environmental diversity of the various countries submitting work.

'What I dream of is an art of balance' Henri Matisse.

Assessment of coursework in centres prior to external moderation

Once again there are a number of new centres submitting coursework this year therefore it might be helpful to look again at the requirements.

It is important for centres to use and be familiar with the coursework assessment criteria on the Candidate Assessment Sheet prior to marking work in the centre. In the May series the majority of centres clearly understood assessment procedures for coursework however there was a small number of centres who need to become much more familiar with this procedure which is clearly stated in the specification.

- All four assessment objectives should be met.
- All are equally weighted and have no priority.
- The final mark awarded should be a 'holistic' assessment out of 100.
- The grid should be used in conjunction with the grade descriptions given in the specification.
- A candidate's response may not satisfy every one of the assessment criteria for a particular mark band to receive a mark within that band. The coursework could meet the descriptor from a higher or lower mark band on some criteria. For example a candidate might be competent in A01, A03 and A04 but only sound in A02. The 'best fit' approach should be used to determine the mark band which corresponds most closely to the overall quality of the candidate's response.

- Once the coursework has been allocated to a mark band the final mark should be refined to a specific mark. Then recorded on the sheet.

This year a number of centres who did submit coursework for moderation tended to over or under mark candidates work. Unfortunately there was no pattern to this and the marking could best be described as erratic.

In other centres there was a pattern and the marking was out by as much as ten marks. Therefore some candidates dropped a whole grade moving from sound (51-60) into limited (41-50) in other centres marks were generally more accurate. It would help centres if when using the marking grid (taxonomy) they also used the grade descriptions given on page 18 and 19 of the specification.

It is important that marks awarded are based only on what is presented, and that teacher examiners are not influenced by other factors such as the candidate's previous achievement, or the teacher's perception of the candidate's potential or industriousness.

If there is more than one teacher of coursework in the centre, there should be internal standardisation of marking standards prior to sending work for moderation.

The Assessment Objectives.

The assessment objectives should be seen as inter-related activities not stand alone components. There are some centres that still approach the assessment objectives in chronological order. When structuring teaching and learning activities in the production of the coursework and in the preparatory six week period for the examination, this should be borne in mind.

Coursework

However centres structure their courses they should ensure that the chosen themes or genres are sufficiently flexible to allow candidates to make a personal and informed response. This in turn allows candidates to pursue their own creative journey of discovery. Themes and genres which are insufficiently broad result in submissions from centres in which candidates work is very similar.

A number of centres need to place greater emphasis on working from first hand experience would help candidates both to evidence assessment objectives and to develop creative awardable work which reflects the spirit of the specification.

It was disappointing to see a number of candidates, with signs of creative potential, at the lower end of the mark range, because they had failed to submit evidence for a particular assessment objective. In the majority of centres courses had been constructed to ensure that all assessment objectives were covered across the mark range. Many centres offered their students a variety of approaches to materials and media resulting in some very exciting outcomes.

Submitting coursework and examination for assessment

The format for submitting coursework and examination are made clear in the specification. It was pleasing to note that this year that the number of centres allowing candidates when submitting coursework/examination preparatory studies to overlap or mount work on the back of the research sheets had dropped significantly.

Reviewing, refining and modifying research for coursework and practical examination.

With the help of the centre it is important that candidates review, refine and modify their submission for presentation. Choosing the work which best illustrates their ability at covering all four assessment objectives.

Below are strengths and weaknesses which illustrate this area of coursework and examination in the May / November 2008 submissions. It is hoped these points will help centres improve the overall standard of their candidates ability to review, refine and modify ideas as they progresses.

Strengths

- Appropriate and ongoing annotation.
- Recording using an exciting range of media
- Work which reflects an understanding of the purpose of visual research.
- Appropriate contextual links in the visual form or including short written analysis.
- Sequential development of ideas using appropriate materials.
- Taking photographs of work in progress.
- Evidence of an understanding of the formal elements.
- Experimenting with media

Weaknesses

- Some centres presented research where there was too much emphasis on writing.
- They produced unedited 'downloads' from the internet.
- There was an over-reliance on secondary images.
- Research was superficial, incomplete or disorganised.
- Copying with no purpose.
- No sequential journey.
- Little visual analysis.
- Research where the intentions were not clear.
- One or more of the AO's was missing.
- Little understanding of the requirements of the specification.

By improving the quality of research it is hoped that candidate's final personal response will be ambitious and imaginative.

Practical examination and preparatory studies

Those candidates who performed of their best were generally from centres that had provided a well structured beginning to the examination. Good time management during the six week research period can also help candidates in their planning. It was clear however that some centres had given very little support to candidates in helping them 'un-pick' the exam paper.

Centres are reminded that the candidate response to the examination should be supported by a taught six week period prior to the ten hour examination. **Centres should download and print the paper as soon as it is posted on the Edexcel website to enable them to prepare teaching and learning resources to support their candidates in the six week period.**

Preparatory period

The six week preparatory period prior to the exam is a taught period where art staff can help and advise students about their work. It is helpful if as work progresses students can then chose their best idea collecting more reference material to help in their exam. Students should avoid having a trial run at this stage, as work can often become stale and dull if it is just repeated again in the exam. Unfortunately once again this year centres allowed candidates to do this. It also means that students remain excited about their work during the ten hour examination.

Ten hour examination

The theme of 'Secret' for the November series produced a very diverse response by candidates and clearly inspired many of them. Issue based responses proved to be popular, as did secret places e.g. under the sea, or hidden ancient secret monuments.

The theme is a starting point and candidates may work from any of the starting points suggested by the theme or they may develop a relevant starting point of their own on the theme of Secret.

In general it was a pleasure and privilege to see the quality of work produced by candidates for their examination. It was clear that the quality of teaching and learning in some centres was outstanding. These centres are to be commended for their enthusiasm, imagination and endeavour to provide candidates with the platform to give their best in the examination

Summary

Good teaching, well structured courses and appropriate resourcing ensure that candidates perform to their full potential in the examination and coursework. There was much evidence of this in the May/ November series. **Disappointingly however there were some centres submitting work who had little understanding of the requirements of the specification.** To move forward these centres must become much more familiar with the IGCSE specification. They may also wish to take advantage of Professional Development and Training opportunities being offered in early 2009.

Centres wishing to move their candidates forward and improve their performance must address the following issues.

- Centres must develop a course structure for both coursework and examination underpinned by the assessment objectives.
- Good teaching and learning stem from an emphasis on recording visually from first hand experience.
- With the help of the centre it is important that candidates review and refine their submission for presentation choosing the work which best illustrates their ability covering all assessment objectives.
- Internal assessment of coursework needs to be approached with impartial detachment to ensure accuracy.

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