

GCE

Product Design: Textiles

TEXT2

Report on the Examination

1561

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Introduction

This specification continues to be very successful. It is taught well and the students respond with enthusiasm to produce some impressive work across the ability range. As confidence has grown in the application of the assessment criteria teachers are allowing students to use different approaches to the coursework ranging from full portfolio content to two or three short tasks to a single design and make activity. There was some excellent work submitted, modern in its content, focused and creative with, unusual products being designed and made. Rarely do we see lengthy projects full of irrelevant research material and it seems that the only centres who don't quite get the complexity, challenge and content quite right are those new to the specification.

There has been an increase in the range of work covered with a real diversity in the end products made. National competition entries, costume design for theatre productions, advanced toy design along with the use of modern technology, particularly laser cutters and sublimation printers have been excellent features this year. Centres administration and the presentation of work for moderation has been outstanding with only a few centres failing to send work in rank order or not enclosing the Centre Declaration Sheet.

Candidate Record Forms (CRFS)

The teachers supporting statements on the Candidate Record Form were generally excellent and a strong feature of centre assessments. Students had also taken this task very seriously and identified precisely where supporting evidence could be found. It is becoming more commonplace for photographs of the made items to be attached to the CRFs and this is very useful.

Applying the Standard

Few adjustments were made to centres marks this year though it was reported that teachers are pushing marks very close to the tolerance. Only a few are getting it wrong and misinterpreting the expectations of the specification usually because they are new and have failed to make the transition from GCSE. The chosen tasks often do not provide enough challenge for the students.

- It appears most teachers are either making use of the Teacher On Line Standardising or are referring to AQA exemplar materials on the website when applying the standard and this has proved successful;
- A few centres are over rewarding students for work that lacks creativity and complexity and they are pushing the marks to tolerance.
- some centres particularly those with a high proportion of talented students are tending to mark low ability students on the harsh side;

Presentation of Work for Moderation

- Presenting the coursework portfolios is a major strength of this specification and the work is always a pleasure to moderate. Folders or sketchbooks are invariably individual, seldom over decorated and the focus is on designing not pages of irrelevant, little used research. So much of the work shows they have studied and considered the work of professional fashion designers.
- A variety of methods were used by students to present their work: Windows Power Point presentations, A3 plastic flip folders and sketchbooks proved most popular, certainly most appropriate for moderation.
- There was a significant improvement in the presentation of portfolios. Most now include an introduction/contents page with detail of the individual tasks. In most cases the portfolio included one or two design and make projects plus additional activities which were added to fulfil all areas of the assessment criteria. Many included the designs they had created for fashion and accessory competitions.
- A number of centres that produced a single project also included sample/sketchbooks to supplement their work. These were interesting to look at and a valuable resource for the students' future use. However these sketch books are heavy and some students submit them with only one or two pages used. They would benefit from only sending the used pages and avoiding the high cost of postage. One feature that has become more popular is the inclusion of thumbnail photographs of the sketchbooks presented in the folders as opposed to sending the actual sketch book.
- A3 plastic flip folders or sketchbooks were most successfully used with students showing more focus and only presenting work that illustrated their best achievement in each of the assessment criteria. Very few presented more than one folder or sketchbook.
- There was excellent use of photographic evidence throughout often making it easy to agree centre marks.

Meeting the Assessment Criteria

Criterion 1. Investigation and Clarification of Problems

This criterion was met well with students carrying out relevant research and investigation to inspire them in the early stages of designing. Very few students continue to present excessive research material clearly aware it is only worth 8 marks:

- research was generally comprehensive, focused and organised in a logical way;
- students would benefit from adding analytic annotation for their findings rather than descriptive;
- mood boards and trend forecasts were done well featuring as an early part of research and these served well to inspire fashionable designs;

- the evaluation of existing designs varied with some students failing to give in depth analysis;
- most students showed clear understanding and were able to extract information which fed into detailed design specifications;

Criterion 2. Development of Design Proposal

Success in this criterion varied greatly across centres with some students failing to understand that the objective is to creatively develop ideas and produce original designs:

- The most successful took risks in the initial stages of designing and moved away from copying existing designs;
- It was pleasing to see many having the confidence to develop their own individual style, approach and route through the design process;
- The most able gave a full explanation of all decisions made at every stage of developed;
- The quality of the ideas presented varies at this level with some students still providing 6-8 creative ideas but then making the simplest one rather than developing the most original. Where designing is good it is generally very good with excellent presentation of ideas, annotation and evaluation.
- Many students who worked to a single brief designing either corsets or special occasion dresses were highly creative and showed originality whereas others copied existing products;
- Pattern drafting was tackled by some students while others used adapted commercial patterns. commercial pattern were used wisely with adaptation, testing and modification taking place and a full explanation of the work carried out given;
- Some activities appeared to be very teacher led with students producing very similar technique samples;
- Some used the making of toile's as practise runs of making the product rather than a process aiding development;
- The most able showed highly complex development skills with advanced pattern making;
- A wide variety of both decorative and construction techniques were tested and appropriate for the designs by students working in the higher mark ranges. However there are still a number of centres who give evidence of their chosen decorative technique rather than testing a variety before making a decision. This is often an opportunity missed.
- Some centres could have encouraged more complex decorative techniques to show progression from GCSE, applique and printing are still popular in their most basic forms;

- There was an increase in the number of students who were researching fabric properties and testing techniques on the fabric before making final decisions about choice;
- Most discussed and shared their review of ideas with others including clients;
- Planning was improved with most providing plans for research, development and manufacturing;
- Production plans are thorough with evidence of quality checks and very good use is made of photo diaries. These often helped the moderator to agree centre marks for the making component;
- The inclusion of industrial aspects and wider issues such as sustainability were integrated throughout by the most able and influenced the designing. The lower ability continue to present theoretical notes.

Criterion 3. Making / Modelling

This criterion continues to be very well met with some very exciting made outcomes using modern equipment and techniques. End products were very marketable and met the client needs admirably:

- Centres appear to have got the level of demand right in the majority of cases. Portfolios tended to show products that demonstrate garment making, children's fashion items, accessory design, decorative skills as well as home interior items.
- A few centres over marked simple work because it was well executed. They failed to recognise that challenging, complex products with a high level of demand are expected to be made at this level. This was particularly evident when students submitted single items rather than a portfolio of skills;
- Some students who are following a portfolio approach are making several products and in some instances they lack the complexity expected at this level;
- There was an improvement in the quality of accuracy and finish with most using appropriate techniques;
- The most able used a varied range of materials, components and complex techniques to very good effect. There was an increase in the number experimenting with fabric manipulation techniques for decorative purposes;
- Many centres have access to sublimation printers and laser cutters and make excellent use of them in the production of the final product. The use of conductive thread and the installation of LED lights was a feature of some products this year.

Criterion 4. Evaluation and Testing

Several moderators reported a decline in the quality of evidence presented for this criterion and found it to be over marked in many cases. Some teachers gave high marks if all elements of the evaluations were attempted rather than the depth of analysis included. However the most competent students continue to have comprehensive testing strategies applied throughout the work with excellent summative product analysis reports included.

- Some centres are still not using the specification for testing against and rely heavily on the opinion of others.
- Less successful students produced weak summative evaluations which were often descriptions of the work carried out and not the critical or analytical evaluation required;
- Most students provided excellent photographs of the final products in use. Many engaged in professional photo shoots often done by fellow students studying photography
- Evaluative comments made by clients or users were used well to inform the students about improvements or modifications however those who had chosen a celebrity to design for struggled with this aspect;
- Fashion shows, productions and user trials were performed and proved to be useful to the evaluation process;
- There was some excellent feedback provided when students had entered competitions or contacted fashion designers who seemed very willing to offer support and comment.

Criterion 5. Communication and Presentation

Students continue to do well at meeting this criterion not just because they present their work with flair but because they choose appropriate methods to communicate their thinking:

- Only a few centres appear to be encouraging students to over present work on heavy card or to decorate with buttons or beads or to double mount ideas;
- Most folders flowed really well with every page leading you logically through the design process. All aspects were communicated to a high standard with good use of technical language.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion