GCE
PRODUCT DESIGN: TEXTILES
TEXT3
Report on the Examination

2561
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General

The format of the paper is now well established with students expected to choose three questions from a total of six with at least one being selected from each of the two sections of the paper. Many of the questions were *open* and parts 05, 13 and 14 had further elements of choice built into them. This offered students the opportunity to use their own knowledge and learning when responding to the questions.

The overall standard of responses seen was very disappointing this year; many answers were of a superficial level and lacked detail. It was noticeable that a high proportion of students used material from the 2014 mark scheme when responding to questions on this paper even though the questions were different; students need to understand that whilst the mark schemes are detailed and may prove useful revision aids, the questions will be different and will require different material in the answers.

There is a wealth of support material for this specification on the e-AQA website, the questions and mark scheme allowed for a wide range of different answers and many of the topics had appeared on past examination papers. But despite all of this support for students taking this examination, answers showed very poor knowledge and understanding of the specification.

Centres and students do need to start preparing for this paper at the very start of the course and continue to teach and practise using the subject content throughout; the previous year's mark scheme on its own does not constitute adequate revision and preparation.

Scripts were mostly well presented with labelled diagrams used to explain various points; diagrams can often help students explain things that they might find difficult through the use of written communication alone. As is often the case, many students did not plan their time wisely with the result that answers to their third question were rushed and sometimes incomplete and this affected their overall achievement. Examiners noted the lack of relevance and detail in many answers; students need to consider the mark allowance for different parts of a question before beginning their response.

Teachers and students entering for future examinations are advised to study past papers and mark schemes and the relevant examiner's report in order to become familiar with the requirements. Practising answering questions within a limited time can help students to plan their time in examinations.

Section A

More students chose two questions from this section that from Section 2. Question 1 was clearly the most popular with slightly more opting for Question 3 than Question 2.

Question 1

This question was chosen by more than 50% of candidates and one which produced a good spread of marks.

01   The majority of students knew what is meant by *Fad design* and were able to explain the sales cycle of such designs. Marks were often lost because inappropriate examples were given.

02   Some students struggled with this, not really understanding that a description of the *classic sales cycle* was required and instead, writing about celebrity promotion and shocking fashions. Most gave a relevant example even though they were not asked to do so. The average mark for this question was about 10% lower than that for part 01.

03   The New Look, mini skirt, Little Black Dress and harem pants were the most popular products selected and examiners saw some very good descriptions with accurate dates, names of designers and detail of the products accompanied by high quality sketches. A number failed to identify a specific product and referred to designers' collections, e.g. Vivienne Westwood's bondage collection. A very high proportion of responses were descriptive of the era without actually giving detail of the product they had named. A well annotated diagram would have helped some students to secure a higher mark for this part of the question.

It was also very noticeable that many students referred to the way in which their selected designs were considered to be shocking at the time of their launch – clearly attempting to answer Question 1 on the 2014 paper but not quite getting the right slant for this question.

Question 2

Many answers to all parts of this question lacked depth and detail with only the most obvious points made.

04   There were some good answers with a range of positive and negative points considered and often illustrated with relevant examples. The average mark for his part of the question was about 3.5 out of 6.

05   Examiners saw very mixed responses to this part of the question with many students describing an actual uniform rather than discussing the requirements of the garments. Whilst many named fibres, few were able to describe specific fabrics, and there were some totally unrealistic examples of fibres and methods of fabric construction given. Students should be aware that fibres are not fabrics, and that more precise and accurate detail is required for top marks on an A2 paper.
The average mark for this question was just under 7 out of 14.

06   This part of the question was not well answered as many students concentrated on the reasons for wearing an overall and describing the style features rather than the properties of the non-woven fabric construction and the polypropylene fibre.
The average mark was about 33% of the total available for this part of the question.

Question 3

This was a popular question

07   This was a very straightforward question yet students offered only a limited range of points with safety issues being the main, and sometimes the only, concern. Although the points on safety were often detailed few students made reference to the needs of the child in terms of

garments being easy to put on and take off, comfort factors in relation to different seasons or activities, or considered that parents might want easy-care clothes with allowance for growth.
The average score was about 3.5 out of a possible 8 marks which is poor given the straightforward nature of the question.

08 Students understanding of the role of a buyer did not often extend beyond the need to be aware of trends. Those who were awarded the highest marks made reference to the buyer attending catwalk and trade shows, studying fashion forecasts together with established consumer buying patterns in order to anticipate the needs of the target market, and the problems arising from not buying the right stock for the outlet and the season.
A sizeable number of answers concentrated on the buying of fabrics and components and not completed garments.
Again, the average mark was disappointing – about 40% of the total.

09 Answers were very varied with some students showing good awareness of the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 and providing relevant examples of its interpretation in a clothing factory. However, many answers wandered off into problems surrounding poor working conditions in developing countries and some missing the point completely as they sought to discuss the issue of quality control when making garments.
Many answers lacked the depth of knowledge expected of an A2 answer as they concentrated on the need for a clean, well-ventilated and lit environment with adequate lighting and fair pay. Many considered that it is the employer's duty to keep the workforce happy and to make sure that employees work only limited hours; there was a lack of awareness that some workers might actually welcome additional work in order to earn more pay.
The best answers covered a wide range of different points which went beyond the most obvious and actually showed understanding of specific legal requirements such as the role of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations.

The average mark for this part of the question was also about 40% of the total.

Section B

Question 5 was the most popular choice of the Section B questions, attempted by about a third of the entry. Question 6 was the least popular.

Question 4

Those opting to answer this question were clearly confident in their knowledge and responded well to all parts. Many included drawings to illustrate the points they were making.

10 There were some very good descriptions of core-spinning with diagrams supporting written information; students had clearly used the mark scheme for the 2014 paper when revising. However, many students struggled to describe a second method of blending fibres in such detail and examiners saw some highly unrealistic methods put forward.

11 Answers were often very limited in scope and with few examples given. The A2 specification goes beyond knowledge of the basic blends on the AS specification. Few answers included anything other than polyester/cotton, elastane/cotton and wool/acrylic blends, there was only limited reference to the qualities of the individual fibres and how they

would affect a blend with a consequent lack of detail and accuracy in the responses. The topic of fibre blends has appeared on many past AS and A2 papers and there is no excuse for the poor performances seen on this question; the average mark was about 5 out of a total of 12 marks.

12   This question was answered well, particularly the description and uses of interfacing. Underlining was frequently confused with lining.

Question 5

This was the most popular question in Section B but without doubt the worst answered question on the paper, with the average score being just over 10 out of a possible 28 marks.

13   Students were offered a choice of six different areas of the textile industry, all of which have appeared on previous papers. Answers showed a lack of knowledge and understanding, even in relation to environmentally friendly fibres and marketing and retailing. Students also have a very limited awareness of changes that have taken place since 1965, the main focus of the question, with references to batik, tie-dye, block printing, television, billboard and magazine advertising appearing frequently under the guise of modern applications. Lyocell was often referred to as a new environmentally friendly fibre with some students showing awareness of others such as Ingeo and organically grown cotton but there are a significant number of students who believe that all cotton is environmentally friendly. There was some good understanding of the reasons why new fibres have been developed and the increasing use of non-traditional fibres but most answers lacked any real depth or breadth of knowledge.

Knowledge of modern methods of applying colour and pattern to fabrics was poor; many responses included lengthy and irrelevant descriptions of dyeing by hand, screen printing, the preparation of fabric for dyeing but few showed knowledge of modern techniques, even though many of them have used sublimation and digital printing in coursework projects. The development of pattern templates and lay plans was one of the better answered areas although there was a tendency to focus on the use of CAD for lay-planning and the PDS systems at the expense of a broader coverage.

Accounts of Quick Response Manufacture often showed good understanding of the importance of JIT but little else. Some students became tied up in lengthy accounts of garment dyeing and EPOS systems which are minor considerations in the topic as a whole. There was very little knowledge of automated construction methods, often limited to laser cutting and automatic buttonhole machines. There was some repeated information relating to pattern development and lay planning which was not required.

Descriptions of marketing and retailing had lots of information about shopping but often little else. There was a blanket lack of understanding of modern marketing methods even though the majority of students will be familiar with mobile phone apps, social media and cookies on internet sites. Instead, many were caught up with descriptions of older established methods such as magazines, TV and radio and billboards.

Question 6

This question again offered a choice of fabrics, many of which will have been used by students in coursework projects.

14 Students opting to answer this question tended to be knowledgeable about the fabric construction with many detailed descriptions supported by some clear and detailed diagrams. Velvet checked tartan and polyester satin were the most frequently selected fabrics whilst Jacquard knit and lace were the least popular choices. Whilst many successfully described one of their choices, there was often a lack of information about the second.

15 Answers to this part of the question were poor throughout. Many students offered limited knowledge about restrictions on some garment styles and the cutting of their chosen fabric, especially where a nap, slippery surface or bold pattern was involved, but there was very little information about the sewing and pressing of the fabrics other than the need to *be careful*. This is not A2 terminology and does not have the rigour expected in answers at this level. Students were expected to make reference to the need to stop seams from slipping or fraying excessively, to ensure continued pattern matching as required, to the use of specific equipment such as ballpoint needles for knitted fabrics, ultra-fine ones for satin and lace fabrics, a walking foot for velvet and checked fabrics, and the use of pressing aids such as a velvet board or pressing cloth.

The average mark for this part was about 35% of the total.

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