



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2011**

**Design and Technology: TEXT4
Textiles**

(Specification 2560)

Unit 4: Design and Making Practice

Report on Moderation

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Introduction

As anticipated, following the improved development of the portfolio approach to the AS course candidates this year have been impressive in their quest to produce original, complex textile products.

At best the work has been innovative and met the assessment criteria in original and exciting ways. Many centres have addressed the issue of awarding high marks to candidates who have done little more than copy existing special occasion dress designs. Originality, complexity of designs and the quality of standard of accuracy and finish have all improved.

There has been an increased use of sketch books with candidates recognising their value, particularly when presenting their individuality and flair for Further Education applications and interviews.

There was a slight growth in confidence amongst candidates working to home furnishing or fashion accessory briefs. Though construction skills may not always be the most complex the criterion can still be met at high levels and this appears to have been recognized by teachers as they assess the work.

Over the year centres have made good use of the coursework advisers who have answered a wide range of enquiries on coursework tasks. They are to be encouraged to seek further advice on development issues which continues to be a weak spot for many candidates.

Administration

Moderators reported that administration procedures were adhered to effectively with mark sheets and folders arriving promptly so that the process could begin on time.

In general, centres' administration was excellent, following the instructions correctly.

It was particularly helpful when:

- Folders were sent in rank order and clearly labelled with the candidates details;
- Centres with fifteen or fewer candidates sent the folders of all of their candidates with the Centre Mark Sheets to the moderator before the deadline date;
- The sample requested from the moderator arrived promptly;
- Centres who required a visit set out the work accordingly;

Candidate Record Forms (CRFs)

The teachers supporting statements on the Candidate Record Form were generally excellent and a strong feature of centre assessments. Candidates had also taken this task very seriously and if supporting evidence was not on the CRF they identified precisely where it could be found.

Annotation provided by the teacher was particularly helpful when it:

- identified individual help given beyond that of the teaching group as a whole;
- commented on any aspect of the work, which could not be seen by the moderator;
- referenced how candidates had used processes, methods and investigations;

Criterion 1 Context and Objectives

Again this year many candidates had explored a wide range of modern, exciting contexts and worked to very individual design briefs. However there was a worrying increase in the number of centres where candidates have worked to the same context. Even though there was still flexibility to write original design briefs it could hamper some candidate's creativity. At A2 level candidates should be identifying and writing individual, inspirational briefs and through this interest they will be encouraged to develop innovative product designs.

The criterion was very generally well covered with evidence of being met through the CRF or in the design portfolio. Many candidates now clearly state the objectives of the task. Candidates working at the lower levels, as expected, lacked some focus and depth, though most still understood what was expected of them.

Criterion 2 Plan of Action and Clarification of Problem

Planning was generally well done though often the Gantt charts presented at the start were done retrospectively and of little value. However, in many instances excellent planning occurred throughout the process with evidence of detailed planning of research activities, development work and the making activity.

Confidence has grown and an increasing number of candidates no longer present the research material and design folders start with a very in depth analysis of their research findings. The bulk of the work in the folder was rightly focused on the development of original product designs. This was refreshing and showed a maturity and excellent practice.

As always the most able showed very perceptive analysis of information and went on to produce comprehensive, well-reasoned and explained design specifications. Candidates working at lower levels tended to list the research they had carried out failing to analyse it to any depth and the resulting specifications were not a reflection of information gleaned. They often appeared from nowhere and merely described the garment they had decided to make from a commercial pattern. This in most cases was reflected in the marks the teacher had awarded.

Criterion 3 Development of design proposal

Though there has been an improvement this criterion continues to cause some concern being the one that has been marked least accurately.

At A2 level candidates are required to produce a comprehensive and imaginative range of feasible ideas resulting in the achievement of a sophisticated and elegant solution. Teachers are still asking high marks for ideas even when they have been copied from existing designs usually from commercial pattern catalogues. Some still fail to declare where the pattern or template has come from trying to disguise the fact they have relied heavily on commercial designs. Teachers know this is the approach candidates have taken and yet are unfairly awarding them top band marks.

Candidates who are fairly awarded top band marks will have set out with an inspirational context and be intent on designing an original and hopefully innovative, quality textile product.

However on some occasions very creative ideas were rejected and a simpler or safer product made.

Design ideas continue to be presented to a very high standard using professional graphic techniques. Designing showed that candidates are increasingly using improving drawing techniques to display their designs.

There was a slight weakness in the investigation and experimentation with fabrics and some occasions little regard given to their working properties. There is no right or wrong way to develop original products and many candidates at A2 level are showing their individual flair and creativity as they embark on this process. There has been a significant increase in the use of modern fabrics and technologies with candidates making full use of the CAD CAM facilities in their school.

Criterion 4 Manufacture/Modelling

Again strength of this year's entry was the quality of making with a high percentage of candidates using appropriate methods, technologies and materials and using a range of skills that demonstrated high levels of accuracy and finish.

Candidates in Textiles are very good at planning the making and recording the manufacturing process through the use of photographs and detailed written annotation to back up processes and decisions made.

There was an encouraging increase in the number of candidates not making special occasion dresses. The variety of textile products in our world is vast and the opportunities for candidates to develop original products in this field are enormous and yet for many the creativity is limited to special occasion dresses.

Criterion 5 Conclusions, Evaluations and Recommendations

Several moderators commented on this being an area of weakness for many candidates. The focus should be on evaluating the design aspects and final outcome against the original specification not on the process and how well the project went. The opinion of others appears to be sought more often when the product has been made and candidates generally offer suggestions for modifications and improvements.

In some cases evaluations lacked maturity and were not always completed to the high standards as the earlier sections and in many cases there was not enough testing against the specification. However some candidates are using modern technology to show their products in use in different locations and often in the case of garments presented along with alternative accessories.

Criterion 6 Communication and Presentation

Textile candidates continue to excel at meeting this criterion not just because they present their work with creativity and flair but also because they choose appropriate methods to communicate their thinking.

A variety of methods were used by candidates to present their work: A3 plastic flip folders and sketchbooks proved most popular though some had successfully used Windows Power Point presentations. A few candidates had used A2 folders though these presented some problems with posting and packaging

Although photographic evidence in folders is not an AQA requirement there was excellent use of photographs with many images included during the development stage and in a making diary.

Applying the Standard

- the majority of centres have referred to AQA exemplar materials when applying the standard and this has proved successful;
- some centres are marking low ability candidates severely;
- in some cases particularly when ball gowns or wedding dresses were designed there was a misinterpretation of the assessment criterion 3 when candidates were over rewarded for work that lacked originality;

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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