

GCE

Product Design (Textiles)

TEXT4

Report on the Examination

2561

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PRINCIPAL MODERATORS' REPORT 2013

Introduction

This Textiles specification continues to be popular and attracts students with extensive creative ability who rise well to the challenges of this coursework component. The standard of work, presentation of design folders, understanding of the specification and the application of the assessment criteria was generally impressive across the ability ranges. Many students have worked independently to confidently develop their own individual style, approach and route through the design process.

As fewer candidates copied existing designs, there was a wider range of well-designed products that were original and complex in their construction. Commercial patterns were modified and developed well to produce a template suitable for the product designed. Some candidates continued to produce patterns using a basic block and this tended to be done very well.

A small number of centres continue to award high marks to candidates who have done little more than copy existing designs, particularly special occasion dresses. These candidates tended to replicate designs from commercial patterns, adding minimal embellishment, researching manufacture through producing a mock up and then making up a garment that may look sophisticated, but lacks originality, complexity and is often the commercial pattern made well.

Centres are encouraged to make use of AQA coursework advisers and should seek further advice on the design briefs students are setting along with development issues that continue to be the weakness for some students.

Administration

Moderators reported that administration procedures were followed correctly with mark sheets and folders arriving promptly so that the process could begin on schedule

It was particularly helpful when:

- Centres with fifteen or fewer students sent the all candidates folders to the moderator before the deadline date
- the sample requested by the moderator arrived promptly and the folders were sent in rank order.

Applying the Standard

- Unfortunately, only a small percentage of centres used the Teacher Online Standardising facility in 2013. All centres are strongly advised to make use of this facility, as there are a number of centres who are failing to recognise the AQA standard, which can result in an adjustment.
- There was an increase in the number of centres over rewarding low ability students in order to ensure they achieve a passing grade;

Candidate Record Forms (CRFs)

- The teachers' supporting statements on the Candidate Record Form were generally excellent and a strong feature of some centres assessments. Only a small number failed to provide helpful annotation to support the making marks
- Candidates generally completed the CRF in detail, precisely identifying where supporting evidence could be found in the folder, if not directly included on the CRF
- Candidates should be reminded there is no requirement to present the research material, only their analysis of the research. Many candidates spent a too much time mounting work which they then did not use
- Annotation provided by the teacher was particularly helpful when it focused on any aspects of the work, particularly the making, which could not be viewed by the moderator.

Criterion 1: Context and Objectives

- Many candidates explored a wide range of modern, exciting contexts and took ownership of individual design briefs;
- Most candidates grasped this criterion very well and provided interesting contexts showing perceptive understanding;
- In some centres there was little variation in the marks awarded for this criterion, with the majority of students getting 4 or 5, when much of the work was in the lower mark range.
- A small number of candidates' context and supporting statements lacked depth, candidates only producing a basic thought shower rather than unraveling all aspects of the context.
- Students are reminded to clearly state the objectives of the activity at the start of the task.

Criterion 2: Plan of Action and Clarification of Problem

Students are required to use a range of investigative techniques when carrying out research and analyse their findings. Candidates are not expected to present the research material in their folders as the activities should be clear from the analysis they complete. The most able candidates did not present the research gathered and concentrated on analysis and the development of solutions. This showed maturity, excellent practice and was an improvement for many candidates this year.

- Some students provided sketch books to support the work in the design folders. Candidates often photographed the relevant material and presented it in the main portfolio of work. Where this is the case, there is no need to send bulky sketch books in addition to the main folder.

- There was a further decrease in the use of Gantt charts with students choosing alternative methods of planning.
- The majority of candidates favoured edited highlights which meant a reduction in the number of candidates who presented large amounts of irrelevant material.
- Some candidates continue to produce large amounts of cut and paste images of existing products taken from fashion magazines with very little analysis.
- The most able candidates demonstrated very perceptive analysis of information and went on to produce comprehensive and well-reasoned design specifications.
- Candidates working at lower levels tended to list their research findings without in depth analysis and as a result, their specifications were not a reflection of information gathered. The specifications often appeared from nowhere and merely described the garment they had decided to make from a commercial pattern.
- Some candidates rely on very detailed prompt sheets for specifications that do not always reflect the task or the product in development. At this level, students should be working without the support of teacher led activities.

Criterion 3: Development of design proposal

Moderators reported an overall improvement in the way this criterion was met. It can vary significantly from centre to centre, some choosing to be very experimental, some preferring to stay with the safe option.

- At this level students should be producing imaginative and original ideas that show flair and ingenuity. Centres often award high marks for ideas that have been copied from existing designs and development consists of the addition of pattern and colour to make them look appealing.
- Some candidates presented their ideas using professional graphic techniques to a very high standard. Some candidates produced development activities that tended to be superficial which did not help them develop the ideas for an original outcome.
- There was some useful experimental sampling in the folders but it was often not evaluated or used in the final product. There was a marked increase in the number of candidates making full use of the sublimation printers and laser cutters, not just as samples but as part of the final products;
- Modelling and use of toiles was good at this level with patterns either being made from basic blocks or modelled on mannequins. Commercial patterns were most often used as starting points for adaptations.
- Testing during development was a particular strength of many candidates work;

- Some candidates would benefit from including more evidence that they had researched fabrics as part of their development work. Many candidates stated their chosen fabric but few related it to the relevant properties.
- Many candidates took the clients views into account during the development stage, particularly when deciding which ideas to develop.

Criterion 4: Manufacture/Modelling

Candidates who enter this specification are often experienced machinists and enjoy working with textiles particularly when it involves fashion and garment making. The quality of making was impressive with most candidates producing complex products that use a range of skills and demonstrated high levels of accuracy and finish;

- There are a huge variety of textile products available and the opportunities to develop original products in this field are enormous and so it was encouraging to see a fewer candidates limiting their creativity to special occasion dresses.
- Photo diaries and production plans were used extensively which assisted with the moderation process;
- Many students trialled their garments and exhibited them to good effect in a fashion show or a professional photo shoot.

Criterion 5: Conclusions, Evaluations and Recommendations

This criterion tended to be well met with the majority of projects showing evidence of testing, analysis and evaluation. The most able candidates ensured this had taken place throughout the design process.

- Most candidates produced detailed, summative reports that took full account of client opinions for improvements and modifications.
- The focus of this criterion is to evaluate the design aspects and final outcome against the original specification, not to evaluate the process and how well the project went. Lower ability students tended to struggle with this aspect;
- Most students provided excellent photographs of the final products in use and this often helped to support the making marks awarded by centres.

Criterion 6: Communication and Presentation

Candidates generally met this criterion well by choosing appropriate methods to communicate details of their design thinking.

- To achieve the higher mark bands, candidates must express complex ideas clearly and fluently in a structured and relevant way making few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Some teachers are rewarding all students' high marks irrespective of whether or not they have met this criterion.
- A small number of candidates continue to over decorate with ribbon, trims and components such as beads and sequins.
- A variety of methods were used by students to present their work: A3 plastic flip folders and sketchbooks proved most popular. Some candidates used Windows Power Point presentations. A small number of candidates had used A2 folders however this sometimes presented a problem with postage and packaging.
- Candidates made excellent use of photography, including many images taken during the development stage and presented them in a making diary;
- The most talented candidates presented outstanding fashion illustrations.

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](#)