



---

GCE

# PRODUCT DESIGN: TEXTILES

TEXT4

Report on the Examination

---

2561

JUNE 2015

---

Version: 1.0

---

---

Further copies of this Report are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2015 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

## **Introduction**

The quality of fashion designing continues to be impressive across the ability range for this specification. Many students have worked independently showing confidence as they develop their own individual style, approach and route through the design process. As teacher's knowledge and confidence increases so does the use of modern materials, conductive thread, LED lights, the sublimation printer and the laser cutter in the actual manufacture of the end products. This has been one of the highlights this year. The majority of students follow the fashion design route and some of the work has been truly innovative, not looking out of place on a professional catwalk.

A few teachers are still leading students down the celebrity, special occasion route and many of the garments seen are safe, an almost replica of existing designs. They lack the flair and originality we would expect to see when high marks are being awarded. On a positive note, seldom do we see work that has not covered all of the assessment criteria and very few students fall into the E mark range.

## **Administration**

Moderators reported that examination officers and teachers alike dealt with all administration procedures very efficiently this year. Folders arrived promptly, many ahead of schedule and they were sent in rank order which is helpful to the moderation process. All other aspects were dealt with efficiently by most schools and colleges.

## **Presentation of work**

Most of the work was presented in an appropriate way and helped with the process of moderation. Very few used heavy binders or removed work from light weight flip folders, treasury tagging it together, which is never secure. Teachers need the confidence to encourage students to stop presenting the research material, they need to analyse their findings in depth, complete the CRFs and then move straight into developing designs. However it did work well when students included mood boards and trend forecasts because you could see the direct link between the source of inspiration and the final product. Time is very short so students who do this can focus on development work including lots of ideas, modelling, and experimental work. Many are using techniques throughout the folders that are good fashion design practice and a reflection on the number of teachers who have fashion design backgrounds.

## **Applying the Standard**

- The majority of schools and colleges appear to have referred to AQA exemplar materials when applying the standard and this has proved successful as few were out of tolerance.
- Some teachers, whose marking is on the edge of tolerance would benefit from accessing the teacher on line standardising found on e-AQA secure website.
- Some centres continue to mark low ability students too generously in order to ensure they achieve a pass, while others in high achieving schools mark them harshly.

### **Candidate Record Forms (CRFs)**

The teachers supporting statements on the Candidate Record Form were generally excellent and a strong feature of some schools assessments. Students had also taken this task very seriously and if supporting evidence was not on the CRF they identified precisely where it could be found in the folder. However some continue to pay lip service to completing the CRF and they failed to provide the evidence needed.

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 students had used processes, methods and investigations when making the final outcomes.

### **Criterion 1 Context and Objectives**

- It was encouraging to see that many students had explored a wide range of modern, exciting contexts and worked to very individual design briefs.
- Most students grasped this criterion very well and provided interesting contexts showing perceptive understanding.
- It is important that the objectives of the activity are clearly stated at the start of the task which was often missed by lower ability students.
- There was a lack of depth shown in the context and supporting statements from some with many still completing a task analysis spider diagram instead of unravelling all aspects of the context.
- A few contexts were very contrived, students had decided what they wanted to make and then wrote a context to fit, and this is not good practice and rarely achieves the most creative work.

### **Criterion 2 Plan of Action and Clarification of Problem**

Students are expected to use a range of investigative techniques when carrying out research, though it is not a requirement to present the material in the folders. It appeared that the most able did not present the research aspects but gave very in depth analysis on the candidate record forms. The majority of their time was focused on the development of their textile product. This showed confidence and maturity as well as being excellent practice. It was an approach adopted by many this year.

- Planning was generally in evidence though not all students produced a detailed and realistic plan of action at the start of the project.
- It is unnecessary for students to present sheets of research into industrial practices, quality assurance and health and safety in an attempt to prove they have met this criterion. It is far more meaningful to integrate and reference this information as they work through the project.

- As expected the most able showed very perceptive analysis of information and went on to produce comprehensive, well-reasoned and explained design specifications.
- A few students 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.
- There is a worrying aspect in that some teachers are providing students with prompt sheets for specifications and they do not always reflect the task or the product required. At this level students are expected to work independently without the support of teacher led activities.

### **Criterion 3 Development of design proposal**

The majority of students met this criterion very well and moderators reported a significant improvement in some aspects. However it presents problems for some students, mainly because their original design brief was basic, usually nothing more than a garment for a friend or celebrity. Experience shows that using these starting points often fails to encourage challenge or originality:

- At this level students are expected to present a range of imaginative ideas that are original and show their individual flair and creativity. A few teachers continue to ask very high marks for ideas when the designs have been copied from existing designs usually from commercial pattern catalogues or fashion magazines and have minor decorative alterations.
- Some students are proficient in copying existing garments and then adding pattern and colour to make them look exceptionally appealing. They are often presented to a very high standard using professional graphic techniques. Unfortunately the development work that follows tends to be superficial.
- In order to achieve innovative outcomes students must explore and experiment with different construction techniques and methods of creating special effects with fabric, thread and colour. There was some excellent experimental work in all aspects of development which was a significant improvement this year.
- Most students at this level will model their ideas on a mannequin and then go on to show excellent pattern making skills using basic blocks. Commercial patterns when used, were mostly starting points for adaptations, or were used for the bodice and the student created the skirt shape independently.
- Students are expected to have knowledge of fabrics and components. More information could be given about fabrics, many students said which fabric they were going to use but few related it to the relevant properties. Many explanations were superficial.

An increasing number experimented well with modern, creative techniques, sublimation printers, laser cutters, conductive thread, special effect lights and computerized sewing machines as they developed their ideas.

#### **Criterion 4 Manufacture/Modelling**

It was very rewarding to see such original fashion garments, made through hard work and passion for the subject. There are some very talented young people in our schools and colleges.

- A strength of this year's entry was the quality of making with a high percentage of students using appropriate methods, technologies and materials and using a range of skills that demonstrated high levels of accuracy and finish.
- Students have selected appropriate advanced methods well and most products had the complexity expected at this level.
- There was a further increase in the use of laser cutters, conductive thread, computerised sewing machines and sublimation printers resulting in very professional looking work.
- There was again an encouraging reduction in the number of students making special occasion dresses. The variety of textile products in our world is vast and the opportunities for students to develop original products in this field are enormous and yet for many the creativity is limited to special occasion dresses for their favourite celebrity.

Photographic evidence of garments being tested through use was outstanding from most schools and colleges. This quality helped moderators make decisions as they tried to agree centre marks.

#### **Criterion 5 Conclusions, Evaluations and Recommendations**

Evidence of testing, analysis and evaluation has been evident in the vast majority of projects and has taken place throughout the design process. Most students produced a detailed, summative report:

- The most able address the criteria in full as they include comprehensive testing and evaluation as the work develops.
- The focus should be on evaluating the design aspects and final outcome against the original specification not on the process or how well the project went. Most students achieve this aim.
- The opinion of others appears to be sought more often when the product has been made and students generally offer suggestions for modifications and improvements. The most able consult the client throughout the process and take heed of their preferences.
- Evaluative comments made by clients or users were used well to inform the students about improvements or modifications.
- Fashion shows, productions and user trials were performed and proved to be useful to the evaluation process

## **Criterion 6 Communication and Presentation**

Textile students excel at meeting this criterion not just because they present their work with flair but because they choose appropriate methods to communicate details of their thinking throughout the process:

- A variety of methods were used by students to present their work: A3 plastic flip folders and sketchbooks proved most popular. A few students had used A2 sheets though these presented some problems with posting and packaging.
- There was an increase in the number of students submitting their work on Windows Power Point presentations or Adobe files. This method is proving popular because of the ease of sending coursework to the moderator.
- The majority of students presented a manufacturing diary, with quality photographs and they provided moderators with information that supported the making marks being asked.
- The most talented students worked at degree level and used many techniques favoured by textile designers in the fashion industry.

A level Product Design: Textiles continues to be a successful specification with a wealth of talent shown in this coursework component.

## **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](#)