

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Broad-Based Assignment

General comments

The responses to this paper were generally very positive with a diverse range of interpretations for many of the questions.

The stronger work was characterised by a confidence to develop and explore ideas which progressed from initial observations. Research had been gathered from a variety of sources which were personal and thoughtful. At this level, a range of media had been explored. These included painting, digital manipulation and there was also evidence of printmaking and photography. Candidates who produced strong submissions developed their final pieces through investigation and exploration of themes and ideas. The inclusion of contextual referencing contained appropriate connections to relevant artists which were used successfully to inform ideas and personal intentions. As a result, final outcomes were stronger and more resolved. The best works progressed naturally from initial thoughts through to the final pieces and submissions appeared logical and organised. The stronger candidates also demonstrated very good technical skills and control of media. Their work showed imagination with evidence of very personal and individual responses. Some candidates responded in an abstract and inventive way to their chosen question.

Submissions at the higher end of the middle mark range often had similar strong personal qualities and ideas were individual and inventive, but often the technical skills of the candidate had not been so extensively developed, explored and refined. Judgments made by the candidates about which media or technique to use in the exam piece did not always reflect the potential demonstrated in the supporting studies. Sometimes candidates did not explore and develop an idea or process and relied on their technical ability to reproduce a still life or copy a photograph, therefore not scoring as highly on AO2 and AO5.

Submissions in the main body of the middle mark range often lacked experimentation of media and the collection of a variety of visual images from a range of sources, but demonstrated a steady and safe approach with the compositions, subject matter and use of media. Although the work often demonstrated some good technical ability, it generally lacked depth and personal vision.

Weaker submissions lacked the exploration of observational drawing to form initial ideas and research. The work of the candidates at this level also lacked experimentation and exploration. It often over relied on the repetition of images and ideas and the use of a limited range of materials, which did not allow for the production of an informed outcome. Weaker candidates often copied imagery for the sake of producing something rather than using it as a platform to inform their own progress. Often the research of an artist's imagery appeared irrelevant to the rest of the portfolio and was not used to inform the direction of the work.

Scale of work was a recurring issue where supporting work was carried out on smaller scale sheets of paper but the final outcome was much larger and less successful. Centres should ensure their candidates practise at the scale in which they wish to submit their final piece.

There were many examples where supporting work was a series of unrelated images (often of good quality) but which did not support the final outcome. The journey needed to be more focused and coherent. Often it was clear that candidates were not able to recognise and select the most successful achievements from their preparatory work and needed to be encouraged and supported by their teachers at this point to develop the most appropriate line of study.

Centres should remind candidates that photography is valid first-hand research and should therefore be given the same status in terms of composition, lighting, presentation and quality of print etc. as drawings generally were. The very poor photographic prints taken with mobile phones were often difficult to analyse and also often remained unattributed. It was not possible to tell whether these were first hand or had been sourced from the internet.

Digital manipulation was used well in some submissions, with Photoshop or similar being used to develop ideas from initial photographs with varying degrees of success. It was helpful when contact sheets were attached to supporting work in order for the photographic processes used to be clearly identifiable. There was evidence of film and animation used for development within some submissions.

Printmaking was used by a few candidates, mainly as part of mixed media explorations combined with photography, textiles, paint etc.

A number of candidates in the mid and upper mark range made good use of visits to museums and galleries. The drawings and photographs taken from objects in the collections provided candidates with sound first-hand experience which was often put to very good use both in the preparatory and examination work.

Large numbers of candidates made reference to one or more artists. In the lower mark range the images frequently did not inform the final outcome. In the mid mark range candidates also referred to movements and made studies of genres to inform the research and outcomes.

Centres are reminded that all work sheets for each candidate should be firmly tied together at one corner prior to sending. Some Centres submitted work mounted on very thick board. Frames that are heavy and unsuitable for transport should not be used. There was little advantage in sending images on a CD that are included as prints in the submission, unless they add another dimension to the work.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Clothes hanging on the back of a chair

This question generated much observation with varying degrees of technical ability, originating from arrangements of clothing thrown, folded or placed, either over or on, various chairs. This created a challenging exploration of perspective, proportion and form. Many candidates showed proficient exploration of different angles and viewpoints. They understood form and perspective and observed the contrast of the wooden angular chair with the soft drapery very well.

The candidates at the higher level included substantial research and explorations of possible alternative arrangements and viewpoints, mostly through photography, which they often used to support their observational drawings. There was an excellent understanding of the whole composition, with some candidates selecting a close-up or section of their subject, or in some cases an unusual viewpoint. Some candidates took the question and developed original ideas in unexpected directions. Figures were seated on the chair, in addition to the clothes and dreamlike backgrounds were developed creating surreal imagery. References were made to other artists' works which had investigated this theme – most notable Van Gogh's chair from his bedroom.

The work in the middle level illustrated a range of observational studies. Candidates had taken advantage of the opportunity to record through photography and draw from direct observation. However, the candidates at this level appeared unsure of how to progress these initial studies into informed ideas. Many focused more on the drapery of cloth than on the structure of the chair, which often led to an unbalanced final composition.

The lower level submissions for this question generally had a lack of understanding for the complicated form and perspective of this ambitious still life. Development was lacking and some candidates just did the same still life in different types of media in a repetitive way. Sometimes there was a lack of supporting work. However more often the preparatory work was good but the exam piece was less strong. This was often due to unsuccessful attempts at scaling up an image.

Some Centres had set up a still life arrangement for all candidates to work from which ensured that all had equal opportunity to work from observation but meant that those candidates who did not develop further from this were left with a rather impersonal response.

Question 2: Stripes

This was the most popular question with many candidates showing a variety of personal responses to the theme. Stronger candidates used a wide range of starting points from imaginative and creative ideas with good references to the work of other artists like Bridget Riley, Barnett Newman and Jenny Meehan. There was evidence of thoughtful explorations of stripes such as the light through blinds or drapes/folds in fabric

and from the creation of stripes from shadows or reflected light onto faces or objects. Well-composed photographs often formed the basis of the starting point and these were sometimes manually constructed, but more often digitally manipulated using Photoshop to create more complex arrangements. Architecture, patterns on leaves, flowers and plants formed good source material for academic and formal drawings and technical skills were often high. Some candidates managed to create abstractions that were effective and more complex. Some excellent photographic submissions in response to this topic were seen. There were interpretations into fashion responses which demonstrated confident investigation, exploration and development with imaginative and individual ideas.

Works in the middle bands of achievement were often repetitive and relied on the reproduction of imagery. They were often accurate but candidates had not recognised the potential within this topic. Submissions demonstrated the ability to use a selection of media, including collage and mixed media, to develop the initial drawings and photographs, resulting in abstract, woven and spliced designs. Some connection to artists informed the outcomes but work in this mark range often took a more literal approach than work seen in the higher mark range, which was more individual and innovative.

There were some rather unimaginative responses at the lower end. Secondary images of zebras dominated many submissions and encouraged minimal original experimentation. Candidates had a limited grasp of observation skills and were less able to select appropriate media, which then led to a limited development in their imaginative outcomes. Some candidates experimented with block polystyrene printing which enabled them to repeat images and try out a range of colourways. Few candidates working at this level referred to the work of other artists to influence their own work and there were also issues with candidates being over reliant on secondary sources. Where reference was made to other artists, they often had very little connection with the submission.

Question 3: Moonlight shadows

Few entries were seen for this question with most being in the mid to lower achievement range. Some stronger candidates produced some interesting photo shoots, and had explored time lapse or long exposure pieces. There were some impressive drawings and media explorations too and the depiction of chiaroscuro was sometimes very successful.

Once again in the lower mark range there was an overuse of often undeclared secondary sources with complete images and compositions appearing with no evidence of experimentation or modification. Very few candidates explored the compositional possibilities of shadows to link subject matter with backgrounds. Only stronger candidates realised the potential of overlapping shadows from natural and man-made light sources. Many candidates chose second-hand sources or imagined images of the moon, wolves and silhouettes which did not lead to a strong final outcome.

Question 4: A seated figure seen from above

Most candidates who selected this question worked directly from the figure, from varying angles.

At the higher level there were some excellent submissions where candidates had given strong consideration to the positioning of the figure and the viewpoint. Many had used photography as a method to resolve composition. Submissions demonstrated an accomplished manipulation of techniques and media and there were many studies of figures from different angles. The work demonstrated a clear ability to observe the challenging structures within a pose with evidence of a good understanding of the form, proportion and structure of the figure. Photography also helped candidates to understand the foreshortening of the pose. Ideas had often been developed into a successful and resolved outcome which expressed a personal engagement with the theme.

Mid-level submissions often did not investigate the potential of scale and the significant positioning of the main subject within the composition to add visual interest. Candidates were able to research the work of other artists to inform their own work and included well-known art works such as Picasso's Blue Period paintings in their responses to produce an abstract interpretation.

Lower level submissions showed little understanding of the structure or proportions of the human figure. They failed to use media to either represent the textures found on different surfaces or to model the illusion of three-dimensional form.

Question 5: Textural contrasts

This was a popular choice which attracted responses from across the whole of the ability range. There was much evidence of exploration of media and the creation of tactile surfaces across the ability levels.

Stronger candidates explored texture and surface with real skill and sensitivity. Patterns were explored on buildings and from nature. There was some good use of mixed media to suggest surface contrasts – particularly aged surfaces. Prints were made from lino and exciting outcomes used wool, rope, fabric and wire to create abstract designs. Some candidates made the connection to look at beauty in nature, emotion and symmetry. The most adventurous techniques appeared in this question using collage, design and photographic studies.

The work seen in the middle mark range included mostly textural resources such as shells and floral details from direct observation and also from the Internet or photocopied from books. Techniques such as marbling were selected and creatively developed. Some candidates experimented with colour and texture using mixed media such as by working on newspaper or crumpled paper with paint, pastels, coloured pencils and felt-tips. This exploration allowed candidates to experiment with a range of compositions and some artists' works were introduced to help with their development of ideas.

Weaker submissions did not really explore the idea of contrasts. Colourful patterns developed from studies of plants and shells were produced with little consideration of composition or with a focal point created through colour or tonal contrast.

Question 6: Street seller

The responses to this question at the higher level contained much research from direct observation in the form of accomplished paintings and drawings. A variety of scenes containing bustling activity within busy streets and stalls were photographed. Candidates at this level were successful in exploring interesting visual stimulus in their local surroundings. The layering of foods, fruits, seeds, nuts and transparent containers were all executed in both a lively and a delicate rendering of media. There were bustling night scenes with dramatic lighting and shadows, cobblers with an array of interesting and highly decorative shoe forms in the background, steaming pans of hot food, money exchanging hands and goods being sold from the backs of vehicles. Stalls and products were captured from a variety of viewpoints and angles to create an atmosphere of chaos.

Materials were executed with confidence and paint, pen and ink, crayon, printmaking were often used. There were some very good examples of photography – focusing on portraiture, compositions of market stalls, close ups of hands exchanging goods and money. The focus on drawing hands which was an excellent attempt at first-hand study was sometimes problematic for weaker candidates. There were some successful textiles entries where portraits of sellers and their goods were applied to fabrics in interesting and creative ways that explored a mature use of line and shape and an understanding of both human and vegetable form. In these works media was handled very well.

Middle range candidates were able to compose a creative solution but had little evidence of recording and often used a limited source. Compositions often focused on the contents of the market stalls rather than the seller.

In the lower mark range, candidates had often taken a single photograph of a street stall and then worked from this single image. Difficulties with technical skills, scale and perspective were often apparent. These candidates showed little understanding of tone and form and struggled with the complexities of constructing a composition. The development of ideas had not been understood, which was apparent by the way images had not been progressed. Final outcomes tended to be unresolved repeats of earlier imagery from the preparatory work.

Question 7: Garden furniture

The majority of work for this question was in the low and middle mark-ranges, and even where higher marks were obtained, the work was sometimes unimaginative. There were the rather obvious patio type views with greenery or sculptural ornaments included. In stronger submissions, studies of tables, chairs and family gatherings outside the house in garden or terrace areas formed well-researched, first-hand projects. Some candidates focused on environmental issues and used natural and found materials to visually construct a wild garden design. In other submissions, swimming pools and water-features became focal points for study and Hockney's work was a very popular point of reference.

Unfortunately far too many candidates relied heavily on Internet/magazine research to find images of garden furniture. They often showed limited understanding of the perspective and proportion required to draw and shade the furniture or to develop satisfactory compositions.

Question 8: Pulled apart

There was a very wide range of interpretations for this question. Stronger candidates responded to the theme in a very personal and imaginative way by looking at the human emotions of bereavement, loss, starvation, heartbreak, cultural divides and relationship break-ups. Other ideas included the pulling apart of bodies, pulling at the skin and distorting imagery. Hands were captured demonstrating the pulling apart of thread or string, or tearing into foods, especially pizza, chocolate, cheese or sticky stringy desserts. The dismantling of objects and machinery was also used as source material. Photography effectively captured the interpretation of angst and emotion through distorted and agonised faces, aided by digital manipulation in Photoshop. This emotionally charged question also produced explorations on the subject of war, migration, refugees, divorce etc. An intelligent collection of sources was often apparent, represented through a skilful rendering of media. Appropriate artist referencing was often included which informed the progression of the work, communicating a clear understanding of concepts.

Weaker candidates generally recycled the same images from the Internet and interpreted the emotional angst of being a teenager through pulled-apart hearts and blood or couples being stretched away from each other. These secondary sources were commonly seen and produced work that was derivative and merely copying. It was rarely developed and often resulted in a scaled-up version of the original. A few candidates had attempted photography and successfully explored the symbolic interpretations of pulling people apart within cultures or marriages.

Question 9: Hanging or trailing plants

There was a wide range of interpretations for this question. The most obvious were based on a single hanging basket with a range of flowers, ferns and trailing plants, such as ivy, providing the main focal point. The environment in which the plants were displayed was an important feature of the composition in the higher level submissions. Greenhouses, biospheres and verandas provided complex background structures. There were also strong light sources often appearing to dissolve forms as well as casting dramatic shadows linking a number of hanging baskets.

The candidates who had drawn either from direct observation or from their photographs developed a better understanding of the structure and flow of the plants depicted. This then helped them produce final pieces that demonstrated a good understanding of form, colour and tone. Secondary sources were quite well used but in some submissions ideas were not fully resolved and outcomes were rarely above a satisfactory standard. Photographs helped candidates to consider a range of compositions and to study the detail of the plant structures. This informed their understanding and led to more fully resolved exam pieces. Some candidates displayed quite personal work exploring a range of media and took risks by combining different media and by working in new ways. The more able candidates recognised the potential of certain media and processes and made good decisions with the choice of media.

In the lower mark range candidates rarely moved beyond representing a single hanging basket from a side view. These submissions failed to use different viewpoints to add interest. Compositions were not well considered and did not establish a strong relationship between the main subject and the space surrounding it. Some candidates attempted to develop simple abstract images derived from floral shapes drawn from observation and secondary-sourced images.

Question 10: A view through a gate

In the stronger work candidates formed an illustrative approach to compose imaginative views with interesting architectural features such as wrought iron gates, stone door openings as well as foliage, which were used as a frame to focus their image. Other ideas included superimposed compositions, repeat patterns derived from the decorative qualities in the subject matter and abstract designs which were proficiently explored.

The themes of imprisonment, exclusion, partition and political divide were explored on many occasions. There were some emotional responses that alluded to incarceration.

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Some excellent photographic submissions were seen using cropping and digital manipulation. Some created repeat patterns inspired by Escher, or changed the views through gates to increase and distort perspectives.

In the middle range, submissions were generally quite competent but often consisted of limited development and copies from secondary material. Weaker work responded very literally to the topic and stuck to one idea with very little evidence of a more creative approach. Artist references were not used very well and a greater emphasis on this research would have added more interest and value to some of this work.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 0400/02 Design-Based Assignment</p>
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General Comments

In this session there was a range of submissions with some showing strong research and skills. Many candidates would benefit from stating their understanding of the brief to identify their intentions before they start work, rather than just writing out the question. This would probably aid them in producing a more focused response.

Primary research was best in **Question 2**, where some very good photography and also drawing and painting techniques were used to portray cacti and houseplants. **Question 1** gave good opportunities for first-hand drawing skills to be shown. These were also evident in the research for **Question 4**, where some very innovative and creative solutions were seen.

Weaker candidates were inclined to collect much of their reference from the internet. Prints were often too small or inadequate to work from, although some original photography was also seen. Apart from at the top of the mark range, there was little relevant annotation in works. There was a tendency at the lower and mid levels to describe the media used rather than their ideas and reasoning behind the decision making.

The media and processes were mostly paint and pencil, markers and pastels for sketching. Watercolour paint was also used quite frequently. Some 3-D work and printmaking was seen in class exercises. There were also a few attempts at collage. Candidates' own photography was seen quite frequently in the supporting work but there was little computer manipulation or use of cartoons. Some examples of digital work were seen, mostly at the developmental stage where colours and typefaces were changed. A few submissions produced very proficient digital illustrations showing a good knowledge of the programmes used.

Many examples of page fillers were seen this session. Colour swatches were very popular shown next to the work where they were used, as were notes about materials and colours, but there was less research about relevant artists and designers. Occasionally, artists were included who had no relevance to the question or the work. Very few designers were mentioned.

Far less experimentation with media was seen this session particularly in the lower mark bands. Although a few interesting 3-D experiments were seen in the developmental stages none were taken further to be used as final ideas.

Most Centres made good efforts to present the work well but there were some submissions where work was less well presented. Labelling was sometimes attached in different places around the work. A few submissions were on ragged sheets of paper of different sizes with loose pages not fastened together. The presentation of the work was very good at the higher end of the marks showing a mature understanding of the processes needed to display their best work. The candidates at this level showed an ability to edit and submit their most relevant pieces. Weaker candidates often submitted every piece of research collected and all of the tiny thoughts and sketches they had produced, regardless of relevance. Sometimes these were mixed up so there was no continuity. These candidates often focused on quantity rather than quality of work.

It was noticeable that in many Centres identical images for reference were used by all or most candidates. Weaker candidates relied on these as their only inspiration for their work.

Question 1: Eye Spy

This was the one of the most popular questions. The submissions were generally in the low to mid ability ranges.

The best works were well researched with relevant photos taken in local situations and included strong found imagery. These were then incorporated into complex developments of ideas and produced work of a high standard. In the mid band, a good variety of well-constructed typography was included, with some interesting viewpoints looking through lenses to bring out of focus images into focus. These candidates found and produced their own references which enabled them to create more individual solutions to the design brief. At lower levels, there was little experimentation with different media and little in-depth research or idea development. Presentation skills were often poor with the exception of a few submissions which had well-produced type and adequate painting/drawing skills. Mostly there was a lack of understanding of how to use research creatively for advertising. Most submissions focused on first-hand drawings of glasses of varying accuracy with some using second-hand cartoons or manga.

Many candidates presented a range of fonts in their research. Some were hand rendered but most candidates used printed out examples. These candidates missed the opportunity to research their ideas in depth or develop the designs thoroughly.

Question 2: Greenhouse

This was a fairly popular question and produced a wide range of responses.

Primary research images of cacti and succulents were often seen in the mid and higher level work. Candidates' own photography and drawings/paintings gave a strong starting point for designs along with relevant secondary research from the internet. Greenhouses were also used as motifs, as were light bulbs and plugs to indicate renewable energy. Often these were secondary images which lacked the detail obtained from first-hand observation. The phrase *renewable energy* was not always understood at the lower level. Here there was a reliance on simple, ready-made symbols of plants or bulbs from the internet and the triangular recycling logo.

The most creative use of these examples in the middle mark bands used the light bulb as an equivalent to a greenhouse containing plants. At this level the execution of the final artwork was adequate to satisfactory, but showed less control of media and fewer design and technical skills. Drawings also relied more on copies from secondary sources. Typography was included in most submissions with varying degrees of accuracy. The stronger work showed sensitive observational drawing and painting ability, which, combined with their own photography of close ups of relevant plants, demonstrated an excellent understanding of form and texture. Some strong colour choices were seen and ideas were thoroughly explored and developed to include various typefaces and images. This helped to create some very innovative logo solutions sometimes abstracting the plant images to great effect. Reference to the work of others was also included and was used well at this level.

Question 3: Topsy-turvy land

Some stronger candidates researched the work of the Surrealists to inform their work for this question. Lines from the poem were used by some of the weaker candidates either on their own or with a few unrelated upside down images. There were limited attempts at research at lower levels and accuracy of lettering was lacking. A few candidates produced calligraphy but with a lack of ability to control their media and process.

Question 4: The Listeners

Candidates answering this question generally carried out some strong primary research and produced good observational drawing. Many different solutions were seen showing all the suggested outcomes – fashion/costumes, textiles, posters and stage sets. Most candidates produced first-hand studies of mouths and ears to varying levels of ability. The requirement of the question was usually understood but candidates at the lower end of the mark range relied on found images rather than drawing from life or included no references at all. Some very original costume designs were seen from stronger candidates, incorporating aspects of mouths and ears as collars, cuffs, capes etc. Less strong candidates who chose fashion often either decorated a dress or skirt with lips, or designed ordinary clothes that had no relation to the play or mouths and ears. The quality of drawing and ideas was poor and predictable, and type, when included, was sometimes not a good fit with the work produced. Candidates in the middle range of marks showed a

satisfactory ability to explore and experiment with ideas, media and processes. Type was seen more at this level but was often inconsistent in development, construction and presentation. Posters were the most popular solution at this level.

Question 5: 3D upside-down piece

This was chosen less frequently than other questions with marks mainly in the low to middle ranges. The question proved challenging for some candidates although there were some strong submissions in terms of technical skills. There was some primary research and idea development in submissions, although the same images were often repeated.

Question 6: Sundry Laundry

In submissions for this question there was often little evidence of clothes hanging on a line or a drying rack as a starting point as indicated in the question. Quite a few submissions were based on washing machines and launderettes or bottles/packets of detergent. Hangers were popular symbols for logos and shops were designed with logos added or without.

Question 7: Loopz

This was a fairly popular question. Although there were some stronger submissions, marks were mainly in the lower mark ranges. There were some satisfactory first-hand drawings of ropes, knots, string, wool etc. in the better work along with photos of twisted and looped materials. Weaker submissions included little primary research or idea development. Stronger candidates took the opportunity to draw from observation but the majority of images were printed out from the internet.

Weaker submissions included poster designs with the words "Craft Fair" written on them and the logo handwritten with little evidence of planning or illustrations with no reference to Loopz. A few examples of hand-knitted pieces and types of knotting were found on research sheets.

Question 8: Rockwood Heights

This was a reasonably popular question with a wide range of outcomes. Posters were the most popular advertising but there were also a few fashion submissions, installations, sculptures, logos and murals.

In the stronger works some very good painting and drawing skills were seen. Some were from first-hand reference, with strong use of colour. Attention was paid to the designs and any lettering that was included. These candidates produced well-researched ideas which they developed clearly. They experimented with techniques to show texture with splattering and blotching, scraping and stippling. They added backgrounds and considered various colour combinations. Typography, if used, was rendered accurately and related to strong ideas to complete the final outcomes.

In weaker submissions there was similar research, mostly of rocks. The same images of stacked rocks taken from the internet were frequently seen at this level and wood and bark were popular too. The research varied in quality and quantity and there was a lack of idea development.

The fashion submissions generally consisted of limited research with secondary images of rocks, which were simplified and designed to be printed in a row down the front of a dress. Some better evidence of research and manipulative skills were seen in stronger works but candidates sometimes forgot to make their artwork attractive and to consider their markets.

Question 9: Interstices

Stronger submissions included the meaning of the word in their research and this produced better outcomes as it reminded them of the question and kept a clear focus. Some of the less strong submissions had not understood the requirements of this question clearly however.

Question 10: The Full Stop

This was a fairly popular question with a range of outcomes seen. The best submissions demonstrated an excellent use of primary research with well-observed drawings in different media, successful photos and a good exploration of typography for the logo. Some of the produce from the research was enlarged to make a

design for a shop front. Unfortunately, some of the final outcomes were poorly composed and were not as strong as the research and development.

Weaker candidates did not understand the requirement to base their designs on filled boxes or cupboards. The responses from the lower mark bands were generally unrelated shop designs with the logo/lettering above the door and complex displays. If any primary or secondary research was produced, this was often of separate jars and boxes and it was forgotten when developing the ideas. Some of the work was poorly presented, some was unfinished, or showed poor painting ability.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/03
Critical and Historical Assignment

The submissions seen covered a very broad range of subject areas. These included fine art, sculpture and painting, architecture, street and tattoo art, textiles, ceramics and jewellery. The design areas of fashion, graphics, film and animation were also seen. The marks achieved were spread across the whole range with the majority found to be within the middle bands of assessment.

Many candidates had taken a thematic approach to the assignment which had often involved making connections through their own practical responses. These were found to be particularly successful when clearly informed by first-hand experience gained from a visit to an artist's studio or gallery. Candidates had benefited from practical engagement with some of the processes involved with the production of two and three dimensional works. These included print making, body painting and ceramic sculpture.

Most candidates made good use of the outline proposal forms (OPF). These encouraged well-considered planning and enabled candidates to make their aims and intentions clear. Many submissions at the lower levels of attainment had often clearly not used these forms.

Some very good investigations of site-specific sculpture were made and candidates used photography in an imaginative way to record some personal first-hand observations. The supporting written analysis was concise and provided some intelligent and informed personal insights.

Sources for first-hand study included visits to artists' studios, art galleries, museums and buildings of architectural significance, and these provided material for written and visual analysis. These visits were often used as starting points for the assignments. Many candidates had combined a visit to a studio with an interview with their chosen artist. This proved to be beneficial when the interview questions were thoughtfully constructed and revealed significant insights into the ideas and processes behind the work of the artist in question.

Several candidates selected a particular process such as printmaking and sculpture as their starting point. The strongest of these examples then explored selected works by relevant artists using good written and visual analysis. This approach provided the opportunity for a comparative investigation to be made which proved to be beneficial for many candidates.

Assignments were presented in a variety of formats. More digitally produced assignments came in the form of an A4 file or folder. Larger, often customised sketchbooks (up to A2) were a popular choice along with large sheets of card with mounted text and images. Some very personal, hand-made spiral bound books were submitted. These contained strong visual recording through photography and drawings taken from a first-hand source. A few CDs and memory sticks were submitted which were usually found to be as back up for the hard-copy version.

Many candidates took a materials-based approach with the strongest of these making some excellent, inventive responses. The stronger submissions always demonstrated a coherence with both the visual and written content.

Some weaker submissions consisted mainly of practical outcomes in the form of a drawing and/or painting with very little in the way of relevant research, supporting text or annotations. These candidates would have benefitted from the completion of an outline proposal form (OPF) to help to identify and approve suitable first-hand sources for investigation. The initial selection of suitable artists and /or designers is vital for the successful planning of the project.

A few very strong digital presentations made excellent use of photography to record sculptural and architectural first-hand experiences as well as producing some imaginative visual comparisons of sculptural

and architectural details. The supporting text was intelligently written and served to clarify the intentions and resulting outcomes of the explorations.

The quality and structure of both the written and visual language used indicated the level of understanding and awareness of the candidate. Candidates achieving the higher levels of attainment all included personal appreciation gathered through direct contact from visits to artists, galleries, workshops and design studios. Interviews were carried out at first-hand or through emails and often provided valuable insights. The questions asked by the candidate revealed their level of understanding and awareness of the related topic. Many submissions would have benefitted more from the inclusion of personal views and insights to support the material gathered from visits to studios and workshops. These examples were often in the mid levels of assessment.

The assignments achieving the higher levels of attainment often demonstrated a variety of approaches with all source material clearly listed. They were the more personal explorations, which involved personal visual awareness, perceptive critical thinking and reflection. These qualities were often demonstrated by a well-informed and informative evaluation of the topic investigated.

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<p>Paper 0400/04 Coursework Assignment</p>
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General comments

Painting and Related Media was the most popular area of study followed by Photography and Lens-based Media. A few entries were seen for Graphic Design, and even fewer for Fashion and Textiles or 3D Design and Sculpture.

The strongest submissions demonstrated that projects had been developed over many weeks to enable candidates to fully engage with their chosen subject. Topics were carefully selected to provide opportunities for collecting a range of visual information from first-hand observation and experience through drawing, colour studies and candidate's own photography. The use of visual stimuli within their own locality, or using friends and family as sources of information enabled these candidates to revisit the subject a number of times and to record under different lighting or changes of weather. This provided a range of visual information from which candidates could begin the process of exploration and development. As ideas were generated these were supplemented with additional information from secondary sources. There was also evidence of researching the work of other artists or cultures which had informed the candidates' own development.

Most candidates recognised the importance of investigating the work of other artists and this often formed an important part of research work. Some of the weaker projects would have benefited from more detailed study of artists' ideas and techniques, rather than just including an image or two, with no notes and occasionally no name for the artist. These were not always relevant to the work. Few candidates actually visited exhibitions or experienced the work of others first hand. The benefit of researching or visiting less well known or local artists, who might have added a greater dimension to work, was only utilised by a few candidates.

Generally, the standard of presentation was good and most candidates presented their coursework on A2 sheets which were securely fastened and clearly labelled. Occasionally Centres unnecessarily used heavy card on which to display work, making the handling process difficult. Some Centres submitted sketchbooks along with A2 sheets of coursework plus their final outcome.

The research in some submissions would have benefited from editing. In these cases candidates could have demonstrated their ability to refine and evaluate their work as it progressed to a final conclusion better.

A few centres submitted 3D final outcomes which had been carefully packed. Centres may consider submitting good quality photographs of the outcomes instead in these cases.

Application of the assessment criteria was mostly generously and this often presented an inaccurate assessment of the candidates' skills. On the whole the order of merit was correct, but Centres over valued candidate ability in each assessment objectives across the mark range. Large adjustments were required to scale some assessments. Very few Centres had undervalued their candidates' work, and a few Centres had made accurate assessments of their candidates' abilities with appropriate application of the mark scheme.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and related media

Entries for this area were very diverse both in subject matter and processes. Work based on aspects of the self were very popular as were still life subjects. Most work was figurative. There were some attempts at more abstract approaches but these were rarely entirely satisfactory. Other candidates were influenced by the styles of other artists in different styles, most notably surrealism, cubism, impressionism, and pop art.

Painting processes dominated. Submissions showed a range of experimentation. However this was often slight and not at all in depth, particularly in the lower mark bands. Those that were the most successful used acrylics or gouache well to produce carefully observed self-portraits or portraits of family or friends. There were many examples of landscapes, architecture, plants and flowers which were often drawn or painted in watercolours with skilful application. There was some good use of coloured inks to make a range of drips, splatters and blending effects. This was particularly successful for interpreting flowers. Colour was used very creatively at the higher and mid levels, with thoughtful experiments to practise techniques for the final artwork. Many candidates combined paint with drawn images but these were rarely successful in aesthetic qualities. Combinations of photography and painting, or when photographs had been collaged into compositions and overdrawn or worked with paint were much more successful.

Photography was also extensively used as a means of visual research and the more successful candidates made effective use of lighting and alternative viewpoints to fully explore their subject matter. In submissions in the higher mark range candidates chose themes of personal interest, which sometimes came from from initial class studies and teacher-led activities. All of the submissions in the higher mark range clearly showed the progression of ideas from the initial drawings and collection of related images, through the exploration of media, to well-informed final outcomes. These candidates demonstrated excellent ability to make informed decisions in the supporting work.

Submissions in the middle mark range often demonstrated similar personal engagement and candidates showed their ability to gather images from a range of interesting and appropriate sources. Many candidates made good use of their own photography to record, particularly if their drawing skills were less strong. The work at this level contained evidence of drawing from direct observation which led to ideas that were original and exciting. However often technical skills had not been fully developed, explored and refined, which limited the works. In some cases, the judgements about which media or technique to use in the final pieces did not reflect the potential demonstrated in the supporting studies. At this level candidates were less able to select the appropriate artists to research in order to improve their own technical skills or to help them to develop individual ideas

Less successful submissions lacked the range and thoroughness of first-hand research and exploration. Candidates had insufficient material to explore and develop ideas from, and the resulting final outcomes were often copies from a single source.

Some extremely weak work was seen consisting of a few rough sketches or poorly executed copies from secondary sources. In many cases teacher assessment of such work was very generous.

Photography and Lens-based media

The strongest submissions included references to the work of appropriate photographers who had clearly informed the development of the work and had also inspired candidates to improve and expand upon their technical abilities. Candidates working in the higher mark range were also able to demonstrate the exploration of their chosen theme from a range of interesting and unusual viewpoints, angles and locations. Technical skill was developed through sustained studies and exploration of the medium. Candidates were able to demonstrate a good understanding of qualities such as contrast, composition, movement, exposure and depth of field. Lighting was used imaginatively and submissions included studio work as well as landscape and documentary photography. Annotations demonstrated candidates' ability to use relevant terminology and to demonstrate their understanding of technical processes.

The less successful submissions included sheets of unrelated photographs that did not demonstrate an ability to explore a theme in detail or develop into a final outcome. Candidates at this level made an adequate use of digital manipulation such as experimenting with double exposure and integrating and merging images together to create obvious effects. They were less able to successfully select images for development. Photoshoots were sometimes limited, and often consisted of recording from only one subject or visit. Often work in the lower or middle mark range did not include reference to the works of others, which prevented any informed development. Artist referencing that was included tended to be superficial, with little understanding of the ideas or techniques involved in the work. Images tended to be undeveloped and repetitive. There was little evidence of critical thinking or analysis from these candidates to demonstrate any depth of understanding of their intentions.

Graphic Design

Submissions for this area were mainly in the mid and lower ability range. Some competent design skills were seen but the work tended to be rather mechanical with less evidence of candidates' abilities to make

independent aesthetic judgements about their work. Unexpected ideas were rare as candidates followed prescribed steps rather than engaging in a more open creative process. However some good use of photography to investigate subject matter was seen.

The majority of submissions relied heavily on images sourced from the Internet, and text tended to be produced from existing typefaces then put together in a variety of combinations. It was sometimes difficult to distinguish between candidates' own work and that which had been downloaded or copied from existing designs. Submissions contained little or no annotation to clarify the progression of ideas or the different stages of the design process.

Technical skills were limited. For example, where the work was hand produced, the painting skills were often poor. Some submissions contained computer generated work which demonstrated some knowledge of the programme employed, but results tended to demonstrate little exploration or development of techniques or original ideas.

Fashion and Textile Design

There were only a few examples of fashion design. Within these submissions candidates explored ideas which were more relevant to costume. They demonstrated well-executed and successful examples of costume design. This was supported by strong initial research consisting of competent drawings from sources and appropriate references to the works of other fashion designers. Development had clearly been inspired by the gathering of relevant research. The emphasis in the work was on the design ideas as there was no evidence of fabric exploration or textile manipulation.

Some submissions included textile work within their supplementary studies and these included batik, screen-printing, weaving and embroidery. These were mostly used as a decorative element but in stronger submissions they became an integral part of the development process of the project.

At the higher level candidates not only designed but also made their creations and showed them being modelled through the use of good quality photography.

Weaker fashion submissions were very ordinary designs of chosen drawn outfits decorated with different images or patterns. The designs showed little if any evidence of research or idea development and were of a poor standard.

Some successful batik, tie dye and stencil printing processes were carried through to ambitious final outcomes. These submissions demonstrated in-depth research from primary sources with many referencing local cultural artefacts.

Weaker submissions often demonstrated competent craft skills but were not supported with sufficient evidence of first-hand research or enough exploration of ideas or processes.

3D Design and Sculpture

Relief work and collage were seen as part of the supplementary studies within some submissions but very little sculptural work was seen as a final outcome.

There were a few clay sculptures submitted. These were fully supported with studies from direct observation and the candidates made reference to other contemporary 3D artists. The supporting studies clearly demonstrated the progression of ideas and there was good evidence of an exploration of a wide range of media, including 2D media, to fully explore the chosen themes. Candidates explored a range of starting points and all demonstrated how they had practiced with the media to develop their modelling and building skills. Outcomes were successful and related well to the supporting studies. Weaker candidates who chose this medium for their final work showed limited experimentation with the technique and lacked an understanding of the properties of clay. Often ideas were selected at the outset and creative development was minimal. Final outcomes were not fully realised due to the lack of experience of working methods.

Other sculpture submissions were constructed using a mixture of materials. These submissions were thoughtfully researched, developed and referenced appropriate sculptures and sculptors. The works were well photographed to provide a good indication of the content of the final outcomes.