
AS

Art and Design

7241/C & 7241/X – Art, craft and design
Report on the Examination

7240
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General

Many teachers commented positively on the clear language of the new specification and the inclusion of contextual references in the question papers. Teachers were able to adapt existing schemes of work to meet the requirements of the new specification. The extensive support materials provided on e-AQA were valued by many teachers.

The 10 hour period of supervised time at the end of the Externally Set Assignment was seen as an opportunity for students to produce finished work which was considered to be an appropriate conclusion to AS. The work seen in schools and colleges was very much a celebration of students' achievement in Art and Design.

At the start of the AS year, the majority of schools and colleges provided an introductory course. These varied in both structure and content. A series of focused tasks or short projects introduced students to materials, processes and techniques or were designed to develop particular skills. Most students then produced one extended personal project which addressed all four Assessment Objectives.

Intensive drawing projects provided opportunities for students to explore a range of media and techniques and to develop their observational skills. Examples included small, closely observed studies of natural and manufactured objects and large expressive drawings of the human figure. Explorations into mark-making techniques were widely seen. Some students were provided with small tasks or assignments designed to introduce them to formal elements and the language of art and design. A number of students explored typography, composition and other graphic elements by responding to the work of others in a series of design tasks. In some schools and colleges, students were introduced to computer software packages and print-making media.

For the extended project, most teachers provided students with a choice of stimulating starting points. Some students were asked to respond to a single, open-ended theme. Where students produced their own starting points, these did not always provide enough scope for the investigation and the development of ideas. Responses to ideas, issues and events were often thoughtful and considered.

A wide range of traditional and contemporary practice was seen in portfolios. Fieldwork provided many students with first-hand source material which they often recorded with digital cameras and/or smartphones. Successful students responded to source material with insight and sensitivity. When found images were used successfully, there was evidence of selection and they were responded to imaginatively. Some very accomplished drawings were seen, in both finished and preparatory work. Evidence of good drawing practice was also seen in well-considered sketches and diagrams that were appropriate to intentions and fit for purpose. Thumbnail sketches and storyboards, for example, enabled many students to explore ideas, to refine compositions and layouts, and to plan their work.

In successful work, students were inspired, influenced or helped by references to appropriate contextual material which informed investigations and the development of ideas. Some students investigated contextual material at the beginning of each project. Others referred to the work of others as their work progressed. Appropriateness to the student's intentions was important when identifying and choosing contextual sources. The majority of students demonstrated care and discrimination when selecting relevant contextual material and other sources. Some students simply downloaded collections of unrelated images from websites such as Pinterest and these did little to inform their investigations.

In the most successful work, students provided clear evidence of their intentions and of their ability to investigate and develop ideas. The best examples were thoughtful, personal, coherent and organised. Some exciting sketchbooks were seen and high standards of presentation were reported by moderators. Successful digital sketchbooks included images that were organised into a PowerPoint presentation or into folders that were labelled clearly. The thoughtful and considered selection of images for assessment was an important factor in the most successful work.

It is a requirement of the specification that images which are not produced by the students are identified and acknowledged, either in the body of the work or on the Candidate Record Form.

It is also a requirement of the specification to identify what was produced in the supervised time.

Administration, marking and moderation

In most schools and colleges, mark sheets were completed correctly and were received by the deadline of 31 May. Problems occurred when Candidate Record Forms (CRFs) and Centre Declaration Sheets (CDSs) were not completed before the moderation visit. Some CRFs were not signed by the teacher(s), some did not marry up with the work displayed and there were some transcriptional errors between the CRFs and Centre Mark Forms (CMFs). However, teachers' comments on the CRFs were often very helpful.

Teachers are reminded to send the pink **and** yellow copies of Centre Mark Forms (CMFs) or two copies of EDI print-outs to the moderator. One copy of each will be returned indicating the required sample(s) for the moderation visit.

Preparation for moderation visits was generally very good. Samples were displayed as an exhibition or presented in folders, either equally acceptable. Labelling was usually clear, but there were a few exceptions which was very disappointing. It was most helpful when different sets of work were clearly labelled and separated. Many teachers organised the samples in rank order. Where different components of a particular candidate were displayed together it was not always a straightforward task to identify which work belonged to which component. The majority of moderators were provided with a quiet, private space to work in. Teachers are reminded that moderation is a confidential process and the moderator must not be required to mark work in public spaces.

A number of moderators commented on the positive approach of teachers to the moderation process and to the warm reception they received. However, there were occasions when they felt under real pressure to reveal marks, which they cannot do because they do not know the outcome of their marking.

Understanding of the requirements of the four assessment objectives often resulted in accurate marking. Problems generally occurred when teachers awarded their top student high marks when a lower mark was more appropriate. Standardisation meetings are viewed by many teachers as an opportunity to see different ways of working and a variety of approaches from schools around the country. The training provided by AQA at standardisation is regarded by many teachers to be exemplary. Erratic marking was often linked to non-attendance at these meetings.

Assessment Objectives

AO1

Successful students demonstrated the ability to investigate and develop ideas in a sustained, focused and coherent manner. Their intentions were clear. Meaningful references to appropriate contextual material helped students to consider different approaches and to develop their own personal language. Analytical and critical understanding was evident in the choices and decisions made by students and in the connections made between images.

AO2

The development of skills when handling media, materials, techniques and processes enabled students to investigate and develop their ideas successfully and to review and refine them as the work progressed. Successful students demonstrated their ability to explore and select resources appropriate to their intentions. Less successful students did not always provide evidence of refining their ideas and their work often lacked basic skills and an understanding of materials and processes.

AO3

Students recorded ideas, observations and insights in a variety of ways including drawings and colour studies, photographs, computer generated material, textile samples, models and maquettes. Successful practical work provided evidence of how students reflected critically on their work and progress and the way that a particular idea or image led to another. Most students provided additional evidence in written materials. The least successful students produced collections of unrelated images with annotations which added little to the understanding of practical work.

AO4

Successful students developed appropriate skills and understanding which enabled them to manage their investigations effectively and to realise their intentions. Clear and confident connections were made between elements of the work. The majority of students realised their intentions at different stages of their investigations as well as in the final outcomes.

Portfolio (7241/C)

The majority of students produced work in two areas of study. Most schools and colleges offered broad, balanced and well-structured courses which enabled students to develop sound working practices alongside good technical skills. Successful students produced work that was well considered and provided evidence of understanding of a range of appropriate media and techniques. Many courses commenced with an introductory period which formed a foundation for the extended personal project.

Portfolios often included work based on readily available resources with 'Natural Forms' and 'Portraiture' being extremely popular. Some personal and exciting work was produced in response to themes such as 'Today's Society', 'A Sense of Play', 'Hidden Forms' and 'Destruction'. Many successful starting points were open-ended which provided students with opportunities to follow individual lines of enquiry.

Students engaged with a variety of materials, processes and techniques which included both traditional and digital media. Some interesting three-dimensional work was produced using recycled materials, wax, resins and casting processes. A number of portfolios included examples of animation. There were many successful examples of textile design and graphic communication.

Outcomes varied in complexity and were often ambitious in size. Most students successfully realised their intentions and displayed skills and knowledge acquired during the investigation. Successful work was often supported by effective recording skills and many courses included time given to developing drawing and observational skills.

Many schools and colleges provided students with productive visits to galleries and museums to view work at first-hand. These included visits to local art centres and national galleries. Workshops and demonstrations by visiting artists and craftspeople often inspired students and effectively informed their work.

A variety of both historical and contemporary practice was referred to in students' work. The most successful examples provided evidence of students' abilities to select appropriate contextual material and to respond to it with understanding.

Many students produced all their preparatory work in sketchbooks. Some presented their work on mounted sheets or on design sheets. Electronic sketchbooks were seen mostly in portfolios which included examples of photography and graphic communication.

Invariably, the most successful students demonstrated good organisation, systematic development, and addressed each of the assessment objectives evenly. Less successful students tended to produce disparate portfolios which lacked direction and organisation.

Externally Set Assignment (7241/X)

The questions enabled students of all abilities to select an appropriate starting point. The selection and response to appropriately chosen artists had a significant impact on successful work. The majority of students found references included in the starting points helpful to their initial investigations.

Insects

An extremely diverse range of work was produced by students of all abilities. There were many three-dimensional responses which varied from miniature delicately constructed fabric butterflies to impressive installations based on sculptures by Rafeal Gomezbarros and Louise Bourgeois. Other examples included prints inspired by Escher, embroidery based on Annemieke Mein's textiles and paper stencils based on Claire Brewster's work. A broad range of materials was successfully combined with high levels of craft skills.

Beneath our feet

Ideas were developed from investigations which included recording observations of both the natural and built environment. Mixed media relief work exploring surfaces, inspired by the work of the Boyle Family featured in many submissions but these rarely went beyond pastiche. Interesting work was created with reference to Roman tiles and Islamic geometric patterns resulting in lino prints and collage. Other, more intriguing conceptual investigations involved records of walks undertaken in the countryside inspired by the work of Richard Long.

The Eyes

The majority of students started their investigations with recording eyes using photography and drawing. Responses varied from clichéd images of eyes reflecting articular scenes, to more profound work considering eyes as 'Windows to the Soul'. Many students produced highly detailed and technically precise images in pencil, paint and ink, whilst others produced adventurous mixed-media work involving carnival masks and sculptural work based on Tony Tassett's 'Eyeball'. Some students explored medical problems such as colour blindness, cataracts and the onset of blindness in elderly people. Thoughtful issue-based work was also seen in which students looked at the world through the eyes of refugees.

Curves and curved lines

Many students related this question to the human form and used life drawing effectively to produce mature and sophisticated personal work. Others focussed on arcs created by movement of the human body basing their work on the fluid movement of ballerinas to create semi-abstract paintings. Intricate and colourful designs for jewellery and stained glass were developed from curves in nature and architectural forms. Some predictable but effective work was influenced by Bridget Riley's optical paintings and Barbara Hepworth's carvings.

Rocks, stone and pebbles

The majority of responses started with carefully observed studies of small stones, pebbles or specimens of mineral rocks. These often resulted in realistic paintings which displayed a good understanding of tone, texture and colour. Other investigations began with exploring rock faces and crags which led to dramatic images of rock climbers and mountaineers. Some accomplished sculptural outcomes focussed on balance and symmetry informed by the work of Andy Goldsworthy and Chris Booth.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.