

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

GCSE Art & Design (2AD01-
2GC01)

GCSE Art & Design Short Course
(3FA01-3GC01)

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Introduction

This report presents a review of the 2011 series of GCSE Art & Design 2AD01-2GC01/3FA01-3GC01 examinations.

The Edexcel GCSE specification aims to make available for all centres, a framework, appropriate and accessible to a range of levels of candidates' experience and ability, which encourages an adventurous and enquiring approach to art and design.

The GCSE specifications form part of an educational continuum that progresses from Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the National Curriculum. In the National Curriculum in art, craft and design, pupils explore visual, tactile and other sensory experiences to communicate ideas and meanings. Working with traditional and new media, pupils develop confidence, competence, imagination and creativity. Pupils learn to appreciate and value images and artefacts across times and cultures, and to understand the contexts in which they were made. In art, craft and design, pupils reflect critically on their own and other people's work, judging quality, value and meaning. They learn to think and act as artists, craftspeople and designers, working creatively and intelligently. Pupils develop an appreciation of art, craft and design, and its role in the creative and cultural industries that enrich their lives.

GCSE builds on art practice carried out at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

GCSE candidates should be able to

- develop practical artistic skills and abilities
- demonstrate an understanding of past and contemporary art and design practice
- produce a personal response that embraces a range of ideas
- reflect on their own work and on the works of others.

Reports received from moderators in 2011, informed by the important preliminary dialogue that they held with teachers in centres at the start of

their visit, and the ensuing study of candidates' work, has provided confirmation of the success of the 2011 series. In 2011, the first year for both full and short course entries for the specification 2AD01-2GC01/3FA01-3GC01, centres provided encouraging courses for candidates.

The majority of moderators acknowledged that teachers, in centres, recognised that the specification maintained the flexibility of the legacy specification (1027/3027). Many centres understood the fundamental continuity between the specification and the legacy specification and built on established good practice to develop suitable courses of study.

Undoubtedly, those teachers who

- examined the specification carefully and thoroughly
- attended national training programme events or requested customised training offered by Edexcel
- scrutinised the wealth of informative support documents available on the Edexcel website
- sought clarification via the Edexcel Subject Advisor or Ask the Expert scheme

were well placed to construct fitting courses of study that take advantage of established good practice.

Centres that have not studied the specification thoroughly, or taken advantage of the range of support outlined above, may not have fully understood some aspects. It is certainly worth urging centres to visit the Edexcel website and obtain, for careful and scrupulous study, the GCSE Art and Design Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book.

Successful centres' courses of study, more often than not, moved candidates to carry out visual research using primary and secondary sources and record observations, experiences and ideas in diverse and fitting ways. Good quality candidate submissions showed a capacity to observe, select and interpret, with imagination and understanding. For the

most part, moderators noted in most centres, teachers' emphasis, to their credit, on candidates working from first hand experience.

Many candidates showed undeniable confirmation that they had developed and realised their ideas and outcomes as a result of fully exploring and reviewing a range of possible solutions and then suitably modifying their work as it progressed. The significance and value of a creative visual journey, informed by critical and cultural contexts is acknowledged by centres to be vital.

Of course, centres respected the significance of the individual outcome, the final destination, for GCSE artists. To their credit, many centres showed that they recognised that a visual account of the creative journey was necessary. At the same time, it was appreciated that very large volumes of evidence were not a prerequisite and so enabled candidates to allocate the time necessary to achieve convincing final statements.

Although it is unnecessary to present every single piece of work for assessment and moderation, it is nonetheless in every candidate's greatest interest that sufficient convincing evidence reflects the best of their performance and therefore credibly corroborates teacher-examiner assessment decisions. A number of moderators were concerned, therefore, that erroneous interpretation of controlled assessment had led some centres to omit the presentation of some candidate work, notably good quality evidence produced during year 10, for moderation. Support for a coherent understanding of controlled assessment is obtainable from the GCSE Art and Design Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book available from the Edexcel website.

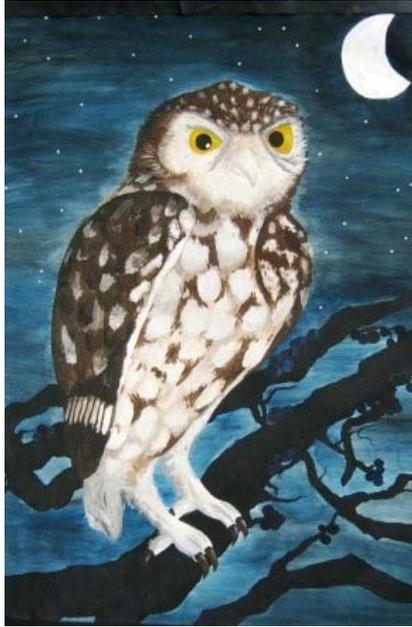
In 2011, as in previous years, candidates showed that they understood and employed a range of materials, processes and techniques, including information technology to develop their knowledge and use of visual language.

The extent to which candidates knew about and understood a variety of work from present-day practice, past practice and different cultures and

demonstrated an understanding of continuity and change in art, craft and design was unquestionably noticeable in the 2011 series. Centres, as a general rule, recommended that candidates made critical and contextual references. In some cases centres were, to their credit, encouraging candidates to move further toward investigating and analysing contextual encounters primarily through the use of visual language and therefore guarding against the propensity to submit substantial amounts of written text. As pointed out in recent reports, progress away from dissertation (a lengthy and formal written treatment) and toward annotation (a short explanatory or critical note added to visual evidence) is welcomed.

As always, it is worth paying tribute in particular to those GCSE candidates awarded the highest mark available. Candidates of such high quality, again and again, provided teachers and moderators with chances to see astonishing outcomes that revealed exceptional proficiency, understanding, imagination and originality.

Candidate work from the 2011 GCSE Art and Design series



Administration and Moderation

The Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination (ICE) document is updated each year, taking on board lessons from the previous year. The ICE is made available to centres on the Edexcel website. Undeniably, those centres that read the ICE very carefully and in detail made sure that assessment and moderation processes were accomplished smoothly and effectively.

Moderators provide, for centres, a feedback report (E9) available on Edexcel Online. Centres should examine the feedback report thoroughly and respond appropriately to its contents for support in achieving sound assessment decisions and, as a result, a satisfactory moderation outcome.

An Assessment Guidance Grid (AGG) and an Authentication Form must be completed accurately for each candidate and made available for moderators when they visit the centre. Centres found it very useful that the ICE, AGG and Authentication Form are all available on the Edexcel website. Many centres photocopied the AGG and the Authentication Form back to back and this helped to lessen paperwork for centres.

Candidate marks may be submitted to Edexcel using the OPTEMS forms provided or by direct input online. Moderators have commented again this year that, where centre marks had been submitted online there was a welcome opportunity for them to prepare for the moderation visit. It is certainly worth reminding centres of the need for meticulous accuracy in transferring teacher examiner assessment marks from the AGG to the Optems or direct online input.

Moderators reported that the majority of centres presented candidates' work for moderation in the form of an exhibition. Candidates' hard work and commitment certainly justified the celebration offered by an exhibition that was enjoyed by others. The use of an exhibition to present work clearly

provided an important opportunity for candidates to organise outcomes coherently and selectively to 'tell the story' of their achievements compellingly for both the teacher assessor and the moderator. Some centres with a large number of entries were, of course, at the mercy of constraints of space and unable to display candidates' work as an exhibition and, therefore, submitted the work in folders. Candidates who had been encouraged to arrange their folder to reveal their achievements lucidly, helped sustain the rationality of teacher examiner assessment decisions. A small number of moderators reported, as in 2010, that in some centres a candidate's submission was incomplete. It is suggested that centres pay special attention to the need to make certain that work does not go missing following teacher assessment and prior to the moderator's visit.

Moderators universally welcomed centres' readiness to provide an order of merit for the moderation visit. Furthermore, it was always helpful where centres had made a clear distinction between the personal portfolio sample and the Externally Set Assignment (ESA) sample. Many centres took great care in placing unobtrusive labels with a candidate's work to make it easily identifiable. Helpful maps enabled moderators to locate each candidate's work easily. The time and care that heads of department took to describe in some detail, for moderators, the approach taken in their centre toward course design and delivery, assessment and internal standardisation procedures was, at all times, appreciated.

It is crucial that centres mark their candidates' work using the assessment guidance available on the website together with the assessment guidance grid. Centres that followed this practice thoroughly showed an increasingly accurate understanding of suitable mark levels. Furthermore, by using the assessment guidance carefully to arrive at assessment decisions, teacher-assessors not only achieved sound and accurate internal marking, but also convincing standardisation across all of the endorsements and disciplines.

The moderation sample is a computer generated random selection of candidates. Nonetheless, centres are reminded that the work of all candidates must be readily available for the moderation visit. The highest

and the lowest candidate, for the personal portfolio unit and for the ESA unit, must be presented with the selected sample.

It is worth reiterating and emphasising, as in previous reports, the significance of accurate internal standardisation. Where this has not taken place within the centre, it may result in sizeable changes to the overall centre marks affecting all endorsements. Centres must take care to thoroughly internally standardise, otherwise candidates' final marks may be compromised. The provision of a secure merit order within an endorsement, or across endorsements where a centre has candidates for more than one endorsement, is very helpful to centres in their pursuit of credible internal standardisation. Furthermore, a secure merit order encompassing the total candidate entry and with the sample identified within it, is of particular value for the moderator in providing convincing evidence and support for a centre's effective and accurate internal standardisation.

It is imperative for centres to note that adherence to assessment guidance must function consistently for both the personal portfolio, and ESA components. Although the quantity of work presented for the two components may differ, the assessment guidance requirements remain constant.

It is vital that centres secure a credible grasp of the visual characteristics of Limited, Basic, Competent, Confident and Fluent attainment in the national context for GCSE Art and Design. Edexcel not only makes available to centres support material on its website and an annual national programme of training, but also offers customised training to promote a sound appreciation of standards within the national context.

Candidate work from the 2011 GCSE Art and Design series



Strengths:

- Complete candidate submissions through secure storage of work prior to the moderation visit
- Adherence to assessment and moderation processes set out in the ICE
- Accurate and complete AGG, Optems and Authentication Forms
- A sound order of merit
- Personal Portfolio and ESA clearly identified with a map to enable moderators to find candidates' work
- An instructive conversation with a head of department that sets out in detail the centre's approach toward course design and delivery, assessment and internal standardisation procedures
- Precise use of assessment guidance and a first-rate grasp of the visual characteristics of Limited, Basic, Competent, Confident and Fluent in the national context for GCSE Art and Design to arrive at secure assessment decisions
- Persuasive internal standardisation within and across all endorsements.

Weaknesses

- Incomplete candidate submissions as a result of work going missing between teacher assessment and the moderation visit
- Failure to adhere to assessment and moderation processes set out in the ICE
- Inaccurate and incomplete AGG, Optems and Authentication Forms
- An unconvincing order of merit
- Personal Portfolio and ESA submissions that were not clearly identified
- The lack of an informative discussion with a head of department covering the centre's approach toward course design and delivery, assessment and internal standardisation procedures
- Inaccurate use of the assessment guidance and a poor grasp of the visual characteristics of Limited, Basic, Competent, Confident and Fluent in the national context for and GCSE Art & Design to arrive at secure assessment decisions
- Unconvincing internal standardisation within and across all endorsements

Unit 1 Personal Portfolio

For Unit 1 (Personal Portfolio) of the Edexcel GCSE Art and Design (2AD01-2GC01/3FA01-3GC01) candidates complete a personal portfolio of work.

Unit 1 covers work produced from activities, theme(s) or projects. A personal portfolio is defined as a body of practical research and development, relevant to the chosen endorsement, leading to one or more outcomes or to a variety of resolutions.

Unit 1: Personal Portfolio in Art and Design (together with Unit 2: Externally Set Assignment in Art and Design) would normally provide evidence of two years' full-time study at Key Stage 4. Each unit must contain supporting studies and personal response(s).

For the Full Course Personal Portfolio unit, evidence of working in at least two disciplines should be presented for assessment. For the Short Course Personal Portfolio unit, evidence of working in at least one discipline should be presented for assessment.

Centres can devise the content of Unit 1 and plan, select and develop their own theme or themes/projects appropriate to their candidates and resources. The work for Unit 1 may be separate in focus or interconnected. Candidates should be encouraged to develop their personal ideas. Supporting studies should demonstrate the candidate thinking through the development of their ideas. Centres should ensure the authenticity of work submitted for assessment.

In 2011 the majority of centres continued their resolve to use informed judgment to interpret the concept of a unit as best fitted their own art education situation. Centres repeatedly made sure that the flexibility of their preferred personal portfolio theme, or themes, allowed each candidate to make personal and well-informed responses. Moderators reported that

centres employed a range of personal portfolio themes including, to name but a few, Journeys, Identity, Structure and, Environment.

Course leadership in successful centres clearly embraced the interests of a wide range of abilities. Moderators noted that, more often than not, they encountered courses that promoted high expectations in relation to practical skills, effectively developed self confidence, made sure that outcomes reflected the true level of a candidate's ability and enabled the successful communication of creative intentions.

Unit 1, for the most part, proved to be the strongest component of each candidate's submissions. Most centres had created sympathetic, carefully planned and stimulating schemes of work and wide-ranging teaching programmes to provide candidates, across the ability range, with opportunities to bring forward credible evidence of their accomplishment in all the assessment objectives. Candidates gained most from carefully prepared courses that made available a structure that enabled them, not only to build up their knowledgeable analysis and understanding of artists' work that served the progress of rationally focused ideas and individual outcomes, but also to extend their grasp of processes, methods for research and, a route to secure the convincing use of media. Many centres with powerful inventive approaches clearly engaged candidates in individual and relevant concerns. Personal work of quality arose where centres had, in addition to a structured framework, also successfully provided opportunities for candidates to find their own routes to investigate and develop individual responses using diverse scale, media and technical processes. Able candidates given free reign may, without a doubt, produce compelling work of high quality. However, the work of successful candidates across the ability range, was cultivated best within a structured, although non-prescriptive framework, where there were ample opportunities to investigate and develop independent and personal responses.

Moderators noted again in 2011 that in some centres the same themes had been rather overused over the years. It was pleasing, nonetheless, that moderators reported a number of teachers had taken the opportunity,

afforded by the introduction of the specification, to assess, modify and advance their previous course design for the benefit of candidates.

Centres frequently made use of themes from a previous Externally Set Assignment (ESA) in their programmes. Where centres took indisputable individual ownership of a past ESA theme and developed and built on it as a starting point appropriate for their setting, successful candidate outcomes were commonly met.

In 2011 there was persuasive evidence of centres building on the good practice of thoroughly integrating contextual encounters and references within personal portfolio projects. Used as a starting point for assignments, meaningful engagement with the wider context, through educational visits or artists in residence, for example, frequently resulted in many candidates securing genuine insight into a range of creative practices. Candidates' sound judgements and responses enabled them to go on to demonstrate the value of their understanding of contextual issues for developing ideas underpinning individual and personal outcomes. Moderators frequently reported how visits to galleries and other places of visual interest really did help inspire and stimulate many candidates and inform the development of their personal work. As in 2010, many centres showed an ever-increasing confidence in supporting candidates in their mission to research, react, respond and reflect. Visual analysis and evaluation was, to many centres' credit, found in candidates' work but, disappointingly, there remained, perhaps, an overwhelming predisposition in some centres to stress writing at the expense of visual analysis and evaluation accompanied by brief annotated explanation. Moderators reported that they sometimes encountered, as in 2010, for the most part amongst weaker candidates, a penchant for offering large volumes of text simply copied from a website as evidence of contextual research, analysis and response. Art and Design is fundamentally a visual subject and a visual response through the use of visual language should be encouraged.

Centres, by and large, ensured that candidates gave the review, refinement and modification of their work as it progressed sufficient attention to

support the production of the finest outcome. Many candidates having generated exciting ideas from a contextual encounter and information gathering or from a visual research starting point convincingly developed the potential of individual themes through persistent experimentation and further investigation. It was reassuring to hear, from moderators, that many centres encouraged candidates to make the most of well founded and meaningful development and therefore counter any tendency to make hasty uninformed and incoherent leaps to the final outcome. In some cases however, to the clear disadvantage of the quality of final statements, a thoroughgoing process of review, refine and modify was treated ostensibly somewhat superficially and ideas could, therefore, be consolidated too early. Where candidates moved straight from conception to the realisation of final statements the result could often be inadequate in quality. Reviewing, refining and modifying offers invaluable opportunities for candidates to not only refine skills but also select appropriate media and identify the best focus for realisation. The competent use of ICT provided another valuable tool to enable some candidates to not only simply manipulate images, but also to thoroughly develop ideas before producing credible final statements. A range of materials was, more often than not, offered to candidates but confidence and expertise in using them may be compromised by a shortfall in the quality and intensity of the developmental process leading up to realisation.

Candidates showed, more and more, that they understood the importance of substantial visual research by recording first-hand observations utilising a multiplicity of media, materials and processes. Candidates clearly gained in centres that structured courses to thoroughly promote the discerning compilation of information and recording of observations from a range of primary and secondary sources. Many centres supported candidates in the perceptive and intelligent use of digital photography to assemble visual evidence of first hand experiences (that might previously have been found entirely second-hand) and use this effectively to sustain themes. It should be stressed that where centres encouraged a wide range of first hand research and opposed the widespread use of secondary sources, candidates achieved genuine individual progress not only in respect of increasing

technical proficiency but also in the ability to completely develop the potential of engaging personal themes. As in 2010, moderators reported compelling examples of good practice where the innovative, although not exclusive use, of digital photography actively supported first hand visual research. Where candidates had carried out first hand research in several different ways, by and large the quality of that whole body of visual source material was without doubt enhanced. The intelligent, selective and focused use of photography for gathering observations was again praised, by moderators, particularly in settings where this mode of visual research was one of several techniques employed by candidates. It should again be noted that visual research of quality, using photography as an investigative tool, more often than not came about in centres where the significance of composition, angle of view, lighting, shutter speed and technical know-how had been tackled successfully with candidates and, as a result, moved them away from the undemanding snapshot. Many centres clearly encouraged their candidates to recognise that the range, depth and quality of primary and secondary research ultimately had a direct positive impact on the merit of final outcomes. Sadly, there remained in the 2011 series, a disappointing tendency for some candidates to rely wholly on secondary sources.

A growing number of centres secured a well established understanding of assessment criteria. Principally, when all of the assessment objectives were seen to be inter-dependent in the manner in which they underpin the work presented for the personal portfolio unit, candidates performed at their best across the whole mark range. As noted in 2010, where assessment objectives appeared to have been addressed as a series of unrelated tasks, moderators reported that candidates may not have reached their full potential.

It is worth emphasising again this year that the assessment objectives are indeed inter-related and that they may be approached in any order in personal portfolio and, indeed, ESA activities. It is perhaps self-evident that project themes might begin with defined research activities from first hand sources. However, projects could equally launch very successfully, for some

candidates, from working experimentally with materials or, indeed, grow from responses to contextual starting points.

Supporting studies essentially serve to provide evidence of the candidate's 'journey' and have the potential, as do final statements, to reveal the quality of research, contextual encounters, visual analysis, review, refinement and selection, exploration and development and, of course, realisation. Supporting studies could evidence a candidate's progress, in the course of their work, through the use of some or all of the following

- work journals
- sketchbooks
- notebooks
- worksheets
- design sheets
- different scale rough studies
- samples
- swatches
- test pieces
- maquettes
- digital material

to demonstrate the thinking through of the development of ideas.

Moderators noted that many candidates, to their credit, focused their supporting studies, in whatever form they took, on well-considered and relevant contextual encounters, visual information capture and a thoroughgoing process of perceptive review, refinement and development of ideas.

Moderators reported that there was sometimes a noticeable tendency, in a number of centres, on the part of teacher examiners to somewhat over-reward in their assessment of candidates' work for the personal portfolio. It is vital, in an effort to counter leniency, that assessment decisions are

established using the assessment guidance available and persuasively corroborated by sufficient credible personal portfolio evidence.

Candidate work from the 2011 GCSE Art and Design series



Strengths:

- Well-structured, fitting, non-prescriptive and flexible courses that provided candidates across the ability range with a sound foundation of visual language skills
- Courses that provided candidates with chances to learn and show their grasp of a number of processes and methods for research (including digital photography and ICT), the use of a range of media, analysis of artists' work and, the development of individual and personal ideas and outcomes
- Courses that highlighted the purpose and value of visual research and promoted the use of primary sources such as first-hand observational studies and independent or organised study visits to galleries and museums
- Courses that offered candidates opportunities to work with an artist in residence and in workshop settings
- Work in which appropriate contextual study was meaningfully linked to the focus of projects and development of ideas through coherent visual and, where fitting, verbal description, annotation and analysis
- Supporting studies that were personal, enlivened and informative, expressing thoughts, ideas, experimentation, contextual links and showing review, refinement and development.
- Courses which stressed and promoted the production of ambitious and imaginative final outcomes and that supported candidates in using a variety of media and scale
- Secure understanding of the inter-relationship of the assessment objectives and sound appreciation of the need for sufficient, credible and appropriate evidence of a candidate's level of achievement

Weaknesses:

- Courses that betrayed a lack of structure or were excessively prescriptive and inflexible and that did not provide candidates across the ability range with a secure foundation of visual language, technical and material handling skills
- Courses that did little to move candidates away from over-reliance on copying from second hand sources with little or no creative purpose
- Unselective photographic recording of the entirely 'snapshot' variety
- Disproportionate prominence of written evidence for analysis and evaluation
- Contextual evidence that was comprised primarily of unrelated biographical studies of artists copied from texts or unedited downloads from the internet with slight indication of visual analysis
- Superficial responses that were incomplete, disorganised and the result of inadequate review, refinement and modification
- Weak understanding of the inter-relationship of the assessment objectives and poor appreciation of the need for sufficient, credible and appropriate evidence of a candidate's level of achievement

Candidate work from the 2011 GCSE Art and Design series



Unit 2 Externally Set Assignment

Perhaps somewhat unsurprisingly, the ESA theme received a varied response from centres. However, a very large number of centres and candidates responded very positively to 'Similarities and/or Differences', the theme for the Externally Set Assignment (ESA) in 2011.

Moderators reported that a preponderance of centres welcomed the theme. Many centres commented that it was an improvement on the theme offered in 2010 as its openness encouraged a wide variety of responses. Both the guidance and subtitles were understood, by centres, to be very helpful for candidates. The introduction of coloured images as a springboard for candidate research was very well received by centres. Centres reaction to the range of suggested artists was, for the most part, positive. Many candidates clearly engaged with the theme in an imaginative way to develop individual and often very personal solutions. The work submitted for the ESA certainly showed a commitment, on the part of candidates, to illustrate their understanding and appreciation of the potential of the theme for a personal response. The theme brought forth an assortment of individual responses ranging, as expected, from the cautious and somewhat literal to the refreshingly extraordinary. Candidates' responses were, more often than not, fostered where centres used the guidance and suggestions contained within the examination paper as a way of encouraging a deeper level of personal engagement with the theme. Unfortunately, some candidates spent an excessive amount of time exploring a large number of starting points at a surface level. Regrettably, some centres and candidates undertook unnecessarily, at the outset, to work systematically through 'similarities' and 'differences' and, on occasion, through many, or all, of the suggestions outlined in the ESA question paper. This approach, predictably, could lead to a delay in a candidate identifying a personal focus and hence inadequate time being available for thoroughly reviewing, refining, modifying and developing ideas and realisation skills before the production of individual final statements. Centres and candidates should appreciate that the theme in no way seeks to restrict outcomes. Candidates should

regard the theme, and the suggestions given in the paper, as encouragement to select and explore the best direction in which to go, for them personally, to achieve their finest individual responses.

The ESA theme provoked diverse responses involving, for example, outcomes exploring the similarities and/or differences in terms of black/white, dead/alive, natural/manmade, traditional/contemporary, male/female, plant species and season changes. Moderators reported that some candidates developed ideas that engaged with issues such as racial disharmony, the complexities of their own cultural backgrounds, world poverty, inequality and, man-made disaster versus natural disaster. It was notable that self portraiture was used successfully, by a number of candidates to investigate mortality, youth, aging, growth and life stages.

Quality responses were undoubtedly the result of the way in which centres supported candidates' management of the preparatory period with well thought-out and imaginatively planned activities. Where teachers worked with their candidates throughout the formative stages, rather than leaving them to their own devices, a high quality approach helped them to combat a shallow response to the theme. Thoughtful preparatory period activities, developed by teachers with candidates, really supported attempts to go deeper into the theme and develop personal responses underpinned by experience gained through personal portfolio projects. Where candidates built on strengths and experiences gained through the development of their personal portfolio, they adopted a secure and credible approach to realising convincing supporting evidence that documented their journey through visual research, experimentation and development of ideas, and encounters with artists and cultures. The finest ESA work had undoubtedly grown from the high standard of best practice personal portfolio experiences.

It should be stressed, therefore, that candidates regularly gained from a dependable, supportive structure and rationally guided direction during the preparation period and, as a result, achieved their most successful, independent and inventive results. The ESA is part of the whole GCSE course. Centres are reminded that, although a candidate's work must be

unaided during the ten hour period of sustained focus, helpful advice and guidance should be available throughout the preparatory period. Weaker candidates in particular undoubtedly profit from guidance at the initial stages of the ESA to support them in identifying a suitable personal focus and path for their studies. Moderators noted that centres with supportive preparatory frameworks helped candidates for whom time management is a problem to work systematically and effectively to produce ample evidence for the assessment objectives.

It must be said that the need to review, refine and modify work in progress was not always well met in the ESA. Candidates, on occasion, did not spend an adequate amount of time on sustained research, investigation, exploration, experiment and development before arriving at a final outcome. Results would have been better, in some cases, if the concluding days of the preparatory period had been used more effectively. Selecting and 'fine tuning' the very best development of an idea and simultaneously sharpening technical skills regularly underpinned the production of final outcomes of the finest quality.

Centres implemented a variety of approaches to give all their candidates the opportunity to follow a purposeful voyage of discovery. Stronger candidates made self-directed choices when investigating work by other artists and they offered their research and analysis in well-informed ways that established evocative links with their own practice. Many candidates fully appreciated the process in which they were engaged by collecting, recording and presenting information with high levels of skill. In many cases a wide range of media, materials and techniques was used to consider ideas and develop responses.

Some centres launched the preparatory period very successfully for their candidates from a contextual stance by encouraging them to investigate starting points inspired by the examination paper, independent study or a gallery visit. Elsewhere, engaging outcomes began with a methodical period of visual research from first hand sources. Visual research obtained through a candidate's own photography was certainly powerful where it was

discerning, well thought-out and focused, rather than indiscriminately captured with little evidence of sensitivity or thought. Contextual sources for the ESA encompassed a mixture of artists, photographers and designers. Some centres and candidates limited their exploration of contextual sources to those provided on the ESA paper. Centres should be aware that the contextual references provided with the theme are offered purely as suggestions and candidates should certainly be encouraged to look beyond them to identify profitable avenues for themselves. It is worth emphasising again that for the ESA, as for the personal portfolio, writing is only one of many ways through which candidates' thoughts, observations, evaluations and analyses might be captured and revealed. Critical and contextual responses may be presented advantageously primarily in visual terms. Extensive written documentation is not a requirement.

Moderators reported that, in 2011, there was a conspicuous tendency, in a number of centres, on the part of teacher examiners to over-reward in their assessment of candidates' work for the ESA. Obviously, assessment guidance must function consistently for both the personal portfolio and ESA components. Although the quantity of work presented for the ESA may differ from that offered in the personal portfolio, the assessment guidance requirements remain constant. It is essential, in an effort to counter leniency, that ESA assessment decisions not only draw on the assessment guidance available, but are also persuasively corroborated by sufficient credible evidence.

Candidate work from the 2011 GCSE Art and Design series



Strengths:

- A well thought-out, centre devised and teacher led programme for preparatory studies that enabled candidates to achieve coherent, convincing and well-crafted, imaginative personal responses
- Appropriate and evocative contextual encounters and analysis often supported at first hand through gallery or museum visits
- Comprehensive first hand observation and research, including that obtained from the accomplished use of a candidate's own photography, to support the development of outcomes
- Adequate, focused, meaningful and sustained preparatory work that continued the development of ideas
- Compellingly convincing application of media and techniques that enabled a high standard of realisation of imaginative ideas and intentions
- Precise centre marking clearly corroborated by sufficient convincing evidence

Weaknesses:

- Inadequate support and guidance given to encourage candidates' time management during their developmental journey resulting in too little time for important review, refinement and modification
- Safe and literal interpretations of the theme that undoubtedly served to constrain candidates
- The pursuit of an excessive number of 'starter' exercises designed to cover the assessment objectives but which discouraged individual choice, failed to engage candidates and frequently consumed valuable development time
- Overpowering dependence on secondary sources or unconnected primary sources
- Poor command of materials and techniques that, in the end, reduced the quality of realisation of imaginative ideas and intentions
- Inaccurate centre marking decisions based on insufficient credible evidence

Summary

The majority of centres showed that they have developed confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the specification and the demands it makes on both teachers and candidates. For the most part, centres have clearly recognised the fundamental continuity between the specification and legacy provision and built on established good practice to develop fitting courses of study.

First-rate teaching, thorough and appropriate personal portfolio and ESA arrangements, the application of a thoughtful approach to the coverage of assessment objectives and fitting resources made sure that many candidates performed to the best of their ability in both components of the GCSE examination. Candidates who achieved first class results did so because centres provided helpful support that stressed recording visually from first hand experiences. Noteworthy contextual encounters provided candidates with encouragement for individual and personal outcomes. Careful and discriminating research, visual analysis, thorough development of ideas and the honing of technical skills were, more often than not, sustained in order to bring about high quality work.

In a number of centres some misunderstanding of the specification has, without doubt, caused a level of anxiety. Careful scrutiny of the specification, the range of support available on the Edexcel website, thorough study of the GCSE Art and Design Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book, involvement in the training offered by Edexcel and the help available via Edexcel's Subject Advisor for Art and Design and the Ask the Expert Scheme certainly provide routes to developing accurate understanding of some aspects of the specification, most notably controlled assessment.

As in 2010, there remains the necessity for maintaining a suitable balance, between the volume of supporting studies and preparatory work and sufficient opportunity to develop the realisation of final outcomes. Some candidates, for example, perhaps spend a disproportionate amount of time

and effort, during their course, on journal based work. This means that a large amount of some candidates' work is limited in terms of both scale and media and their artistic growth may, therefore, be to some extent reduced. It is worth remembering that the development of a candidate's creative visual journey continues and, undoubtedly, may well be enhanced during the production of final personal portfolio and ESA outcomes.

It would, no doubt, be helpful to emphasise once again that the Edexcel GCSE Art and Design specification calls for visual responses from candidates. Extensive annotations may well, to some degree, support a number of candidates' submissions, but large amounts of written text are, without doubt, not a requirement of the specification. All assessment objectives, right through the entire mark range, may be convincingly evidenced primarily through a visual response. Candidates can, and indeed do, reveal visually compelling evidence of their technical skill, creative reflection, independent working, aptitude for problem solving, evaluative ability, powers of sequential thinking and creative practice. Visual research, visual reaction, visual response and visual reflection are always appropriate in GCSE art.

Finally, it must be said that centres are to be applauded for the encouraging ways in which, through the provision of sound courses, they confronted the challenge of supporting their candidates in achieving striking personal creative successes in the 2011 series.

Candidate work from the 2011 GCSE Art and Design series



Strengths:

- Accurate assessment, using the available guidance, with a secure grasp of the visual characteristics of Limited, Basic, Competent, Confident and Fluent in the national context for GCSE Art and Design to arrive at sound mark decisions
- Credible active centre support for the moderation processes set out in the ICE
- Well-structured, non-prescriptive and flexible courses that provided candidates across the ability range with a secure foundation of visual language skills and best practice time-management support for the process of development of both their personal portfolio and ESA outcomes

Weaknesses

- Inexact assessment resulting from a failure to make use of the available assessment guidance and a fragile appreciation of the visual characteristics of Limited, Basic, Competent, Confident and Fluent in the national context for GCSE Art and Design.
- Unsatisfactory application of the requirements for moderation visits set out in the ICE
- Courses that either lacked a coherent structure or were very prescriptive and that did not provide candidates across the ability range with a secure foundation of visual language skills and best practice time-management support for the process of development of both their personal portfolio and ESA outcomes.

Statistics

The grading, awarding and certification of this qualification will comply with the requirements of the current GCSE/GCE Code of Practice, which is published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). The GCSE qualifications will be graded and certificated on an eight-grade scale from A* to G. Individual unit results will be reported.

The first certification opportunity for the Edexcel GCSE (Short Course) in Art and Design was 2010, and the first certification opportunity for the Edexcel GCSE in Art and Design will be 2011.

Awarding is based on work scrutinised falling within A, C and F grades. All other grades are calculated mathematically to fall equidistant between the selected marks.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link: <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Grade boundaries apply to all of the endorsements within Art and Design (Fine Art, Three-dimensional Design, Textile Design, Photography and Graphic Communication).

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