

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Broad-based Assignment

Key messages

- Candidates achieving high marks made good use of their preparation time to carry out visual research from a range of sources, including primary sources, exploring viewpoints and making detailed observational studies using a range of media.
- Supporting studies should demonstrate the candidates' ability to experiment with a range of media and processes in order to develop technical skills as well as their ability to make informed decisions regarding their choice of media for the timed test.
- Candidates should explore a range of compositions experimenting with arrangements, viewpoints, lighting and backgrounds in order to produce a fully resolved outcome in the timed test.

General comments

A full range of questions were answered, and performance varied. Overall many candidates used first-hand research material, and this was often combined with secondary-source material. Candidates usually clearly indicated where their material came from, particularly their own photographs and sketches.

The media used included photography, printmaking, textiles and painting and related media. Many candidates used the internet as a main source of visual research and at times this undermined the personal vision of the candidate and individuality of the work.

Candidates explored images, ideas and media in detail throughout the preparatory stage. However, in some submissions the outcome produced in the timed test was not as successful. This was either due to a lack of planning for the time allowed in the timed test, or candidates had not planned the composition of the final outcome. In other situations, candidates did not use their preparation studies sufficiently to guide them through the development of their final piece.

Stronger candidates demonstrated a focus on recording from direct observation. Candidate intentions were clearly identified with ideas developed successfully into resolved final outcomes. A range of media was explored to a high-level including painting, drawing and mixed media, to investigate ideas in response to starting points. Photography was used to good effect and the work demonstrated a good analysis of ideas and critical thinking, furthering development. Good use was made of artist research and this influenced ideas, development and experimentation with media. Candidates at this level worked to their strengths and explored a range of individual ideas and approaches.

Weaker work often lacked enough research from primary sources to inform individual ideas into a cohesive body of research. Mobile phones were often used to take pictures which were of poor quality and not appropriately edited. Candidates would have benefited from carefully selecting the most appropriate images to enhance their investigations. Secondary references from the internet were often poorly printed. The exploration of materials was limited, and technical skills were weak and unrefined. Annotation at this level was descriptive rather than demonstrating an awareness of critical judgement. References to the works of other artists were seen, but sometimes they did little to inform the work.

Question 1: Urban clutter

Submissions were seen from across the mark range and those candidates achieving higher levels demonstrated a strong and personal connection to their chosen topic and contained many studies produced from direct observation. Candidates used their artist research to develop their own ideas and inform their experimental studies.

There were some interesting examples of photography. However, at times candidates had not fully explored the images, relying on digital manipulation to enhance their work.

The middle level submissions contained a good selection of research through photography, drawing and paintings, but the work often lacked the idea development and refinement seen at the higher level. Candidates explored complex ideas through collage and cut up photos to overlay paintings with interesting effects, but some were not well planned or resolved.

Those in the lower mark range produced their final outcomes from very little research and candidates relied heavily on secondary material. The lack of research material in the preparatory work limited any meaningful development. The use of media was not fully explored, and technical skills were not refined. The final pieces were usually either a combination of one or two images from the preparatory work, or an altogether unrelated image, demonstrating limited development.

Question 2: Shell and stone patterns

This was a popular question and received many individual responses from across the mark range. In the higher mark range, candidates recorded through a range of 2D media with a high level of skill. Media such as pencil, pen, watercolour, paint and pastels with much collage and mixed media, were executed creatively. Well developed observational skills and a subtle and explorative use of colour were also apparent in the work. Compositions and ideas for this question tended to take both an observational and design approach. The development of the submissions from observation to final outcome was clear and included experiments and explorations of colour, texture and pattern. Those who used the referencing of other artists' works to inspire colour use, technique and image, developed their work into more individual responses.

At the mid and lower mark range candidates used some artist references in the preparatory stages but they were less able to analyse this work and use it successfully to inform their own development.

Question 3: Camping equipment

The candidate responses to this question were mostly in the middle to lower levels. The work at the higher mark bands contained a good range of initial studies showing expert first-hand drawings and paintings of equipment such as lamps, tents, walking boots and campfires, and these candidates included their own photography. Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of their sources while describing the forms through media. There was a good range of initial studies, idea development and experimentation plus a high level of understanding and accomplished use of media. These combined to form excellent outcomes with well-rendered and balanced composition.

Most submissions at the middle level did not move from the observationally informed path, but the quality of observation and the sensitivity and control of media in the recording was of a good level. Research was appropriate and the selection of materials used to record and create their ideas were handled well. There was often a lack of artist references which may have encouraged candidates to produce more of an individual response. At times candidates were unable to recognise some of the potential in their supporting work and outcomes were less successful.

The work at the lower level demonstrated some recording ability but lacked the creative ideas and technical skills needed to produce developed submissions. The preparatory work usually consisted of several disconnected basic studies, often relying on second-source images, and the lack of real investigation and development prevented these submissions from moving forward.

Question 4: Tangled

This was a popular starting point and responses came from across the mark range. Submissions at the higher level demonstrated an excellent use of media, both in control and expressive application. The sense of line was very well developed and often had a strong rhythmic quality. Mixed media experiments illustrated tangled forms that had been explored using different materials. Observational work was strong and showed an engagement with the complexities of the twisting and tangling of the various components involved. The preparatory work clearly demonstrated the developmental journey the candidate had taken resulting in some creative outcomes.

At the middle level the responses were imaginative and interpretative, and included the tangle of bodies, roads and various other objects, along with as the more obvious forms such as string, roots and stems. Candidates attempted to capture the quality of the source through appropriately selected media. The

development of alternative ideas was in evidence and this informed the final outcomes. There were a few artist references, but these tended to be limited and made little impact on the work.

The candidates at the lower level recorded from more obvious objects such as electric flexes, string and hair. There was little evidence of media experiments or explorative compositions and the final pieces were usually a repeat of an image seen in the preparatory work, but on a slightly larger scale.

Question 5: Cultural celebration

This was a popular starting point with candidate responses located mainly in the lower and middle of the mark range. Some of the work at the middle level demonstrated competent recording from primary sources and good use of media. The development of ideas was coherent, with a sense of engagement, particularly in some of the strongest submissions. Candidates demonstrated some depth in recording from their research, and thoughtfully explored their cultural sources. Many candidates made good use of their own photography as well as studies made from direct observation. Other work however, demonstrated inconsistencies in the rendering of media and a reliance on the copying from photographs rather than directly from sources.

The work at the lower level demonstrated limited observational skills and consisted of a basic copying of images, taken either from the internet or from magazines. The images were usually copied in paint, pastel or pencil and showed little sensitivity through observation or handling of media. There was little sense of development and the final compositions were almost always a repeat of an image seen in the preparatory work.

Question 6: Distressed

This was a popular question and responses were spread across the mark range. The responses to this question across all levels tended to focus on emotional distress and particularly on the experience of relationship break-ups. Observation and media handling were both sensitive and controlled, allowing for a good sense of expression. The preparatory work contained many explored compositions and differing viewpoints, as well as showing alternative paths.

Candidates at the middle level often began by using their own photographs and studies of a family member or friend who was expressing a display of distress. These were then typically used to make a series of studies. Still-life groups showing worn out and broken objects using a wide range of media and techniques was another popular choice in this mark range. The representation of textured surfaces and decaying forms demonstrated good levels of manipulative and observational skills.

The work at the lower level included images that were directly copied from the internet. This was obvious as there was much repetition of images across many candidates' submissions. In some work the final image was an attempted copy of a second-source image and lacked evidence of development and originality. Other submissions often contained an image from the candidates' own experience, for example a photograph of a screaming adult figure or a tearful child.

Question 7: Open landscape

This was a popular question and responses to this starting point were spread across the mark range. This starting point enabled stronger candidates to take inspiring reference photographs and to explore a good range of painted surfaces, mixed media and experiments with collage, while producing studies from direct observation. The preparatory work demonstrated good candidate involvement with the subject, observational skills were well developed, and the recording was both accurate and sensitive. The use of media was expressive and well controlled. The use of colour was thoughtful and based strongly on observation, demonstrating an excellent understanding of tone.

The middle level candidates had clearly observed photographs of the landscape, from both primary and secondary source, and used these to inform their representation of the subject. The use of media was controlled and there was some good use of colour to give depth and tone to the landscape. Some of the stronger submissions included artist references and candidates used this well to inform their development, for example in colour use or composition.

At the lower level, preparatory work usually consisted of two or three images that divided the picture plane into two sections, the sky and the land. Media used was generally paint or pencil and technical skills were often very basic with little evidence of sensitivity or control.

Question 8: A person curled up as if asleep

There were few responses for this question. The submissions at the higher level contained very good observational work. The use of media was controlled and sensitive and line was used effectively to portray the form of the body. There was a sense of development in the preparatory work, which flowed through the observational studies to more experimental pieces and thumbnail sketches, exploring line, colour, form and composition.

Submissions seen at the middle level included candidates' own photographs, drawings and paintings, but the initial studies were not always fully explored into idea development. Candidates referenced artists' works, but these did little to inform development. If the artist references had been explored further, this may have produced more personal and individual responses.

Submissions at the lower level included preparatory work of simple studies of a figure, sometimes sourced from the internet or magazines, or from the candidates' own photography. The use of media was limited in range and the images were simple with little variation of viewpoint or composition. The work at this level indicated little sense of development or journey. Final outcomes usually consisted of a repeat of an image from the supporting studies.

Question 9: Shoppers

The strongest work for this question demonstrated good selection of research, strong observational skills and accomplished handling of media. The preparatory work was cohesive.

At the mid level preparatory work contained some exploration with alternative compositions, illustrating evidence of development and experimentation. The compositions of the final outcomes were generally well considered but there were very few artist references which could have informed more individual responses.

The submissions at the lower level generally demonstrated very little first-hand research, and many of the images used were either copied or traced from images found on the internet. The use of media was limited and there was very little development in the preparatory work, which mostly consisted of isolated images of single figures with little thought given to the background or context of the shopper.

Question 10: Music making

This was a popular question with a wide range of responses across the mark range. Candidates explored their ideas from images of musical instruments or still-life arrangements, and photographs of musicians playing. Candidates often combined these separate areas of exploration in their final image.

At the higher levels of achievement, thorough research and gathering provided good opportunities for further development. Some lively and colourful compositions were made from dance images and sequences.

At the mid-level, observational skills were good and media use was controlled and sensitive. The preparatory work demonstrated a fluid and connected sense of development, with images being revisited in various media or within different compositions.

At the lower level, weaker studies of musical instruments were seen, and these were limited by a lack of first-hand source material. Second-source images from magazines, instrument leaflets and the internet were collected, and media use was often limited to paint or coloured pencil with little evidence of experimentation or refinement of technique.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/02
Design-based Assignment

General comments

Submissions for all questions were seen, with **Question 7** being the most popular, and very few responses to **Question 3** seen. A range of media was seen, but the majority of candidates used coloured pencil or acrylic/poster paint. The quality of rendering was very variable across the ability range. Some candidates used photography as a means of recording, and some instances of digital manipulation were also seen. Some candidates had difficulty in developing design ideas and integrating text into the design. Use of generic typefaces was used without sensitivity to the imagery or use of the design. On the whole the presentation of work was good.

It was noticeable that the candidates who achieved the higher marks had done substantial visual research using primary sources in order to gain an understanding of their chosen subject matter. These stronger candidates also made links with the work of other artists and designers, using this research to inform the development of their personal ideas. Planning and thorough preparation also had a positive effect on the stronger work, and there was some evidence of a design process being used to enable candidates to use their research as the starting point for development.

Mid-range submissions relied more heavily on the use of secondary sources from which to develop ideas, and in many cases this had a negative effect as the candidates had not gained an understanding of their subject matter in terms of structure, form, colour and texture. Less research into the work of other artists and designers was seen at this level, and in some cases candidates had not recognised the strengths of ideas produced in their preparatory work.

Weaker submissions often relied totally on secondary sources. Some candidates had done no research at all, and ideas were also secondary, leading to totally derivative outcomes.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Hidden Treasures

This question was fairly popular, attracting a range of responses. Stronger candidates had thoroughly explored the question. Observations were relevant and included drawings and paintings of historical artefacts. Different media was explored to see how the artefacts could be best presented. Lettering styles were also explored with an understanding of their importance to the design brief. Final designs were selected after obvious consideration of aesthetic principles. Candidates had excellent control of media. Posters were presented within a context to show a consideration of function and scale.

Mid-range submissions demonstrated an adequate grasp of observational skills and limited research, mainly from secondary sources. The use of media was often not refined and this detracted from the designs, as did the lack of thought in the use of lettering.

In weaker submissions, candidates often did not consider lettering sufficiently, if at all. Often candidates either printed out font styles they had found or copied these out. Some candidates chose to focus on the museum building rather than the treasures contained within the building. There was also a general lack of development and progression of ideas with insufficient consideration to aesthetics.

Question 2: Poverty magazine

This question was not very popular, but there were some strong responses. Observational studies were often used as the starting point, backed up by photographs of derelict buildings, shacks etc. Areas were zoomed in

on, and candidates concentrated on the textural qualities of decay, using a range of appropriate media to convey these ideas. Other relevant artists' work, and existing magazines were researched and had a strong influence on the direction of the projects. Competent and proficient exploration of the form and structure was evident, and there was evidence of the design process in these submissions.

Mid-range submissions were not so thorough in either research or investigation of media and artists. Some good quality photography was seen, and this was put together to make magazine cover mock-ups. Other media had been explored to create textural effects. More secondary images were seen here, mostly downloaded from the internet. Placing of text and readability were not so well considered at this level, and stages of development were not so clear.

In the lower level of assessment, candidates were very reliant on secondary images, which they had attempted to copy using crayon and paint. Little understanding of subject matter was evident, and aesthetic considerations were very weak.

Question 3: Sculpture design

There were few submissions seen for this question. Some candidates achieved high levels of achievement while others struggled to deal with visualising three dimensions. Those candidates at the higher levels had explored the subject with strong observational studies of interlocking hands, used their own photographs and explored a range of media. Public spaces and sites were looked at, and the development of ideas was informed by research into the work of appropriate artists and sculptors.

Some mid-range submissions showed that candidates had explored the subject by using clay and other modelling media. Others had concentrated on using 2D media and this led to a lack of understanding as to how the sculpture would work as visualisation skills were weaker at this level.

At the lower end, very basic drawings of hands were seen, with little attempt to place the sculpture in a specific space. Submissions were limited by a lack of ability in the manipulation of images and materials.

Question 4: Quotation

Most submissions for this question were based on landscape and some candidates attempted imaginative approaches. This question allowed candidates to work in a more illustrative way and some candidates made good use of this. Family photos and memories were used to create nostalgic compositions, often juxtaposing country and city landscapes to make a contrast. Many seaside and holiday images were included and used to create images. In some cases the lettering had been included, which often spoiled an otherwise successful final image.

At the lower end of assessment, candidates often used very poor quality photographs to work from, which limited their ability to understand structure and other aesthetic qualities. In other cases, the elements within the landscape appeared to have been invented, and the images produced lacked credibility.

Question 5: 100 Years of Motoring

The strongest work interpreted this design brief very well. The form and function of banners were considered along with studies of cars of different vintage. Thorough explorations of lettering were also in evidence and the relevance to this design brief was understood. Many candidates included good or excellent studies of cars using a range of media. Many of these studies included investigation of techniques to best represent a car's metallic surface. Ideas were presented in dynamic compositions which fitted the focus of the brief. Final design ideas were chosen after thorough consideration and were presented to show the banner in a context.

In the mid-range, there was evidence of more reliance on secondary sources of images, and this meant that candidates had not developed a real understanding of structure. Attempts at different layouts and compositions were made, and some exploration of text and lettering was also seen. Some candidates explored and invented their own lettering but then used basic, easily downloaded text in the final outcome. These mid-range submissions showed less ability in the control and rendering of media.

The lower range submissions showed many images of cars downloaded from the internet and copying of logos. Poor rendering skills were evident in these copies. Many candidates had not made a vertical design, and many had ignored the reference to time, merely producing an image of a car with some poorly considered lettering.

Question 6: Repeat pattern based on cacti for a swimming costume

This was a popular question, attracting entries across the mark range. The strongest work demonstrated very good and competent research from first-hand sources, which was reinforced by photography. Different plants and viewpoints were explored, using a range of media and techniques and these demonstrated a high level of ability in their use. Candidates also experimented with a range of approaches from loose and painterly, to tight and graphic. The ideas developed from these initial studies were visualised on a swimming costume in many cases, although this was not specifically asked for. Although the research was of a high standard, many of these submissions lacked flow in the final designs, which tended to be basic spot or half-drop repeats. Many centres had a formulaic approach to this question, with every candidate answering it in a similar way, using the same strategies and materials.

Mid-level submissions also showed strong first-hand and secondary research at the initial stages. The quality of observation was not so high, and the manipulative skills had not been developed to such a high level. Less exploration of the repeat was seen, with many candidates opting for their initial ideas, and not trying out different possibilities. Formulaic approaches were also seen at this level but were generally less successful. Again many candidates showed their ideas on a swimsuit, but where figures were attempted they were often limited by a lack of understanding of the human form.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates showed much less research from first-hand sources, with many just using one simple downloaded image as the basis for the project. Manipulative skills were weak at this level, and ideas had not been developed in any depth.

Question 7: Bitez

In the stronger submissions candidates had very thoroughly explored every aspect of the theme. There were many studies of people whispering together from different viewpoints. There were creative responses with some candidate considering different outcomes such as cartoon style compositions, pop art ideas or more realistic interpretations. Final outcomes were considered alongside aesthetics and a consideration of colour scheme and the whole of the book cover.

Weaker candidates based their ideas on secondary images, mainly of dogs and cats, combined with clumsy attempts at lettering to make a logo. Although simplicity could be very effective, these were often so sparing that there was little content to assess. Many images of dog bowls with Bitez written on the side were seen, or an outline of a dog's head. There was very crude and basic use of felt tips or poorly handled poster paint used to convey ideas at this level. Again much copying of existing packaging was evident.

Question 8: Misheard Whisper

Stronger submissions demonstrated high levels of creativity and imagination in both the research and development of ideas. Artist research was used and informed the development of the candidates' own original ideas, which were well rendered and in some cases visualised as a book jacket on a coffee table. First-hand and secondary research also informed the work. Quite sophisticated ideas were seen in these higher submissions. The title and other lettering had been researched with invention and appropriateness, and these were integrated into the overall design with some success.

This maturity was less apparent in the mid-range submissions, where some photographs were also used as starting points, but were less well developed into personal ideas. The quality of initial studies was less resolved, and rendering skills were not so strong. In many cases, the lettering had been researched and developed, but did not seem to fit with the image, showing a lack of confidence and maturity.

Weaker submissions often concentrated on mouths and lips, mainly sourced from books or the internet. A lack of understanding of the subject matter was apparent, and there were weak manipulative skills and aesthetic considerations. Many candidates chose to take a horror approach and included a variety of cliched images such as dripping blood.

Question 9: Sea Breeze

This question mainly attracted submissions in the mid and lower mark ranges. Some candidates concentrated on the design of boxes and wrappers, including nets and drawn out boxes etc., while others concentrated on the visuals to be placed on the packaging.

Stronger submissions demonstrated some good research into water, the sea and sea animals etc. The best of these managed to convey the idea of freshness and vitality through the use of carefully selected colour and image. Sensitive first-hand research had informed these submissions, and strong manipulative skills were seen. Many candidates referenced other artists' work, most notably Hokusai's Big Wave, and some managed to use this without direct copying. Investigations into lettering were also strong at the higher level, with appropriate styles chosen to convey the message.

Mid-range submissions displayed some good imagery of the sea, sky and other suitable elements. Several ideas had been generated from the research, which was from both primary and secondary sources. Those candidates choosing a more pictorial approach did better with this question, while others focused too much on the production of Design & Technology style plans for boxes, often including bar codes and ingredients lists. The use of media was less sensitive at this level, and some candidates were unable to convey their ideas due to rather clumsy use of materials.

At the lower end, candidates mainly downloaded images of existing products and applied their images on them. The sources of research were mainly secondary also. A lack of skill in the control and choice of media was also apparent.

Question 10 Jewellery design

There were a few higher-level submissions for this question, but most fell in the mid and lower mark bands. The strongest submissions clearly used primary sources as well as research into jewellery from various designers and eras as the starting points for their work. Some took inspiration from ancient Egyptian jewellery from museum visits, or looked at contemporary designs. This research was used to inform the development of ranges of designs, using carefully selected media with a high degree of skill. In the strongest submissions the presentation of final design ideas was often very strong. These were placed on display with consideration to light reflecting on the metal of the jewellery. Candidates were able to effectively scale up their design ideas. In these submissions electrical components had been studied and appropriate shapes selected for aesthetic qualities to move into a design. The form and function of jewellery was understood, and aesthetics was given a high priority.

Mid-range candidates tended to be more reliant on secondary sources of research, and used the ideas generated to make designs for more conventional jewellery than those at the higher level. Several ideas were seen which were basically just electrical components hung on necklaces or earrings. The candidates' own ideas were lacking in imagination or individuality. Rendering skills were less sensitive at this level.

Weaker candidates had not necessarily understood the concept of form and function in relation to jewellery design. Design ideas were often clumsy with no consideration of comfort or aesthetics. Consequently, their work seemed hesitant and lacked a thorough exploration. At this level work often appeared overly simplistic, underdeveloped or under explored. Some candidates had difficulty in scaling up their ideas to show their final design clearly. Other candidates made 3D designs on a tiny scale from actual electrical components but seemed unsure which of these to develop further and how to assess these for aesthetic qualities.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 0400/03 Critical and Historical Assignment</p>

General comments

The levels of achievement were mostly within the mid to lower areas of assessment with a few submissions achieving marks at the higher levels of attainment.

The assignments were presented as sketchbook formats, some folders and files of mounted and annotated A4/A3 sheets of work with mounted photographs, drawings and text. Some A4 digital presentations were seen, usually within a plastic file. A few submissions appeared to be a series of the candidates' own coursework exercises without any notes or annotations explaining the purpose of these pieces of practical work. There were also some written essays containing no visual references at all. The text consisted of descriptions of works and too much biographical detail.

The candidates making use of the approval forms benefitted from stating some clear intentions and indicating appropriate sources from which to explore first-hand research and experience of their chosen topics. Several submissions had not used the proposal forms, and these were confused and lacking a focus for investigation.

Higher levels of achievement

These candidates had carefully planned their assignments and included clearly stated intentions. Thematic approaches provided well-focused areas for investigation.

These strongest submissions gained valuable research and experience through making visits to galleries and studios. Candidates had chosen works by more than one artist which enabled them to make some personal comparative observations, helping to inform critical judgements.

Candidates at this level demonstrated evidence of personal engagement through a visual and written analysis of the ideas and methods behind the works investigated. The strongest submissions contained a coherent journey of exploration with personal practical experiments clearly informed by the research and experience gained. Text was thoughtfully interwoven amongst the candidates' photographs and illustrations. In these submissions, the text was clear and easy to read, containing thoughtful personal observations and insights into how the work had developed. The valuable experience of having viewed the works at first-hand had clearly informed and inspired the strongest assignments.

These submissions all demonstrated an ability to evaluate in an articulate way and to produce an well-informed conclusion which showed a good level of understanding and awareness of the chosen subject.

Mid-levels of achievement

Most of the submissions at these levels were found to rely too heavily on second-hand sources (particularly from the internet) and contained little in the way of a more personal engagement with the subject.

These candidates would have benefitted from taking their own photographs or from making some drawings which would have contributed a more personal element to the research and recording stages of the assignment.

The use of second-hand source material (often downloaded and containing too much biographical information) did not demonstrate much in the way of personal initiative or even much enthusiasm for the chosen topic.

Some attempts had been made at visual explorations through material-based practical processes such as printmaking and the textile methods of stitching and embroidery. However, the images produced could have been made more relevant to the assignment topic with notes and annotations explaining why they had been selected.

Lower levels of achievement

These submissions were mostly limited by a total lack of any evidence of first-hand experience of the topics chosen. Poorly presented and seemingly randomly selected topics often demonstrated a lack of interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

These candidates had not submitted a proposal for their assignments. This process helps the candidate to select an appropriate topic for investigation. It also requires the candidate to indicate some potential sources (first-hand if possible), from which to gain valuable research and experience of the chosen topic.

Some of these submissions were very limited by the lack of any planning and consisted of a few poor and unrelated sketches and drawings. Photography at this level was badly printed and difficult to see with no indication of sources included.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Painting and Related Media was the most popular area of study, with a few submissions entered for Photography or Graphic Design. There were only a very few Fashion and Textile Design entries and even fewer 3D Design submissions.

A focus on drawing from first-hand experience was the foundation of the stronger submissions. Using a variety of media, these candidates had seen drawing as a process of enquiry that enabled them to discover imagery and explore ideas rather than simply demonstrating a technical skill. Consequently their work was always lively and personal. However, there were also many candidates who were heavily reliant on mechanically copying from secondary sources, often just tracing from these images.

There were some good examples of the use of photography for first-hand investigations. At best this method produced unexpected imagery with considerable potential that resulted in thoughtful personal work. Photographs were viewed as starting points for experimentation and invention. However, there were many submissions in which the use of photography did not inform development due to technical weaknesses and a lack of critical thinking. Weaker candidates had difficulties progressing from their own photographs and did not explore the potential of translating their imagery into other media through experimentation. There were many examples of candidates copying photographs or simply colouring over photocopies, demonstrating limited skills, personality or purpose.

Generally projects in the mid and lower ranges lacked clear focus and direction. In some cases final outcomes were decided upon at the last moment and were unresolved due to insufficient time being allocated for completion. In the worst cases there was limited or no connection between preparatory sheets and the final piece.

Reference to the work of other artists was seen in most submissions, but was not always used to further the candidates' work. Some candidates would have benefited from more research into the work of relevant artists to inspire different approaches to their supporting studies.

The centres' order of merit was generally satisfactory, but assessments were very generously marked across each assessment objective. Centres had often overvalued their candidates' abilities and had not correctly identified the strengths and limitations within the work. Frequently, substantial adjustments were required to appropriately adjust assessments. However, a few centres made realistic assessments of their candidates' abilities through the correct application of the mark scheme.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

A wide range of topics was explored. Still life was a popular choice with many arrangements containing ceramic pots, woodcarvings and masks. Organic forms were used to inspire direct observational work such as seed pods, leaves and shells, resulting in a series of very sensitive and informative studies. Some of the strongest work used portraiture to explore facial and emotional expressions.

The strongest candidates displayed ideas and issues that were all well thought through, exploring highly topical, sensitive and personal themes and included evidence of creative development within the supporting work. At this level candidates had researched relevant artists and this work was used extremely well to inform and enhance the candidates' ideas. Stronger candidates were also open to exploring and

experimenting with a variety of well chosen techniques and processes, including printmaking, a range of painting medium and techniques, pastels and mixed media.

As at the higher level, candidates in the mid mark range also demonstrated the exploration of a range of materials. Media was appropriately selected to explore ideas with evidence of a developing control of techniques. Experimental mark making and the layering of materials with collage and stitching, worked over with image or pattern, reflected creativity and confidence. Many candidates had taken inspiration from other practitioners and attempted to work in the style or the approach of the chosen artist. Some produced reproductions of the works of others but there was little evidence that these had made any visible impact on the candidates' own development. Whilst initial studies or ideas demonstrated potential and energy, some work lacked the sustained exploration and experimentation necessary to develop and refine outcomes. Candidates were not always able to recognise which of these experiments had been the most successful and a journey of self-evaluation was lacking.

Less successful submissions contained a range of studies and images which were either underdeveloped or did not demonstrate progression towards a final outcome. A final piece was achieved but only loosely related to the supporting work. It was obvious that candidates' work would have benefitted from a greater amount of observation from first-hand sources within their chosen topics as there was a reliance on secondary sources and internet imagery. Candidates at this level often used marker pens, pencil, coloured pencils and showed poorly executed painting techniques.

Photography

Whilst there was evidence of good photography to produce first-hand research in other areas of study and as a method of documenting the process of making fragile 3D or large works, there were only a few photography submissions.

The few stronger examples demonstrated visual understanding and considered different angles, viewpoints, scale and lighting while developing images. The submissions were sustained, but reference to other photographers were inconsistent.

In the lower range, photographic entries tended to consist of little more than a series of photographs that appeared to have been taken in one session. The photographs did not explore the theme in detail and where some examples contained promise, candidates did not recognise these strengths and demonstrated little critical analysis. Images tended to be similar, with the positioning of the camera barely being altered. There was limited evidence of development or refinement in technique or ideas.

Graphic Design

There were few submissions in this area of study. Designs were seen for company logos, posters, book covers and packaging. Most candidates had collected examples of the work of other designers.

Candidates at the higher level had analysed and adapted these references to inform their own ideas and demonstrated their understanding of the design process. The exploration of font and image was evident at this level and some candidates had creatively explored digital media to achieve creative and abstract effects.

In the weaker entries, digital manipulation was also used for the illustrations and photos which were taken mostly from existing artwork found on the internet. Type examples were numerous but not considered in relation to the products being advertised. Colour changes and Photoshop effects were used randomly. Many projects had so many options and possibilities, different typefaces and images that the final outcomes were a mixture of ideas and unrelated conclusions.

Textile and Fashion Design

There were very few submissions in this area. Stronger candidates had recorded influences from primary research and artist or designer reference. Inspiration taken from this research was illustrated and informed ideas and development. Fashion drawings and textile experiments were also submitted as part of the supporting work. Batik swatches were popular and generally demonstrated a good understanding of technique and process. There was a sense of progression and personal involvement in the work.

The weaker fashion designs had no original ideas as the designs as the dresses were all copies of other designers' work with the colours and patterns changed.

There were many large scale batiks presented, mostly at the mid and lower achievement levels, which appeared impressive due to the ambitious scale of the imagery and the free and flamboyant use of wax or flour paste and dye. Whilst these were vibrant and bold they were often lacking in an aesthetic understanding or a sense of design. Supporting studies were weak and largely based on poor copies from secondary sources.

3D Design

In the supporting sheets of the few entries, there were some interesting 3D experiments with plaster, card maquettes, wire, clay and origami but none of these were developed into successful final outcomes.

