
AS

Art and Design

7242/C & 7242/X – Fine art
Report on the Examination

7240
June 2016

Version: v1.0.

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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 (7242/C)

Many successful courses began with short introductory workshops which focused on drawing, critical and contextual studies and the development of skills in managing materials, techniques and investigations. This enabled students to develop comprehensive portfolios which addressed all four Assessment Objectives.

A wide variety of themes was explored by students and resulted in a rich variety of work using different formats including sketchbooks, mounted sheets and digital portfolios. Pinterest was popular as a means of researching visual and cultural information. Successful students used it effectively. However, less successful students did not use it discriminately; there was insufficient evidence of the appropriateness of selected images and how these had been used to inform investigations.

Students' understanding of contextual material was evident in the selection of appropriate sources and in the connections made between images. Investigations and the development of ideas were informed in many different ways by explorations into the work of others. It was clear that engagement with artists' ideas and approaches helped students to develop their understanding.

Schools and colleges put emphasis on media and processes by running well-informed workshops and demonstrations based on skills and techniques. Photography was often used as a visual research tool and students frequently manipulated images digitally to develop compositional ideas. Drawing was evident; it was often the most successful students who fully explored its potential.

Externally Set Assignment (7242/X)

Students made good use of the supervised time. Planning time was used effectively by the majority of students and some included evidence of visits to galleries and locations linked to their chosen starting point. In most cases, students used the externally set assignment to demonstrate skills and understanding acquired in the Portfolio.

The Seashore

This starting point inspired a wide range of responses. Moderators reported seeing many studies of shells, flotsam and jetsam. Some students made use of seaside holiday photographs. In many examples, students investigated the power, mood and atmosphere of the sea. Interesting experiments with collage, tissue paper, stitch and mixed media were seen often informed by Kurt Jackson's seascapes. There was a vibrant use of colour, on occasion explored through the manipulation of images using Photo-shop and influenced by the paintings of Margarethe Vanderpas.

The spirit of Art Deco

Many successful students identified the historical and contextual aspects of this theme and were able to effectively explore the visual language of Art Deco when developing their ideas and making a personal response. The paintings of Tamara De Lempika and Gustav Klimt inspired students to explore composition, colour and decorative qualities. Less successful students focused on pattern but this was not fully developed.

Machinery

This was a very popular starting point with many students making good use of drawing from direct observation and their own photographs of cogs, bicycle gears, machinery, clock mechanisms and engines to produce highly detailed studies of machine parts. Students used a variety of materials and techniques which included detailed drawings in pencil, pen and ink. Many large, bold and expressive charcoal studies were seen. The colour and flaking qualities of peeling rust were explored by building up layers of paint, sometimes combined with tissue paper and other materials. Printmaking and frottage were also. Contextual references included the work of Idris Khan, Leonardo da Vinci and Bernd and Hilla Becher.

Masks

A wide range of approaches was seen including investigations into characters, emotions, decoration, pattern, and body adornment. Temporary masks, references to clowns and the notion of hiding behind a mask, led to some innovative submissions. References to the work of artists such as Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger and Frida Kahlo were popular and used effectively. Less successful students struggled to progress beyond initial ideas and simple interpretations; they tended to create paintings and models of masks that were direct copies of Venetian masks or masks produced for the Day of the Dead Festival.

Expressive qualities

Artists included in the starting point prompted students to explore a wide range of materials, surfaces and compositions. The more successful students used visual elements, tactile qualities and vibrant colour combinations to produce striking outcomes. Responses to architecture were seen with studies of the works of John Virtue and Jeanette Barnes used to good effect.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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