GCSE

Art and Design

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J160 – J167**

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Art and Design: J160

Art and Design: Fine Art J161

Art and Design: Graphic Communication J162

Art and Design: Photography J163

Art and Design: Textile Design J164

Art and Design: Three-dimensional Design J165

Art and Design: Critical and Contextual Studies J166

Art and Design: Applied J167

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

OCR Report to Centres – June 2013

Units A110 – A127

General Comments

The GCSE Art and Design specification has become firmly established and continues to be well received by teachers and candidates alike.

Most candidates had benefited from well delivered courses, which had been carefully designed to take full advantage of the strengths of the qualification. Unendorsed and Fine Art pathways remain the most popular approaches to study. The other endorsements, often supported by subject specialists, are significant areas of delivery in those centres that have the appropriate resources to facilitate delivery. Photography – Lens and Light-based Media (J163) is particularly remarkable for the continuing increase in the number of candidate entries. Contextual Studies (J166) entries have also risen significantly especially in those centres where candidates undertake more than one GCSE Art and Design endorsement. Similarly, Applied Art and Design (J167), which meets the needs of those candidates seeking a more vocational pathway within the subject has won further adherents and is now frequently delivered by Design and Technology Departments.

Submissions were usually very well displayed with most centres making a considerable effort to exhibit work to the best advantage whilst meeting the needs of the moderation process. Work was generally presented in suitable locations where there was little or no disruption.

However, a minority of centres did not give proper consideration to the necessity of quiet and private accommodation for the moderation process. Elsewhere folders were piled on tables, sometimes in cramped and noisy spaces. Clearly such inappropriate conditions did not facilitate moderation**.**

All centres were informed of the requirement to display the work by Unit in separate rank orders by the *Instructions to Centres regarding Moderation Procedures for Art and Design June Series* (CW1774). Any concerns in this respect should be discussed with the moderator before the visit.
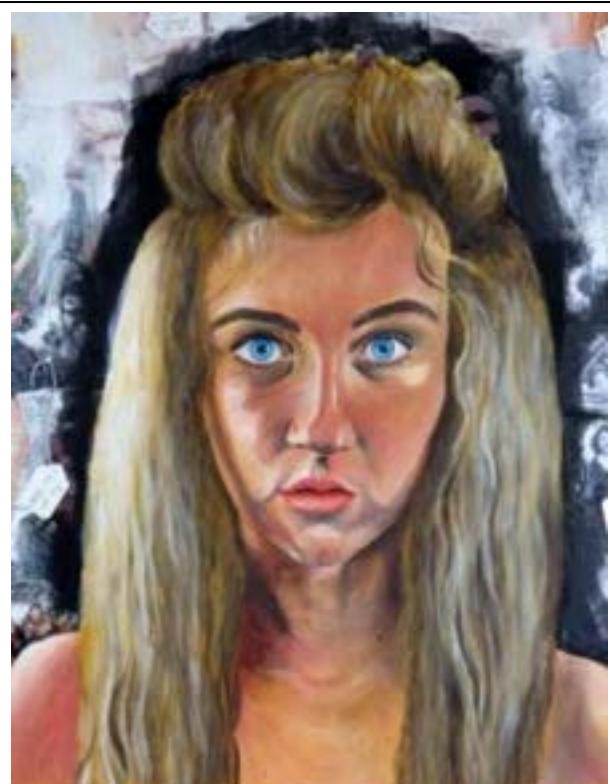
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Centres are reminded that the moderation samples must be exhibited by Unit in merit order.

The loan work for the purposes of Grade Award, Standardisation and Training is essential to the well-being of the qualifications and OCR readily acknowledges centres' collaboration. The dispatch of 'samples' is an important undertaking and every reasonable precaution as regards safety and security is taken whilst these are in OCR's care. Centres are urged to take particular care with the packing of three-dimensional and other fragile work.

Centres are again thanked for their co-operation in making moderation visit arrangements. Usually other aspects of administration were equally efficient. Most centres met the May 15 deadline for the dispatch of mark-sheets to OCR. Similarly, the majority correctly forwarded the Assessment Summary Form (GCW930) and the Centre Authentication Form (CCS160) with the MS1s to the moderator. Nonetheless, the Centre Authentication Form was frequently completed for each Unit rather than the qualification overall.

It was particularly pleasing that most centres had responded to the advice given in respect of the 'inter-active' Centre Authentication and Assessment Summary forms. The widespread use of the latter resulted in the occurrence of 'arithmetical or transcriptional error' being further reduced this year.

In the main part orders of merit were dependable. Even so, the levels of assessment, although frequently more acceptable than 2012, could in some instances prove unreliable and were consequently adjusted to meet the OCR national standard.

In general staff in centres accepted that moderators are permitted to give only condensed verbal feedback and looked forward to receiving a more detailed written report with the issue of results. The latter should be read in conjunction with this overarching final report.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Download and use the Assessment Summary Form GCW930, which is available on the OCR web site. This option allows for the entry and addition of marks thus avoiding arithmetical errors.

Display the Portfolio and Set Task in two separate rank orders.

Clearly identify individual Units and highlight final outcomes.

Centres are reminded that in addition to the work sampled for the purposes of moderation all submissions must be readily available.

Art and Design Portfolio

The work most commonly seen was for the Art and Design (A110) and Fine Art (A111) units. The other areas of study were also represented with Critical and Contextual Studies (A116) and Applied Art and Design (A117) being well supported. New entries are evident in 3D Design (A115) many of which are from Design and Technology Departments delivering courses in response to the Art and Design Suite of qualifications for the first time. Photography is universal and expanding across all endorsements apart from being an increasingly subscribed discipline in its own right. Likewise digital approaches continue to flourish in all areas of study. Three-dimensional work, which reflects the multi-disciplinary approach adopted by many candidates, is often a feature of Unendorsed, Fine Art and Graphic Communications submissions.

Many centres made good use of cultural and other resources, which resulted in candidates showing strong personal development. Those that encouraged candidates to engage with their local environment through investigations into museum collections, architecture and landscape often saw highly stimulated and intensely individual outcomes.

In most centres the approach to the Portfolio was usually robustly thematic, focused and well sustained with the requirements of the Assessment Objectives being met in equal measure.

The use of worksheets, rather than sketchbooks, for preparatory studies continues to be prevalent. This approach may assist greater selection in the choice of work presented for assessment. Certainly less successful candidates were less inclined to substantiate submissions by including superfluous material. Now, irrespective of the means of presentation, with the emphasis on 'quality rather than quantity' this tendency appears to be in decline.

As in previous years most candidates made excellent use of sketchbooks, journals and diaries but it is still evident that some candidates became somewhat obsessed with presentation and the decoration of pages. Inconsistency of achievement within the submission can be detrimental to accurate assessment. In this respect, centres are reminded that the purpose of moderation is to assess the best of candidates' achievement using a selected sample, which will determine the outcome for all candidates.

Centres encouraged and supported candidates to produce individual portfolios. In the best examples it was evident candidates benefited from courses that were structured to ensure coverage of the Assessment Objectives but not at the expense of becoming too prescriptive. However, some centres encouraged engagement with the Objectives in too rigid a manner, which did little to promote the full review, modification and consolidation of ideas as the work progressed towards final outcomes.

Regrettably moderators continued to report that some candidates in their Portfolio submissions had presented sketchbooks filled with collage and magazine 'cut outs'. This practice inhibited genuine involvement in a creative subject.

It is pleasing to note that more submissions showed candidates selecting and presenting their work for assessment. Some candidates produced large quantities of work but failed to develop their ideas in sufficient depth. Candidates should be guided by their teachers and consider carefully the extent to which their initial intentions are selected and presented in their submissions. Successful candidates provided evidence of a creative journey undertaken with a genuine sense of purpose. Less accomplished submissions were often fragmented and the work poorly executed.

A minority of centres did not support the principle of selecting and presenting for assessment. When all the work produced throughout the course was submitted invariably this resulted in uneven levels of achievement, which were responded to in the moderation process.

Centres are again reminded to impress upon candidates the importance of distinctly acknowledging reference material. Candidates may utilise research, quotations and other evidence in their submissions but they must identify their sources. It is also important that candidates differentiate between their own work and that of other practitioners.

Similarly, centres should also remember to impress upon candidates communicating in writing that text should be legible and spelling, punctuation and grammar accurate so meaning is clear. The specification requires candidates to present information in a form that suits its purpose by using an appropriate style of writing and, where applicable, subject terminology.

Yet again, the exploration of artists' work and 'mind mapping' of themes remained a purposeful activity. Nonetheless, some candidates were encouraged to go to great lengths to present worksheets about a wide variety of sometimes quite incongruent artists, without evidence of how these connected with or informed their own work. Likewise, when researching themes candidates sometimes generated much visual investigation but failed to properly consider how they might select and develop specific ideas.
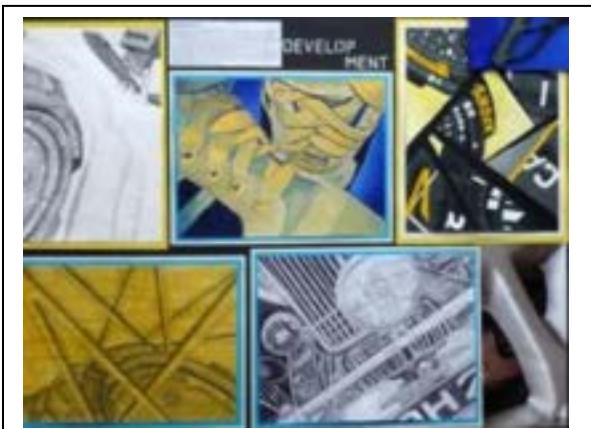
Assessment Objective 1 – Develop

It was conspicuous in the work sampled that candidates placed much emphasis on developing ideas by the investigation of images, objects and other contextual source material. Many candidates demonstrated the ability to undertake independent, well-informed investigations. The most successful submissions had been approached confidently and displayed perceptive cultural understanding. This often adopted a strongly visual form in contrast to less self-assured research, which tended to be reliant on written communication.

Even so, in the best work candidates reinforced the development of ideas through highly thoughtful and analytical annotation, which demonstrated true engagement with the work of others and a clear understanding of how this informed their own practice.

This examination series again witnessed many ethnic themes founded on the study of a variety of sources, including the ever popular Aboriginal Art, African masks, Indian miniatures, Japanese prints and the Mexican Day of the Dead.

Ideas were stimulated by many sources ranging from researching aspects of portraiture or candidates' home localities to inspiration spurred by the Internet. Others stemmed from personal investigations into artefacts or a facet of work from a range of artists, designers and craftspeople. Most candidates clearly identified contextual resources and understood the necessity of ensuring these were relevant to the outcomes. The least successful investigations tended to regurgitate basic biographical information and rather than showing engagement in any meaningful way appeared 'bolted on' to the rest of the submission. It is candidates' responses to 'artworks' in which critical evaluations are made and appreciation of context shown that positively informs the development of ideas.

Some centres encouraged reference to contemporary sources, which stimulated candidates' imaginations and led to some well-considered links being forged. However, Banksy and other graffiti artists again proved popular with the result that frequently understanding was superficial and interpretation obvious and predictable.
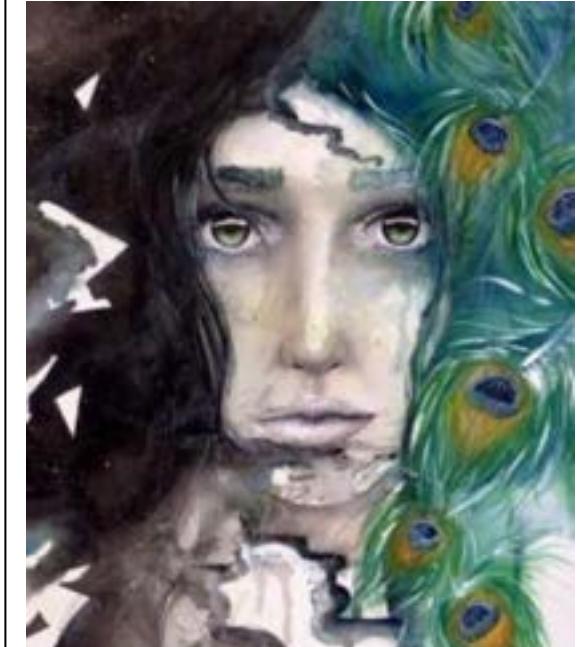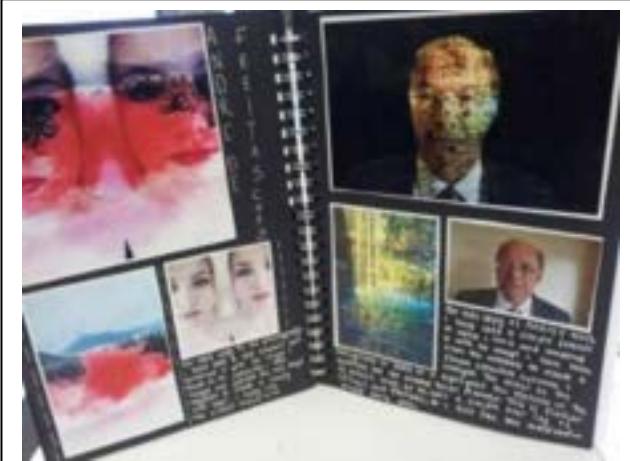
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Use a wide range of sources to develop ideas and establish a balance between the use of media and photographic imagery. Avoid excessive reliance on secondary sources from the Internet or magazines.
Central to the most successful work across the endorsements was the development of drawing skills as a means of researching and developing ideas. In some cases drawings were successfully presented as final outcomes.

Assessment Objective 2 – Experiment

The purposeful and considered refinement of ideas through a strong and consistent ability to experiment using a wide range of media and materials was evident in much of the work sampled. In the most successful submissions the independent selection of resources was perceptive and imaginative. Moreover, these had been employed thoughtfully and systematically with on-going review and modification as the work progressed.

In some centres candidates were prompted to experiment with a wide range of materials and techniques at the expense of selection and refinement. Responses to the requirements of this Objective were best when candidates made strong connections to Assessment Objective 1 and built on investigations into the working processes and approaches of the practitioners studied.

In Photography some candidates engaged with some very exciting contemporary photographers' methods and techniques, including experimentation with projecting and printing onto unusual surfaces, which gave a highly expressive effect.

Whilst candidate's use of an ever increasing range of facilities and resources has clearly expanded opportunity for unusual interpretation and exploration some of the most successful experimentation emanated from skilful investigation through the use of a selective range of tools and processes.

Printmaking, which ranged from simple but effective monoprints to sophisticated multi-coloured screen prints, was extensively undertaken across the endorsements.

Textiles candidates, as always, employed a diversity of techniques and media and demonstrated a keen and well-informed interest in designers.

Critical and Contextual Studies candidates continued to display not only sound research skills but also the ability to be experimental and selective when refining ideas towards practical outcomes.

Applied candidates showed creativity in resolving design problems and presented convincing practical solutions when responding to vocationally or commercially orientated briefs.

Disappointingly in less successful submissions basic skills of handling materials or techniques were under-developed making it difficult for candidates to successfully explore or refine ideas and fully realise their intentions.
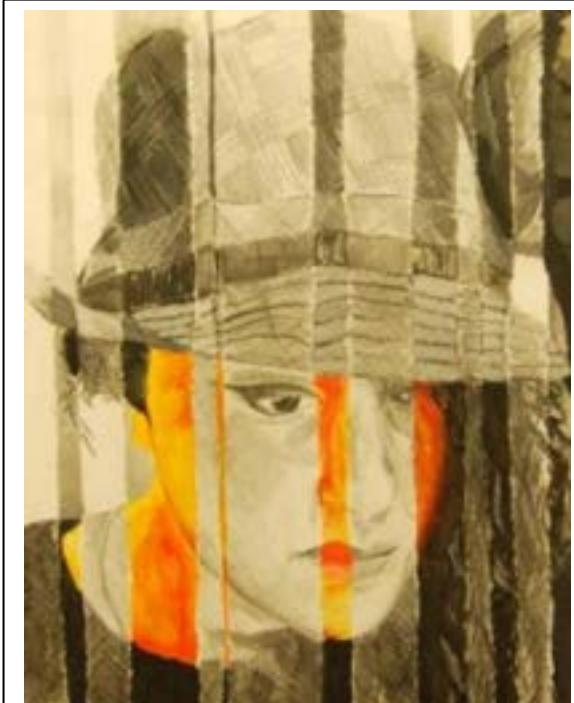
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Exploit local resources:

- · **Museums or galleries.**
- · **Botanical gardens, parks, zoos**
- · **Artists and designers**
- · **Community Arts Centres**
- · **Workshops or artists in residence**
- · **Exhibitions or studio visits**
- · **Carnivals, fairs, parades.**

The best work often provided evidence of a coherent journey with a genuine sense of purpose.

More successful candidates demonstrated not only that they had learnt from others' work but also simultaneously developed their own visual language.

Assessment Objective 3 – Record

Many candidates displayed strength and consistency in their ability to record ideas, insights and observations and this was central to their studies.

Centres had given considerable focus and attention to working from observation. Photography, particularly digital, continues to be a major method of recording across all endorsements. Whilst a significant amount of direct observation along with photographic source material was evident there was also, although permissible, an increasing amount of secondary sourced material which could have instead been taken from first-hand experience.

Many other candidates go to a great deal of trouble to obtain good quality and exciting source material for recording. In contrast weaker candidates still tend to be over reliant on secondary sourced material. For some candidates the improvement of observational skills is neglected and those who substituted thoughtful recording with poorly selected collections of images from magazines and elsewhere were sadly misguided.

When 'found' imagery is gathered from the Internet or elsewhere candidates must acknowledge their sources.

Many candidates' observations were well linked to intentions but for others the discrete approach to Assessment Objectives 1 and 2 prevented candidates from fully exploiting the knowledge and skills gained from development and exploration to expand their methods of recording.

Annotation and other written recording, rarely just descriptive but often reflective and analytical, were extensively used by candidates. Those who were clear about their own intentions and related these to the work of others invariably produced the best examples.

Centres are reminded that candidates may record their ideas, feelings, insights and observations in any way that is appropriate to intentions and this is not the sole domain of drawing and photography. Indeed, successful candidates often record their thought processes, opinions and responses to experience in a range of different ways.

Centres are reminded that the quality of written language is assessable. Moderators commented again and with some concern:

"Unfortunately the frequency of poor spelling, grammar and punctuation was alarming."

The quality of recording invariably has an impact on performance across all of the Assessment Objectives and in the best submissions candidates ensure that the standard of work produced remains consistent throughout.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Present the work in a way that clearly shows the creative journey through the Assessment Objectives.

Empty plastic bottles, cans, packaging and other throwaway items are just some of the materials used by centres in respect of Assessment Objective 3.

Assessment Objective 4 – Present

Candidates successfully planned, reviewed and developed their work to present some strong and personal responses in their outcomes. A wide range of artistic and cultural influences from which candidates had made contextual connections was varied and frequently very personal. The majority of candidates had developed creative outcomes through taking elements of the styles, character or techniques found in their chosen cultural, contextual or artistic influences and used these to good effect in their own work.

Once more moderators observed that there were still some instances of candidates presenting all of their coursework for assessment. This is disappointing because being discriminating would have been more advantageous in terms of meeting the requirements of Assessment Objective 4. Moderators' recommendations in respect of centres' levels of assessment are founded on the evidence seen in the moderation sample and the responsibility for being selective rests entirely with candidates.

The strongest candidates continued to produce exceptional outcomes, which impressed with the sophisticated use of detail, colour, scale and technique. These candidates made connections with contexts and the work of other practitioners that demonstrated insight and sound critical and analytical understanding.

Conversely in some instances candidates simply transposed an image taken from the preparatory phases and, although sometimes well executed, this did little to disclose the narrative of the creative journey.

Moderators witnessed submissions at their best when there was a 'journey' leading to an edited presentation of work, which evidenced not only clear and insightful connections between elements but also imaginative and personal expression.

Some centres still seem to be presenting 'the course', rather than guiding candidates to select work, which not only displayed technical accomplishment but also strengths across the Assessment Objectives.
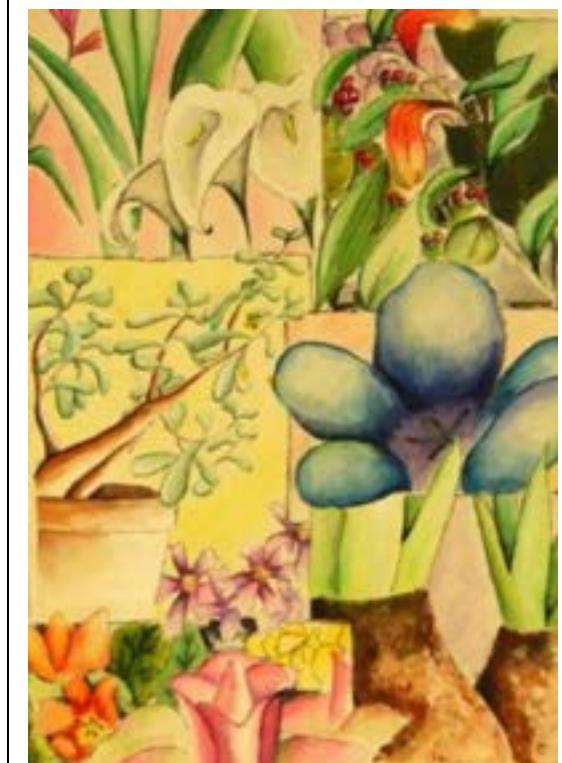
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

In the OCR-set Task candidates should avoid using unfamiliar materials or techniques in the production of the final outcomes, especially during the ten hours supervised period when guidance by the teacher may not be given.

OCR-Set Task

The 2013 OCR-set Task paper promoted responses that were almost invariably lively and well intentioned. Moderation confirmed that the range of starting points provided a platform for all candidates to display their individual creativity and technical skills to the best advantage.

Most teachers previewed the paper upon receipt and were thus well primed for its distribution to candidates early in the Spring Term. Candidates largely took advantage of the extended preparatory period and consequently most submissions were well sustained throughout the Assessment Objectives.

Less successful candidates could be ambitious and produce a significant quantity of work but lacked the imagination or technical abilities to fully realise their intentions. There was often a tendency to choose predictable solutions, such as the direct copying of secondary sourced material thus placing insufficient emphasis on development and exploration.

As usual centres mainly supported candidates well by building on the experiences gained during the Portfolio unit and nurturing candidates' investigations into individual lines of enquiry.

On the whole the submissions for the OCR-set Task appeared to have a greater sense of purpose and be more selective than those for the Portfolio unit. This often meant that the work progressed from inception to conclusion in a way that seemed more personal and refined. Sometimes outcomes did not match the aspirations evident in preparatory work and in such cases the overall submissions did not realise intentions to the level anticipated.

In Photography submissions, especially when much of the work had been produced digitally, it could be difficult to distinguish what had been achieved in the ten hours of supervised time.

Candidates' choice from Section 1 Written Starting Points was particularly even:

'Caged' - a popular starting point that generated many different approaches and the use of a considerable range of materials. A significant number of responses were produced in three dimensions, particularly ceramics. Contextual sources were equally diverse ranging from Francis Bacon, René Magritte and Damien Hirst to Franz Xaver Messerschmidt. Whilst some candidates considered 'chains' and 'confinement' the less literally minded investigated themes such as 'inner trauma'.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

To enable the preparation of teaching and learning resources teachers should access the paper on receipt by the centre.

Provisional entry lists submitted to OCR in the Autumn Term generate the dispatch of papers to centres.

'**Rock forms**' - encouraged some accomplished recording from first-hand observation, often remarkable for the close attention to detail.

'**Canine**' - well subscribed, both across the endorsements and the ability range, this starting point promoted much recording from direct observation. Responses from candidates working in three dimensions were particularly notable.

'**Layers**' - allowed for individual interpretations, which encompassed 'strata' to, rather wittily, 'poultry' and a wide variety of outcomes from candidates of all abilities.

'**Creepy-Crawly**' - a much preferred starting point, which inspired all manner of entomological themes as well as those focusing on human reaction to 'bugs'. Some purposeful contextual links were forged with sometimes lesser known artists, designers and illustrators, such as Eugène Séguy.

'**Love**' - responses to this starting point tended to polarise. On the one hand the predictable visual cliché in the vein of the 'lovers against the sunset on a palm fringed beach' but equally rather more inspiring interpretations such as family groupings, 'mother and child' and investigations into the more subtle aspects of the emotion.

'**Blooms**' - supported by many candidates, especially those entered for Textile Design. Although diverse, interpretations were almost invariably colourful and in some cases led to detailed observation and careful consideration of pattern, shape and texture. Most candidates managed to avoid the well-worn contextual paths of Georgia O'Keeffe and Vincent van Gogh.

'**Health Foods**' - was particularly well liked by Graphic Communication candidates who found much opportunity to design advertisements, packaging and point of sale materials.

The Section 2 Visual Starting Points were more inviting than previously with '**Night time**' especially winning much attention. Whilst some responses were unsurprising being inspired almost inevitably by Edward Hopper and other famous 'nocturnal painters' others that featured 'fairies' or 'moving traffic at night', helped by digital recording, were rather more memorable.

Critical and Contextual candidates undertook all Section 3 starting points. Whilst '**Urban Life**' responses favoured a comparison of two artists those for '**Musicians and Musical Instruments**' often adopted a practical route in the form of painting, printmaking or three-dimensional work. Candidates investigating '**The Kiss**' largely showed a genuine critical appreciation of how artists have portrayed 'love or affection', through purposefully sustained study.


12
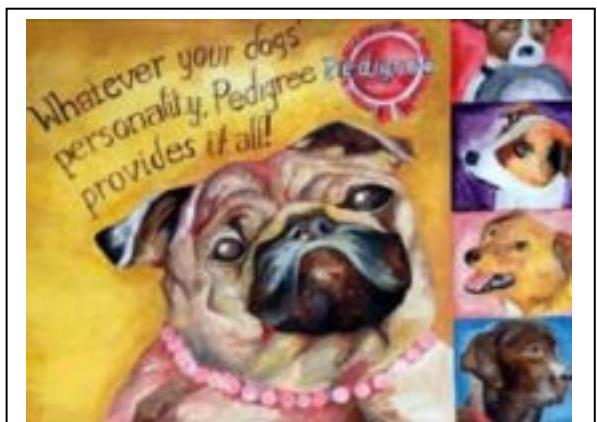
Critical and Contextual Studies

As before this endorsement attracted a good following especially from centres wishing to offer their candidates the opportunity to follow a course that is underpinned by contextual research, reference and finding practical solutions.

Moderators again praised the wide variety of subjects and themes undertaken. Predominantly candidates made highly personal responses to Art and Design through their own practical work.

Successful submissions were exemplified by practical work frequently supported by thoughtful written observations that demonstrated commendable levels of critical understanding and appreciation.

It was encouraging to note that most candidates successfully avoided repeating factual information gathered from the Internet and made a genuine attempt to be interpretive and insightful. Not surprisingly candidates' performance in Assessment Objective 1 was customarily strong and impacted positively on the rest of the submission.

Some centres encouraged candidates to reduce the amount of historical or factual information gathered and concentrate on documenting, critical analysis and personal evaluations.
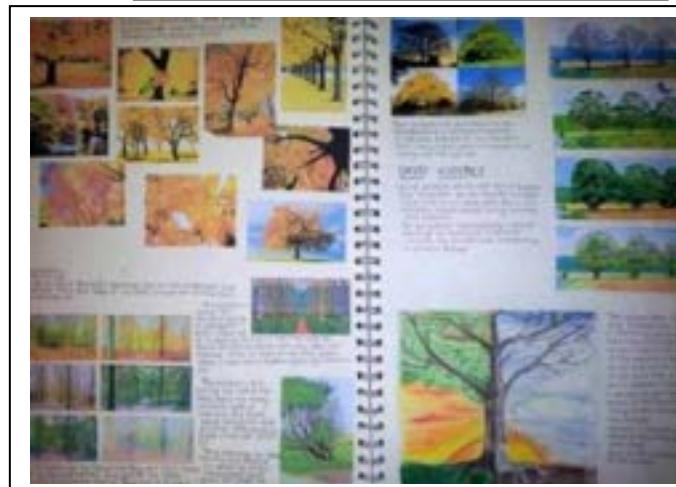
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Introduce a programme of research using a range of different approaches, from sketching and photography to collecting pictures and items. Ask your candidates to edit and annotate their research.

Applied Art and Design

The number of candidates entered for this endorsement in 2013 was consistent with previous years.

Much ingenuity was shown in devising vocationally or commercially orientated briefs, which often established clients and target audiences with whom candidates could readily identify. Working within such parameters, far from being restrictive, continued to cultivate the creativity of the many candidates who displayed much originality of thought in resolving design problems and presenting convincing solutions.

Candidates researched a broad spectrum of commercial, industrial or design contexts and made connections with a considerable array of practitioners, equally from the fields of Design, Industry and Applied Arts. Although candidates had the latitude to work within the broad areas of study identified by the endorsements the approach was frequently multi-disciplinary with candidates demonstrating much versatility in exploring the potential of an impressively extensive variety of 2D and 3D media, resources, materials, techniques and processes.

It was again common practice in some centres to establish a schedule of deadlines throughout the year for candidates to meet.

Annotation in Applied Art and Design can refer to specific design issues in relation to materials, structure, production and alternative approaches supplemented by precise architectural, fashion, graphic, product or textile design terminology.

Candidates should give proper attention to the design process in a vocational context so that the gap between research and final outcome is bridged by developmental stages.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Candidates should remember that their submissions must be within 'a vocational context', which is 'supported by relevant work of their own'.

Summary and Guidance

All centres should find it reassuring that the 2013 session clearly showed that the OCR GCSE Art and Design specification greatly helped candidates achieve in all the endorsements and make full use of the creative and skills based opportunities afforded.

Centres continue to take advantage of the wider choice of endorsements and candidates' submissions distinctly demonstrated the broadest possible range of approaches at GCSE.

'D & T' departments that entering candidates for the Graphic Communication, 3D Design or Textiles endorsements continued to grow significantly.

The opportunities presented in this Art and Design specification allows for greater flexibility in designing course structures and delivery. Moreover, the assessment burden is alleviated by reductions in the amount of work and space required for moderation.
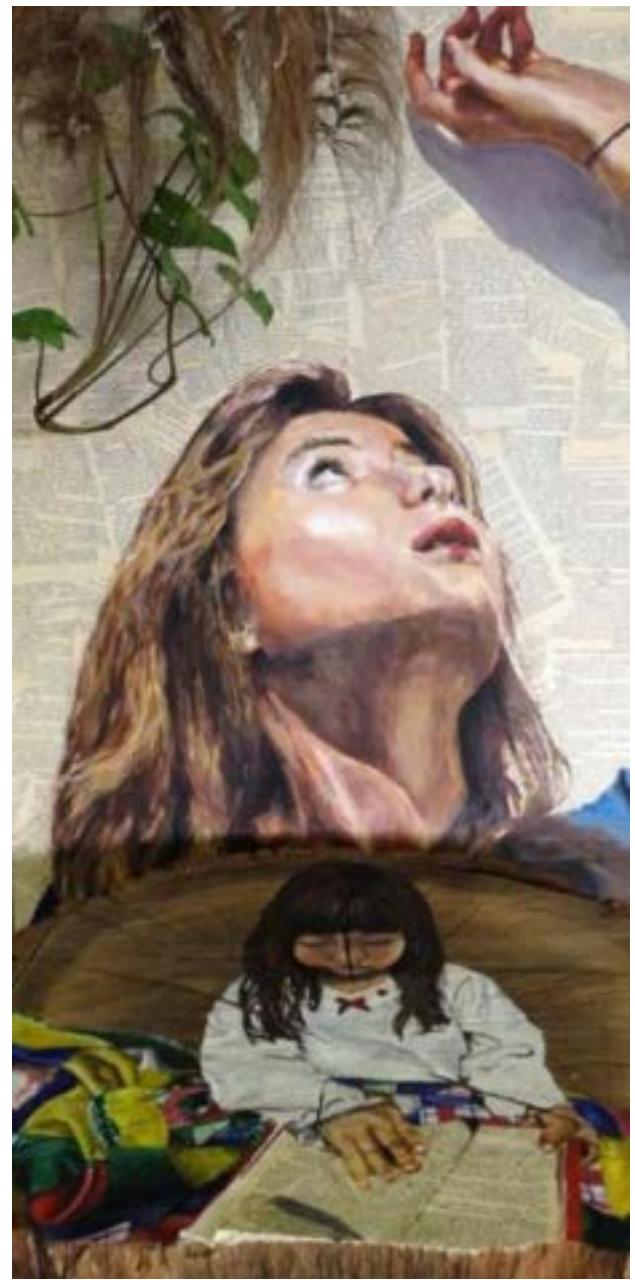
SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Centres should display and candidates present work in a manner that supports the moderation process, a clear journey through the Assessment Objectives and achievement.

Moderators' reports of informed teaching, well-conceived course structures and appropriate resources that ensured candidates performed to their full potential in both Units were heartening. Teachers in the vast majority of centres achieve this and they are commended for the constructive assistance, support and guidance given to their candidates.

Centres are reminded that applications for Special Consideration must be made well in advance of the moderation visit. This responsibility lies entirely with centres as the moderator cannot activate the procedure. It is advisable to notify the moderator of such cases when forwarding documentation for the May 15 deadline.

The use of ICT was a significant feature of work across all endorsements. The Internet enabled candidates to access the work of an ever-widening range of artists, designers and craftspeople. However, teachers and lecturers should be vigilant in checking the websites used by candidates to ensure material is appropriate.
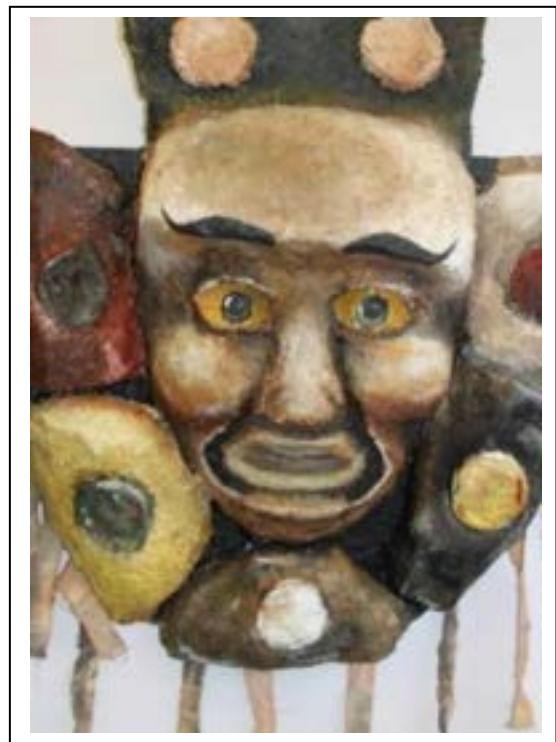
OCR thanks the many teachers who have offered encouragement. This was much appreciated and the suggestions made greatly informed the ongoing development of support materials for both candidates and teachers.

Further information regarding Professional Development for 2013-2014 will become available on the OCR website, www.ocr.org.uk in due course. Alternatively OCR Training may be contacted by telephone (02476 496398) or by email (training@ocr.org.uk).

Teachers are reminded that they can join the OCR Art and Design e-list via the OCR website. The e-list covers all Art and Design specifications and can be used as a forum to ask questions, share good practice and resources and to contact colleagues delivering the OCR specifications in your local area. All OCR senior examining and moderating personnel are members of the e-list and would welcome any questions, comments or feedback from teachers regarding this report.
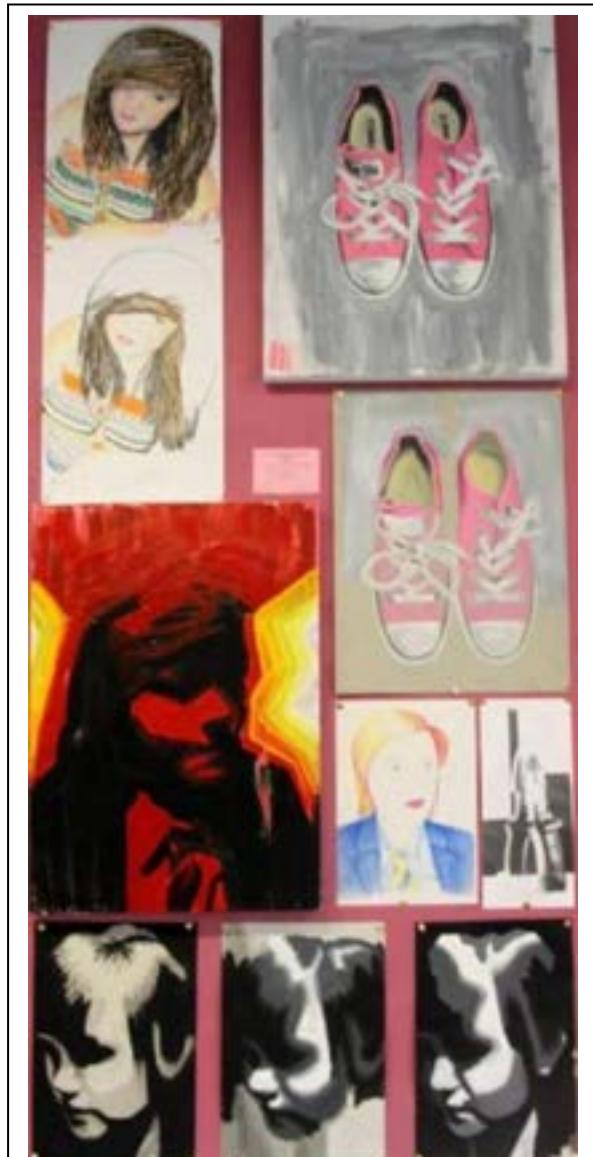
The exemplar photographs used in this report show a small selection of the work displayed for moderation and they are reproduced with the permission of the centres concerned.

OCR would like to thank all the candidates, teachers and moderators who made this possible.

17

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