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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ART AND DESIGN

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Paper 9704/01

Paper 1 - Controlled Test

General comments

In the first year for the A Level entry and the second year for the AS Level entry for the November session, the results covered a very wide mark range. However, almost three-quarters of the work seen achieved a creditable standard, with a fifth of candidates submitting work of very high and excellent levels of accomplishment. Thorough research from direct observation, followed by a variety of explorations of ideas invariably preceded such success. Candidates' abilities to evaluate their work, as it progressed, led to confident and resolved final pieces for the 15-hour examination.

Less successful responses, though acceptable for an AS or A Level pass, were inhibited by limited research, or a dependency on secondary sources, such as magazine images. Experimentation with media was generally apparent, but the exploration of ideas was rarely based on the organisation of visual elements, such as the relationships of line, shape, form, space, tone, colour or texture, to inform intentions and the personal evaluations necessary to sustain the examination work. The weakest work received, however, was usually based on several disconnected copies, one of which had been chosen for repetition for the examination piece.

Candidates' choice of stimulus from the Question Paper was sound, enabling most of them to develop the strongest aspects of their work in terms of personal interest. Questions from **Section A** and **Section B** were equally popular, but there were fewer responses to the specific design briefs of **Section C**. The majority of submissions were for the painting and related media area of study, with far fewer examples of graphics, textiles, three-dimensional work and photography seen. Teachers and Supervisors must be thanked for checking that the work was correctly labelled with Centre, candidate and question numbers before despatch.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Shattered

A popular question, often interpreted in terms of social deprivation and personal dramas as well as broken objects, vehicles and buildings. Many strong and mid-level achievements, informed by Cubism, were received, but fewer weaker responses than for other questions.

Question 2

Up to the minute

Interpretations featuring human and animal movement and mechanical velocity were well informed by early 20th Century abstraction, such as Italian Futurism. Some less adventurous attempts based on competent studies of timepieces, and a few interesting ideas developed towards fashion design, were seen.

Question 4

Wilderness

This theme was one of the most popular in this section. Several excellent landscape interpretations were seen as well as many competent and proficient evocations of particular places with distinctive rock and foliage features. Many candidates included wildlife references, some of which were expertly studied and developed, although the weaker submissions were heavily dependent on copying existing sources.

Question 5

Overlooking

A wide range of sources and interpretations were seen but the most usual approaches were based on observations of natural or machine forms. Some of the best work, which included photography specialists, was derived from domestic interiors with views taken from staircases, windows and rooftops. A few very able candidates used the theme to study the human form or groups of figures seen from above.

Question 6

Heritage

This was probably the most successful question in this section in terms of stimulating a cultural focus for candidates of all levels of ability. Rich and varied sources abounded in the study of artefacts, architectural decoration and traditional costume. Many submissions focused on historical, political and religious issues by combining imagery of contemporary world conflicts with references to the past; when such approaches had been developed in terms of the relationships of visual elements, strong personal qualities were communicated, but less able attempts were limited by literal descriptions, leading to unconsidered combinations of copies from secondary sources.

Section B

Question 7

The natural form question, involving a choice of specimens, was the most popular and successful in **Section B**. Many very competent and able preparatory studies were seen of feathers, stones, nuts, bones and seedpods. Some of these were developed into still life arrangements for ambitious paintings while others led to textile designs. Several excellent works developed towards an abstraction of selected parts of studies were also seen. In the weaker work a poor understanding of forms and structures or a lack of commitment to sustain direct observation limited the potential to develop ideas.

Question 8

The still life group of stacked pots, pans and crockery next to a large-leafed vegetable in a bowl, attracted a substantial number of responses, many of which achieved competent to high levels. Preliminary studies usually showed thorough observation, analysis, recording and development towards well organised compositional ideas. In the weaker examples, the groups of objects were poorly arranged, spatial relationships were inconsistent, or the use of tone, colour and media was very generalised.

Question 9

A pleasing number of candidates chose to study the whole or the upper half of a person engaged in craftwork. Many submissions achieved a high level and several outstanding paintings were seen. Most candidates had given consideration to the craft activity and the surrounding of the model to develop interesting and intimate figurative compositions. The fewer less able responses to this question avoided any direct observation by offering copies of images from secondary sources; while some marks might have been deserved for technical control of media, few of the other assessment objectives had been met evenly.

Question 10

No responses to the environmental question of a view of a bridge seen from below were seen.

Question 11

Only a few candidates chose to interpret the extract from 'The Power and the Glory' by Graham Greene. While all the work seen had clearly been based on observation of particular places, a poor development of compositional ideas led to results of only a satisfactory level of achievement.

Section C

Question 12

The logo designs for specialist areas in a bookshop attracted the most responses in **Section C**. Several competent and well-organised designs were seen, but most submissions were either poor or only just adequate for a pass grade. Although most candidates understood the requirements for logo design in terms of integrating lettering with the idea to be communicated, weaker responses were based on very sparse research, which limited the potential for refinement of tone, colour, line and shape or the relationship of the image to a background or within a particular format.

Question 13

Most submissions for the repeat pattern design, based on wheels and cogs, were of a mid to lower level of achievement. The work seen often floundered at the preliminary stage because of poor research or a lack of experience of repeat pattern techniques. It was interesting to note that far better examples of repeat pattern and textile design were received for **Question 7 of Section B**, which was a perfectly permissible way for such specialists to use the Question Paper if the design brief for **Question 13** did not appeal to them.

Question 14

Very few candidates were drawn to the fashion design question, although the work seen was of a competent level.

Question 15

Similarly, only two or three responses to the packaging design question were seen, also of a competent standard.

Paper 9704/02

Coursework A

General comments

The majority of submissions for this Paper were for Painting and Related Media. Much smaller entries were for Graphics, Textiles, 3D Studies and Photography.

The amount of preparation, and its quality, towards the final pieces of work varied considerably. The best submissions mounted preparatory studies selectively in a clear sequence to best show research and development. Weaker examples often consisted of only partially resolved sketches. There were many examples of strongly stimulating courses where candidates had been stretched to build up information before experimentation, but on the other hand many examples of courses where candidates seemed to have moved from one copy to another without any development at all towards a final piece. In this Component the examination puts more stress on exploration and experimentation than on the production of finished pieces but the work must be seen to be progressing towards some end product. A considerable amount of very weak work was seen which could not be categorised as the work of a course, as there was not much evidence of structure which could move towards a more advanced level of work and ideas.

Few Centres seem to have taken on board the significance of this Component's emphasis being in the research and development of ideas and less on the resolution of the final piece. Where candidates had concentrated on the development of their critical judgements and evaluations of their work and had been provided with the necessary stimuli the results could be most rewarding. Personal qualities should be clearly apparent in the choice of starting points, the thoroughness of research and the sequential development of ideas. The exploration and experimentation should encourage work of substance which can then be developed further, if not in this instance to be fully resolved. References to contemporary and historic practice will further enhance judgements, knowledge and understanding. Where the course aim was to achieve this, the internal assessments were usually very accurate and realistic.

Less satisfactory were courses where candidates had done much copying from secondary sources, usually in the form of photographs from magazines. Although technical skills were apparent in such an approach it rarely led to an experience which a candidate could evaluate other than in terms of controlled skills. The lack of first hand sources provides little scope for analysis and consequently inhibits further exploration and experimentation which will develop personal ideas, this being the main aim of the Component. Such work meets the Assessment Objectives very unevenly but it was invariably over assessed with Teachers attributing qualities to the work which were simply not apparent.

Some of the best personal submissions included richly coloured studies towards still life compositions and most imaginative and well researched and developed ideas towards figure compositions. There was also some lively experimental fabric printing and some inventive and sensitive experiments towards the development of sculptural forms.

Paper 9704/03

Coursework B

General comments

This Component differs from Component 2 in that it asks for one project of one study area of the curriculum to be studied in depth. The work should not overlap that done for Component 2 but may be related and an extension of it. The assessment of the work for this Component places as much emphasis on the resolution of the final piece as on the development of ideas and the use of processes.

So often the work for this Component had been so mixed up in the package submitted with work for Component 2 that it took time to work out the division. Often it was not very well labelled. The components are moderated independently and should be identified separately when dispatched.

Sometimes it was found that items were too heavily mounted and even too much work was sent. It benefits a candidate to use their critical judgement in editing their work.

The work for this Component sometimes reached a very high standard from a few notable Centres. Some of the work seen had been exhaustively developed at the preparatory stage and showed that much had been learnt from the Component 2 experience which is the intention of the syllabus. This led to highly sustained, refined and resolved pieces of work. Such work often reflected the personal environments from which it came, whether the home, the town, city, village or the landscape. The choice of themes for development here was always individual, distinct and thoroughly considered.

The lower levels of achievement showed work which suffered from the same limitations as Component 2, in that a lack of personal research, analysis, selection and focus on distinct sources inhibited the potential to develop ideas. Consequently the main piece of work was often only a larger version of one of the preliminary studies. There may well be evidence of technical skills or the skillful handling of the medium, but the concern or interest to develop an idea beyond careful reproduction of a derived image did not seem to have been encouraged by the course.

A number of the submissions seen fell considerably below the standard expected of Advanced Level. In some cases internal assessments were realistic but in others there was little evidence that Advanced Level expectations had been met although for some reasons the work was being rewarded for them. Centres need to make sure that they have received and studied the training booklet of exemplar standards.

Candidates had offered work which covered most of the areas of possible study, but it was noted that a large proportion of that submitted was under the heading of Painting and Related Media. 3D studies and Graphic design followed in popularity, with only a few entries of Textiles, Printmaking, and Photography.

Just a few remarks on the type and standard of the work seen follow. They are not intended to be in any depth but to give a picture of the scope of the examination.

Of the paintings and drawings seen there were many studies of people, some well observed and with defined character, but others sadly lacking in correct proportion and structure. Some still life work of carefully observed groups was presented, often carried out by using pastel and which were well grouped with interesting shapes and balanced, thoughtful, surface qualities. Others were noted for richly impasto colouring. One Centre had encouraged its candidates to produce highly successful, touching on the surreal, imaginative compositions of outstanding merit and with the firmest of preparatory developmental study.

At the middle range of the scale were seen neatly executed landscapes in watercolour. These showed skillful technique but otherwise were limited in knowledge and understanding of the possibilities.

Some of the weaker work was repetitive in the extreme with all candidates not only re-iterating the same piece of work but the entire Centre submitting work concerning the same theme and objects.

As in all areas of study care must be taken that there is the possibility for all of the Assessment Objectives to be in evidence. Marks can not be awarded in areas where there is no such evidence.

3D Study was on the whole imaginative and often included the use of all manner of media. Photographic evidence of notable woodcarving and some ethnically inspired pottery was submitted.

Textile work included some well planned repeat patterns done by using silk screen stencils. These were carefully executed, of well constructed lively flowing designs and well chosen colour combinations.

Graphic submissions are often overloaded with computer generated imagery and little can be seen of the candidates own ability in evolving and composing shapes and forms. However many candidates had shown judgement in the selection and employment of type faces and its balance with personal imagery. Many other candidates had produced sound design work without the use of a computer.

There were few examples of photography. Some were enterprising but some did not relate Advanced Level standards and were little more than casual picture taking. In these instances there is not much attempt to explore photography as an art form on which to base Art and Design assessment criteria.

Paper 9704/04

Paper 4 - Related Study

General comments

For this first year of the Related Study for the November session, the results showed a very wide range of achievements. Few Centres had any previous experience of preparing candidates for the component, so it was important for this report to address the reasons why some candidates produced highly successful studies, while others appeared to lack an understanding of the requirements. Although the Related Study received only a 20% weighting within the syllabus, it was clear that some Centres provided an appropriate amount of time for candidates to sustain and develop their investigations, while others treated it as an appendix to coursework by presenting very limited responses.

The proposal form is an essential part of the potential progress a candidate makes from an early interest towards clarifying intentions and subsequently engaging in an in-depth investigation. Although Teachers may approve their own candidates' proposals, it is desirable to submit them to the Board's Examiners for advice, to avoid later doubts or uncertainties. Such advice will ensure that:

- candidates intentions are related to coursework and have the potential for development to the highest level;
- some aspect of Art and Design is the prime focus, rather than other issues, such as religion, sociology, economics or marketing, although these concerns may well form part of the cultural contexts;

- some form of first hand study of contemporary or historical practice, through visits to studios, workshops, museums, galleries or sties will inform the selection of works to be analysed and compared with other examples only available in reproduction;
- a brief bibliography of texts to be referred to is given.

Examples of competent proposal forms are included in the Syllabus Support Materials and Standards booklet available from the Board. Candidates whose Related Studies achieved competent to high levels invariably presented thorough proposals. However, it is also fair to point out that some very weak responses were preceded by perfectly acceptable proposals, but, in such cases, candidates had not fulfilled their intentions.

Comments on different levels of achievement

The best studies were sustained with determination and enthusiasm, showing a selective and controlled analysis of works, a thoroughly planned presentation, and clear evaluations in relation to cultural contexts and candidates' own coursework experiences. Although formats of presentation varied from A4 files to A1 folders, with some tailored or shaped to fit the theme, the best examples showed organised planning of the integration of text and image. A variety of illustrative material was apparent, from practical studies and diagrams analysing the relationships of formal visual elements, to reproductions and personal photographic recording. In such studies visual materials were also meticulously annotated and juxtaposed against relevant parts of the written material to facilitate clear communication. Many candidates made use of double page spreads to give flexibility to lay-out, varying sizes of images, as well as variations in the texts through the use of headings, sub-headings or different fonts for quotations. Personal evaluations were made both from the experience of the investigation and coursework achievements. The inclusion of photographic records of a candidate's own work often helped to inform the Examiner of the extent to which the study had contributed to a personal awareness of Art and Design issues.

At the mid-levels of achievement, studies were usually competently sustained and focused. However, investigations of work in written or visual form tended to be dominated by descriptions and copies rather than analysis of formal visual relationships, media, materials or the cultural contexts. Critical judgements and evaluations, expressed in terms of likes and dislikes, went little further in justifying such opinions through comparisons or in relation to personal experience. Although presentation of the studies was ordered and coherent, particularly through the use of computer processes, there was less concern to organise visual elements in an interesting, imaginative or exciting way for an Art and Design study.

The work received at the lower levels of achievement tended to lack structure or drift on without direction. There was a heavy dependency on secondary sources with much regurgitation of historical or biographical information from books; extractions were unselective or unrelated to the analysis of specific works. Although some benefits from conducting the investigation were discernible, evaluations were usually vague and inconclusive. Poor consideration was apparent in the selection and organisation of visual elements in relation to written material. Some studies became so embroiled in processes that they amounted to little more than technical manuals, unrelated to the styles or contexts of particular works. Other studies catalogued large quantities of works without comment or offered travel brochures rather than any specific focus.

A number of very poor submissions were also received, some of which were very far below the standard expected for Advanced Level. Some of these, consisting of no more than two or three pages of writing, contained less substance than most of the introductions to the better work. Examples were also seen of studies which seemed well presented outwardly or began interestingly but then faded out into photocopies from books or became scrapbooks of magazine images for no particular purpose except to fill up the file or folder. To avoid such disastrous approaches in the future, candidates will need far more supervision.