

## Principal Assessor Report 2002

**Assessment Panel:**

**ART & DESIGN**

**Qualification area**

**Subject(s) and Level(s)  
included in this report**

**ART & DESIGN - STANDARD GRADE**

## Statistical information: update

<b>Number of entries in 2001</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	21097
<b>Post appeal</b>	21027

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	21463
<b>Post appeal</b>	

### General comments re entry numbers

From 1995 to 2000, the number of candidates was around 19000 to 20000. Last year (2001) saw this figure rise to 21000 plus. This year's total of 21463 represents the largest number of candidates ever to be presented in Standard Grade Art & Design.

### General comments

The above figures are very encouraging and, despite the increase in numbers over recent years, it is heartening to know that the quality of work produced continues to be of a high standard.

In Critical Activity, many markers reported that they marked work of the highest quality and commented on the fact that there were very few poor submissions. Others indicated that, although the overall standard was good, they felt that there were fewer outstanding submissions. Markers were pleased to note the wide range of topics covered by candidates in both Expressive and Design Critical Activity.

In the Expressive Activity, experienced markers commented on the high standard of work produced at credit level and indicated that the number of individual, outstanding submissions would appear to have increased this year. As in previous years, there were very few poor submissions.

## Comments on candidate performance

### General comments

As in previous years, there is clear evidence throughout the country of very good teaching and good candidate preparation for the Expressive Activity examination. Many centres continue to teach along traditional lines with the emphasis placed on closely observed monochrome or colour studies, using a range of media. Candidates continue to produce a wide range of approaches, demonstrating, in many cases, high levels of skill in drawing and good media control. There were very few poor submissions. Much of the work produced for the examination was two – dimensional. Where there were examples of three dimensional work, they tended to be as a result of teaching preference and staff expertise, with whole sections producing pottery or sculpture submissions, often of a high standard and rarely disappointing. However, three-dimensional work amounted to no more than 5% of the total submitted for the examination.

Expressive Activity continues to see an increase in the use of paint, including watercolour. Pastels, both chalk and oil pastel still prove to be very popular. The standard of work done in charcoal and chalk and the quality of coloured pencil studies were exceptionally good in many cases. Printmaking was less popular this year and those prints that were submitted tended to be in one colour, almost always black, against a tinted background. There were few examples of batik, both traditional (using wax) and serti batik. Where collage images were submitted, they were usually seen in the context of landscape, together with paint and pastel and, more often than not, were of a poorer standard. Pencil drawing, used as the sole medium for the examination by an entire centre, still continues, despite the limitations of media –handling skill. Few candidates submitted photography for the examination but the quality of work produced was often of a high standard.

Still life continues to be the most popular genre, followed by portrait, landscape and the built environment. Though low in uptake, abstract and fantasy art tended to be somewhat undisciplined, ill conceived and, on occasions, displaying unsuitable images. The themes selected for this year’s examination allowed candidates to produce wide and varied responses and generated good work. The most popular titles were “Reflections” and “Saturday Night”: “Looking Down” produced some imaginative results and interesting responses: “Fresh Woods” and “On the Seashore” allowed for some very good seascape and landscapes that were skilfully produced though often from second hand sources.

The visiting teams commented favourably on the standard of work submitted for the Expressive Activity examination.

In Critical Activity, the quality of work continues to be of a very good standard, though there appeared to be fewer outstanding examples this year. Markers reported that very few poor submissions were in evidence. In general candidates dealt with appropriate design and expressive contexts. Centres employed a variety of teaching approaches and candidates used a wide range of resources for this element. However, there was a noticeable increase in the number of submissions displaying very little personal selection or input. These cases occurred across sections/departments and candidates were using the same or similar sources with, in some instances, identical texts covering the same topics. This approach should be discouraged as it greatly reduces the opportunities for candidates to produce credit level performances.

As many as 130 different artists’ works were evaluated by the candidates, and 85 different design topics and designers were discussed. The works of Vincent Van Gogh, Charles Rennie MacKintosh and William Morris still remain the most popular, with Monet and Gaudi being favoured by many. Contemporary Scottish artists, such as Bellamy, Morocco and Watt, as well as the “Colourists” and Eardley formed the bases of many fine submissions.

## **Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well**

In the Expressive Activity examination this year, there were some excellent examples of painting, demonstrating first class skills in terms of painterly qualities and use of colour. Again, a high standard of work was evident in pastel studies, where candidates had used vibrant colour against black or dark paper. Most of the best work was in the form of still life, paintings and drawings, and in portraiture, where the candidates had worked from first-hand sources and where the candidates were able to demonstrate good media control and skill in picture making.

In Critical Activity, work of the highest quality often appeared to the markers to result from study of areas of art and/or design that were of personal interest to candidates and where opportunities existed for personal comment and opinion. Similarly, submissions showing enthusiasm and interest were evident when candidates used original sources such as visits to exhibitions or art galleries, design studios or from talks from visiting artists or designers.

## **Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty**

In Expressive Activity, concern was expressed over those centres that appeared to encourage all of their candidates to complete the entire submission in pencil. It is considered that this medium is too restrictive, formulaic and does not sufficiently stretch candidates to achieve their true potential. Concern was also expressed where it was evident that centres had allowed groups of candidates to use the same second-hand source material e.g. photographs. This left candidates with little personal choice in interpretation of the selected theme.

Problem areas still exist in Critical Activity submissions. This includes candidates submitting work that is not clearly “Expressive Critical” or “Design Critical”. The main difficulties relate to work that refer to the following in the context of design: - stained glass, textiles, public art, wallpaper, posters, stamps, illustrations, TV credits and aspects of product design, where the emphasis is placed on engineering and technical information at the expense of appropriate design criteria. Largely, these submissions rely heavily on description and make reference to expressive terminology and comment rather than design. The tendency for some centres to encourage plagiarism by use of identical sources has also proved problematic. Candidates do not benefit from this approach. Over 500 candidate submissions were investigated for possible plagiarism and/or malpractice.

## **Areas of common misunderstanding**

Candidates still continue to spend too long producing over-long historical research and biographical detail at the expense of appropriate critical comment and personal opinion. This is common to both Expressive and Design Critical Activity.

In Design Critical Activity, one area of common misunderstanding is due to candidates relying entirely on description rather than dealing with design issues related to e.g. function, materials, market, target audience, cost, manufacturing processes, layout, style etc.. Similarly, in Expressive Critical Activity, description of paintings can often be a substitute for more appropriate comment on the ways in which the artist has engaged in the use of the visual elements e.g. colour, tone texture, line, mood, composition etc. .

Some candidates, or centres, appear to be under the misunderstanding that the longer the submission is, the higher the grade will be. Many of these very lengthy submissions were often the result of repetition rather than new information.

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

With regard to Expressive Activity Examination, centres should be aware of the following:-

Centres should encourage candidates to employ a wide range of media.

Candidates should be encouraged to work from first-hand sources, when possible.

Two or more candidates should not work from the same second- hand source (i.e. photographs)

Three- dimensional clay work should be photographed before firing to obviate the risk of accidental damage during firing

Clay submissions should be initialled by both candidate and invigilator to confirm that the work was produced on the day of the examination.

Photographs should accompany 3-D pieces.

Centres should be reminded that the use of tracing, photocopying and use of tracing tables to copy work from preparatory sheets is not permitted during the examination.

Pastel or charcoal drawings should be sprayed with fixative on completion of work.

With regard to Critical Activity, centres should be reminded of the following:-

- ◆ ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to engage in personal comment and critical opinion in their submissions and that historical / biographical information is not seen as a substitute for this.
- ◆ be aware that over- long submissions do not always equate with highest grades in that they can often be repetitive
- ◆ be aware of the need to include bibliographies with all candidates' work
- ◆ ensure that all bibliographies include mention of all CD Roms, Internet Websites, books, magazines etc.
- ◆ ensure that all written submissions are completed in pen, **not pencil**, on single sides of A4 paper.
- ◆ ensure that the original work of the candidate is submitted and not a photocopied substitute.
- ◆ ensure Critical Activity clearly deals with Expressive and Design contexts.
- ◆ ensure that no teacher's comments or marks appear on candidates' submissions and that no grades for this element appear on EX.6 forms.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** ensure all extracts copied directly from sources are acknowledged and contain "inverted commas" thus.