

Moderation Feedback - Visiting

Assessment Panel:

Art & Design

Qualification area:

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

Art & Design: Standard Grade

Visiting Moderation

General comments on visiting moderation activity

This year's moderation of Design Activity for Standard Grade Art and Design was extremely successful. Of 61 centres moderated, all internal assessments were acceptable and no re-assessments were required.

As in previous years, centres tended towards leniency rather than severity in their marking. In fact 18% of the 732 folios sampled were leniently assessed while 5.5% were assessed severely.

Approximately 10% of the Credit 1 awards were judged by the Moderators to be Credit 2's. 4.6% of Credit 2's were thought to be General 3's. The differences between the centres' assessment and that of the Moderators was only one point, indicating a close degree of accuracy and agreement.

At General level there is greater concordance, showing an 8% difference and only 2% at Foundation level. The variance between the internal assessment and the Moderators' grade was quite low at between one and three points. Three centres came near the re-assessment line with six points difference.

Specific issues identified

Credit Performance

The response to Credit performance was favourable. The folios showed a sound understanding of the requirements of Design Activity. Design problems were researched in a thorough manner, generating some innovative results and a number of excellent responses through a fairly pedestrian but skilful examples. Some Moderators felt that the assessment at the top end was far too lenient in certain individual centres due to staff who were not addressing the GRC correctly.

General Performance

Performance at General level was thought to be very good. The design folios tended to be complete with all four elements competently produced and clearly identifiable indicating a firm understanding on the part of the pupils as to what was expected of them. In particular the development stage is showing a clear improvement.

Foundation Performance

Several centres within the sample had no candidates performing at Foundation level. As always, it was reported that in the majority of cases Foundation levels were awarded because penalties were applied when elements of the design process were found to be missing.

This was mainly due to prolonged absence rather than any lack of ability. The design process was distinctive in completed examples but the thinking was not always clear and the individual stages tended to be thin. It was felt that candidates were receiving a solid grounding in problem solving techniques and were developing practical skills. Subsequently, Foundation level candidates are improving and becoming fewer year by year.

Design Brief

A greater range of design activities were undertaken this year ranging from sophisticated architectural and stage set projects to product design (including lighting and stained glass), textiles and jewellery. By far, the most popular activity involves graphic design in all its various forms. Three dimensional packaging, posters and menu designs were the examples which occurred most frequently. Additionally, textile design is growing in popularity with bags and hats being the favoured choice.

There were many positive comments concerning the improvement of the design briefs seen this year. The best of these took account of candidates' interests and personal tastes and some allowed an element of individual choice and freedom. They were concise and provided a clear indication of what was required. Limitations and constraints were built in but a degree of flexibility and creative thinking was retained.

The poorest examples lacked specific focus or were too open ended. In some cases they ignored any context, resulting in products designed without any regard for function or materials. The quality of the design brief was clearly an issue in some centres and one or two poor examples were sited as having contributed to candidates' lack of success.

Design Process

Across all levels, the design process is understood by candidates that they have a firm and confident grasp of how to go about the task of problem solving.

At the research and investigation stage there is a slow but growing trend towards gathering more diverse types of information. While this is to be encouraged there are some individual centres which still focus on irrelevant and over produced drawing. There is a misplaced perception that time should be devoted to "polishing up drawing skills". Incidentally, these drawings are often not exploited at the development stage in any way. Moderators are encouraging centres to do more research into existing solutions and to include meaningful annotation in order to clarify candidates' thinking. The best practice was seen when candidates were engaged in some form of market research, in annotation, and in collation of thematic imagery by drawing, sketching and collecting relevant photographs and cut outs.

The development aspect was better at Credit level with much evidence of experimentation with different materials and ideas. **There was also a stronger link to the research stage. The standard and quality of solutions has improved overall though some candidates at Credit level seemed to have run out of steam by the time they got to the final stage having expended an excessive amount of time and energy leading up to this point.**

In general there were fewer negative comments regarding evaluations, and indeed there were many positive remarks about individual centres who carry out this part very well. Moderators are encouraging evaluations that are more informative and deal with the issue of how effective the solution is rather than the "running commentary" style of irrelevant information. Well devised departmental questionnaires enabled candidates to respond with appropriate comments.

Feedback to centres

- ◆ There is a need to re-emphasise to centres that penalties must be applied if one or more elements of the design process is missing. There is however a reluctance to do this. A reason offered is that sometimes the final internal assessment grade is issued to the SQA before the unit is completed.

Two aspects of the design process still need to be addressed and clarified:

- ◆ **Research and Investigation:** There are many different ways of approaching this aspect of the design process. It should be remembered that it is the design brief that is being investigated and this can take in the research of a specific context or stimulus eg The Sea. Additionally the design topic eg Chair Design could also be investigated and reference made to existing examples. Market research of existing examples of chairs, thematic imagery in the form of drawings, sketches, notes, collections of photographs, cut outs and scanned images are all examples of relevant types of research and investigation. It is detrimental to the candidate if only one type is investigated this is especially so for credit pupils who need to show variety and versatility.
- ◆ **3D Design:** Candidates who concern themselves with 3D design topics should be encouraged to address construction techniques, ergonomics and possible materials rather than always placing emphasis on surface decoration and styling. Some centres engage in 3D topics and do not produce any actual constructions or engage in model making. Moreover the resulting solution is actually produced in two dimensions.