



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Art and Design (Graphic Design)

Coursework 3203/C

Report on the Examination

2008 examination – June series

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GCSE Art and Design (Graphic Design) 3203

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Standards of work and presentation continue to improve and the majority of teachers offer well-structured courses which stimulate candidates' thinking and develop their skills. Only at the lowest levels of attainment were candidates unable to produce evidence to meet the Assessment Objectives. This was due to superficial work, mostly copies from secondary sources showing very limited development of ideas. Higher attaining candidates evidenced greater understanding of the Assessment Objectives and the ability to address these successfully when making a personal response.

The nature of design courses is constantly evolving: the widespread use of ICT/new media reflects increasing knowledge and understanding of technical advances in computer software and the ubiquity of computers in society. Also, and paradoxically, teachers are beginning to appreciate the potential in borrowing from the techniques, styles and methods of an extensive range of art, craft and design influences, rather than confining their investigations to the world of commercial graphics. Candidates are increasingly confident in developing ideas using a range of techniques from other disciplines such as printmaking, painting, photography, collage and mixed media. Some of the highest attaining candidates were those who were able to thoughtfully and skilfully synthesise traditional methods and materials with new media. Although ICT is growing into an important element in many graphic design courses, generous hard/software provision is not on its own a guarantee of success – indeed, where they had been taught well, candidates were able to achieve at the highest level without having access to a computer throughout the entire length of their course. Using ICT can prove liberating for some candidates, and it can act as a powerful tool to make slick and sophisticated presentations, but its use has to be thoughtful and discriminating to be most effective. Teachers and candidates need to be aware, also, of the need to record and/or to annotate work as it progresses.

The approach to the delivery of coursework units in most centres is outcome-led, rather than as the result of a workshop, visit or residency. A number of teachers make use of past question papers to introduce their candidates to the types of question they are likely to encounter in their Controlled Test examination. Typically, work is presented in 2, 3 or 4 units, each with a sketchbook and a final two or three-dimensional outcome. Sketchbooks supporting the units of work from the weaker candidates consisted mostly of photocopies, tracings, and collected imagery and typestyles cut from magazines; the more able used sketchbooks to express and develop ideas, to experiment with materials and mark-making, to explore cropping and composition, and to investigate relevant cultural connections in the work of others. Popular contemporary references in this year's coursework included Neville Brody, Banksy, Barbara Kruger and David Carson, but a miscellany of lesser known artists and designers had also been used effectively.

It is undoubtedly true that ICT is making a positive and significant impact on the ways in which design work is conceived and produced. It is also evident that candidates following a Graphic Design course often had a desire to engage with contemporary culture and capable of producing innovative and sophisticated outcomes.

Mark ranges and award of grades

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