ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Coursework

From the March 2025 series, we will no longer accept hard copy submission. If you send us hard copy work, we will return it to you un-marked. For details on how to submit work, please refer to the *Guidance on the Administration and Online Submission of Art & Design* **for 2025.**

Key messages

- Most candidates focused on painting and related media. Photographic, digital media, 3-dimensional, printmaking and design-based responses, including graphic design and fashion and textiles were also seen.
- Photography was often included in the work to record ideas and initial source material.
- Candidates explored a wide variety of themes relating to people, portraiture and places, as well as objects, food, flora and sources within the local environment giving scope for personal responses.
- Submissions at the higher attainment level recorded from direct observation which demonstrated a personal response.
- At all levels there was a difficulty in distinguishing primary and secondary source material at times. It is important that candidates indicate which is their own imagery.
- Some submissions relied on excessive written annotation which did not support the candidate's ability to develop their ideas visually.
- Art galleries and museums were visited to gather research which often stimulated creative ideas.

General Comments

Higher Level

Submissions at this level were focused and candidates made observations from a good range of objects, people, or places, all of which were relevant to the chosen theme, reflecting strong decision making and self-reflection. Where photography was used as a recording tool it was purposeful, making good use of photographic elements such as depth of field, cropping and light source. Observational drawings from first hand sources were detailed and focused.

The use of media was excellent, and candidates were able to explore a range of materials and processes to effectively communicate their ideas. They were able to control materials with skill and they could apply various methods with sensitivity and expression. Candidates working at this level were able to work across disciplines and they had a strong understanding of the relationship between media use and the concepts being explored.

Candidates were able to make thoughtful developments through the refinement of imagery and further recording as their ideas began to take shape. Artist's research helped inform ideas through composition and concept development, colour use and choice of media, and led to fully informed final outcomes. Candidates were able to use self-reflection and critical analysis to make appropriate decisions for moving ideas forward. A range of ideas and alternative compositional possibilities were explored before producing the outcome which was directly informed by the research in the portfolio.

Presentation was clear and chronological, and candidates placed work to show a strong creative journey. Portfolios were coherent and all aspects of the assessment objectives were carried out in a thorough manner.

Middle Level

Many candidates working at this level demonstrated a good ability to gather their visual research from a range of appropriate sources, in response to their chosen theme. Most included initial studies from first-hand observations alongside secondary sources and contextual referencing, varying in relevance. However,

candidates who selected a design-based approach did not always begin by focusing on observational studies, related to their idea. This effected the potential for personal development and often resulted in preconceived ideas.

Candidates were able to explore a range of media, this was often more controlled and sensitive when copying or making transcriptions of others work, but this level of skill did not always carry through to their own work or imagery. At this level candidates were experimental and expressive in their use of media, but they were not always able to refine their application of media to communicate their ideas effectively.

Candidates attempted to develop their ideas by exploring different compositions. However, these were often limited or repetitive, showing minor differences such as colour or media. Investigation of a wider range of initial observations and confidence in trying out different ideas, could have helped candidates to develop their visual studies into a stronger conclusion.

Generally, submissions in this middle mark range provided evidence of coherent journeys but would have benefitted from a much wider range of initial observations followed by more exploration of media and composition. This would have helped candidates to develop ideas fully and create a more resolved and personal conclusion in the outcome.

Lower Level

Submissions at this level often contained limited visual research from first-hand or secondary sources, with an over reliance on images from the internet. Focusing on direct observational study from accessible sources could have enabled more substantial starting points. This would have provided a foundation on which to develop ideas.

There was less exploration of a range of materials and processes, with candidates tending to work in just one or two familiar media, with little or no exploration of alternatives. Some submissions did demonstrate accurate drawing skills and satisfactory painting and photography, but this was not developed into coherent final outcomes. Candidates were less able to experiment with their chosen media, trying out different ways of applying the paint for example, or combining different media to create a personal response.

Most candidates would have benefited from exploring the work of relevant artists to inform their media use and idea development. Where contextual research was included, candidates were less able to make meaningful links with their own work.

Often it was unclear where the final image had come from, or how the portfolio related to the final piece. There was very little evidence of a creative journey. Candidates mainly gathered a few images and then placed them together without exploring their full potential. More time spent considering a composition, using thumb nail sketches for example, could help these candidates bring their ideas together into a more fully resolved final piece.

ART AND DESIGN

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Paper 0400/02
Externally Set Assignment
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Key messages

- Many submissions included work copied from photographs. Although often skilfully rendered, the understanding of form, structure and texture was greatly diminished. Direct observation is always preferable as it provides better scaffolding and a clearer understanding of the visual elements.
- There was an increase in the use of digital media. Most submissions clearly indicated where software had been used but, in some cases, there was an over reliance, and it was difficult to ascertain where and how the imagery had been created.
- There was increased evidence of AI generated work which was, in most cases, annotated and accredited correctly. The use of AI was most successful when used alongside the candidate's original studies or photography to develop and present ideas.

General comments

Candidates explored a wide and diverse range of media, although painting and related media was the most popular. Photography, digital media, printmaking and design-based responses, including sculpture, graphic design and fashion and textiles were also seen.

Where candidates had the opportunity to visit galleries and/or exhibitions and had explored the work of other artists, their work often demonstrated inspired and creative ideas. However, not all candidates had been able to select appropriate references or were able to apply their learning with clear purpose. In such cases the development of original work had much less impact and was generally lacking.

There was an overall improvement in the presentation of submissions. Non-related, class exercises were fewer, and purposeful editing was evident. Many submissions provided a cohesive body of work that demonstrated a logical journey throughout. Most responses contained evidence of each assessment objective with the stronger work comprising a consistent quality and evidence across each.

Although first-hand recording was evident in some submissions, many lacked crucial observational recording as a starting point for their ideas which prevented sufficient visual information which is crucial for successful further development.

Acknowledging source material was improved. Whilst candidates do not have to annotate their work, where annotation is included, it must be relevant, and it is important that any image used is correctly identified as the candidate's own or the source of the image is accredited accordingly. There was increased evidence of AI generated work, which was also, in most cases, annotated and accredited correctly.

Higher levels

The strongest candidates thoroughly and systematically explored their chosen question making personal and creative connections. Initial ideas were often based on first-hand observational work. A mature approach was evident in these initial drawings and studies, indicating a sensitivity in the use of line and a confident understanding of form. Efficient technical skill and a clear enjoyment of drawing was evident in the supporting studies.

Many candidates included their own photographs, relevant to their chosen topic and had used these to inform their studies further. These photographs were often thoughtfully composed and had clearly considered different lighting set-ups and alternative viewpoints. Candidates were able to combine this broad

range of initial observational work with their contextual studies allowing their ideas to be refined and developed in an informed and original way. Insightful connections were made between artists work and the candidate's own personal ideas resulting in a balance of knowledge and expression.

Such informed explorations helped to direct the progression of the work and fulfil intentions. After the initial gathering of sources, the main body of the work and final outcomes indicated experimentation and refinement of skills with the use of a broad range of media. Confident selection and use of media were seen, enabling ideas to be expertly communicated, utilising the specific qualities of each medium or process.

Sensitivity, expression and control were used to explore and describe composition, pattern, form, colour, texture and tone with skill. Reflective editing was applied to the body of work to present a concise, directed and logical journey that responded to the starting point with originality and a sense of personal engagement.

Middle levels

Mid-range submissions exhibited an imbalance of skills. Whilst some responses indicated strong concepts, the candidates' ability to render their ideas with confidence was lacking. Others demonstrated technical ability but lacked original concept or relied too heavily on working from secondary sources.

Most candidates at this level selected a starting point that gave an opportunity for personal engagement and interest, allowing them to explore relevant sources to inform their ideas. Observational drawing from first-hand sources was evident but at a less involved and committed level.

Copying from photographs was prevalent at this level. Although photographs were mostly the candidate's own, the ability to understand the visual elements was not fully appreciated or understood. Analysis from direct observation is always preferable. In particular the form was commonly lost as was understanding of perspective.

A wide range of media was used at this level with much experimentation evident. Many candidates tried out various styles, often inspired by artists and some exciting, innovative and creative responses were seen. At this level, there was generally less awareness of the candidates' own strengths and there was a tendency to explore more variety of ideas and mediums rather than focusing and honing one.

Concept development was also less organised. Either one idea or image was repeated without much variation, or many differing ideas were included without any clear planning on what the final outcome might be. Artist influence was included in most cases and was sometimes relevant. Some candidates struggled to use these influences to guide their own progression of ideas and instead produced pastiche imagery.

Many candidates at this level took inspiration from their own locality or from people and items with personal connection and this added interest and integrity to the work. Final outcomes were generally less of a conclusion to the project and more of a continuation of it. More evaluation and critique could help to identify an appropriate conclusion to successfully realise intentions.

Lower levels

Much of the work seen at this level comprised limited research and an over reliance on imagery sourced from the internet and other secondary sources. Despite the starting points providing opportunity to record from direct observation, many at this level chose not to, as a result vital visual information was missing. Insufficient substance and detail resulted in ideas being difficult to explore or develop beyond repetition.

Work sometimes appeared to have evolved from the candidate's imagination without any evidence of development of ideas and limited research. The supporting studies bore no relationship to the final outcome.

Responses were predictable, with inconsistent rendering of materials. Development was frequently limited due to a lack of clear intention or insufficient purposeful visual reference material. Many submissions tended to be disconnected and incoherent, with ideas not progressing beyond the initial and obvious image that had been initially considered. Candidates were not able to review, refine or reflect on their and as result the work was limited and basic.

Media use was often basic and inconsistent. Contextual referencing was not evident or superficial. Where it was included, it made little impact on the progression of an idea. Candidates at this level did not have the skill to analyse or interpret the work they had seen. Including research from the works of other art practitioners could have supported their idea development and media use.