

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01

Observational/Interpretative Assignment

General comments

Responses to the questions were fairly evenly spread between **Section A** and **B**.

Q2 and **Q6** were the most popular; followed by **Q1** and **Q8**. **Q4** was the least popular.

All questions offered a broad range of opportunities for observation, personal interpretation and experimentation. Genres included landscape, portrait, fantasy, abstraction, pattern making/design, natural and man-made forms. Many candidates had used the preparatory period well to gather information and explore ideas although many would have benefitted from spending time planning alternative compositions whether answering questions from **section A** or **B**.

The majority of the work was figuratively based either drawn or painted, although some experimented with pattern and printing processes which were then used to good effect in collages and mixed media pieces. There were some submissions resolved through photography or three-dimensional approaches, both of which are entirely appropriate.

Work seen at the higher levels was characterised by; maturity of concept, personal, imaginative and innovative interpretations, research into relevant established artists, a very strong understanding of a journey throughout the preparatory studies, excellent control of media and use of processes, a willingness to take risks and a considered approach to presentation, particularly with photographic and three-dimensional submissions.

Work seen at the mid level also had some good concepts but at times lacked coherence and focus in the supporting studies. Confidence with media handling was not so evident and in some cases the final outcomes did not 'live up' to the promises seen in the supporting studies. A number of candidates did not understand the importance of ideas development choosing instead to present their supporting studies as a series of unrelated finished pieces which lacked a cohesive journey.

At the lower levels, it was evident that many candidates appeared to follow a formula when producing their supporting studies, inevitably resulting in a lack of personal qualities. Although there was some degree of experimentation with media, clearly most candidates required a lot more practice in this area and a greater understanding of formal elements in general. Some candidates were unsure of what their final outcomes should be as some of their compositions remained unresolved. Much of the research carried out into other artists was largely irrelevant, it did little to inform ideas or the work of the candidate.

In some cases it was a real pleasure to see sheets of research where one study had been linked to another across the whole sheet, clearly showing the progress of an idea or technique.

The majority of candidates produced final pieces which filled an A2 sheet; consideration could be given as to whether this format was appropriate as many of the supporting studies were more successful in either a different format or scale. A2 is the maximum size, smaller paper is perfectly acceptable.

Some candidates chose to use different media in their final piece which sadly lacked the confidence of that displayed in their supporting studies.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: A stack of books beside a table lamp Another book is open with a note pad and pen.

On the whole, interpretations of this question were very literal and direct. More often than not the elements

were arranged in one way and then photographed. Drawings and paintings were made directly from the photographs.

However, the best work showed thorough preparation and development work from first hand observation as well as extensive experimentation with materials, lighting, colour and composition. A mature understanding of linear perspective in the stack of books, note pad and the ellipses seen in the table lamp was apparent. These candidates explored the effect that changing the direction of light from the table lamp had on the composition and they experimented with a variety of media to achieve a dramatic effect, including oil pastel, paint and collage.

At the lower end, the basic shapes were present but large empty spaces of white paper dominated the page. Candidates often left out the lamp altogether giving them added problems with composition. Many did not handle the use of perspective with the books, and media control and drawing was generally poor.

Question 2: A selection of peeled and segmented or sliced fruit. Include the peel.

This was the most popular question and again a question to which responses were almost entirely observational. Some of the best work submitted for this paper, however, was in response to this question.

Higher levels included studies of a range of fruit in a variety of states of being peeled, segmented or sliced, all clearly drawn from direct observation and in a wide range of materials including pencil, paint and pastel. Other responses saw additional objects such as cloths, bowls, or lighting to enhance the colours of the fruit. Some fruit was tempting enough to eat! Supporting studies indicated a confidence with experimenting with media and clearly candidates had explored different techniques to achieve successful outcomes that demonstrated an understanding of colour, form and composition. The use of different coloured, and sometimes textured papers was an effective tool here.

Work seen in the mid-level relied on copying the same images in different media, and although accurate, the work often lacked enough evidence of a real understanding of the form or texture of the fruit. The supporting studies did not develop the initial drawings other than to change the media used. Candidates could have explored more fully elements such as scale, background, composition and viewpoints.

Submissions achieving the lowest levels often simplified the form and structure of the fruit into very basic shapes. Candidates were not able to create a range of tones within the chosen media and there was very little experimentation or understanding of composition.

Question 3: Belts and buckles

Candidates seemed more prepared to 'play' with the arrangement of the elements for this question. There were some quite interesting developments involving two or three belts intertwined and rearranged in search of more ambitious solutions to the question.

The variety of belts available gave considerable scope for candidates to explore more personal avenues of enquiry and to develop more original proposals.

Works seen in the higher level were detailed observational drawings of real belts showing the textures of the materials they were made with. Some black and white buckles were enlarged and arranged on top of each other to overlap. The leather texture was achieved through minute marks in spirals and removed by a resist method to show white lines.

Many mid level candidates worked in a range of media and achieved high marks for exploration and development of an idea, but few were able to select and control the media to levels above 'satisfactory'.

Lower level submissions failed to understand the overlapping and twisting form of the belts, some had clearly drawn or traced from photographs and were unable to vary the scale or experiment with the composition.

Question 4: A person kneeling down to fasten their shoe

This question, although the least popular, attracted some strong submissions. Responses were notable for the use of primary investigation through observational drawing based on the candidates' own photographs of friends or family fastening shoes. It was a challenging question incorporating understanding of the figure as a whole and particularly the complexity of hands involved in the task. Some candidates clearly responded well to the challenge of rendering cloth, sometimes very convincingly in coloured pencil.

Mid and lower level work showed some promise but many candidates struggled with proportion, foreshortening, rendering of form and details such as the structure and form of hands. Photographic candidates did not pay enough attention to lighting, the position and context of the subject and composition. Some submissions were little more than snapshots with very repetitive supporting studies.

Question 5: Mending it

This question also attracted a fairly low number of responses with marks being spread evenly across the submissions. It was interpreted widely with the best candidates conveying some imaginative ideas ranging from mending oneself through self-improvement or prayer, the need for mending caused by social/political issues, surgery and actually mending fabrics by stitching into the paper or using tromp l'oeil effects. A wide range of media were used including threads and string for mixed media pieces.

Those gaining lower marks tended to opt for more obvious imagery such as broken hearts.

Question 6: On the edge

This was one of the most popular questions and submissions mainly achieved marks in the middle levels.

Candidates interpreted this question in a variety of ways but the most common was to explore the stresses and strains of modern life on society. The most effective outcomes were achieved when the candidate had responded personally to the question and their research dealt with pressures that were relevant to them, such as social pressure, academic success and body image. Many of the submissions made use of photography and the more able candidates used these to develop ideas by experimenting with manipulating the images and explored a range of media. Less able candidates used second source imagery and often copied an image without developing it or changing it very much.

A small number of candidates successfully used exaggerated architectural viewpoints from below to create tension. A few candidates at the high and mid-level responded to the question solely through photography, successfully using 'joiners' to create a scene within which a drama occurred. Darker subject matter was popular in the mid and lower levels with mental illness/ depression/ suicide/ anorexia being the most frequent themes for candidates to explore. At these levels secondary source material was generally used as inspiration. Others at this level interpreted the question more literally by placing figures near the edge of a high building, or painting a scene of mountaineers. Most of these submissions were copied from secondary sources and lacked personal qualities.

Question 7: Distorted reflections

This was a popular question and candidates at the higher level in photography and painting and drawing had used mirrors, glass containers full of water, reflective flat and curved surfaces and kitchen implements with chrome surfaces to distort images which ranged from faces, figures, jewellery, hands and feet and typefaces. Other candidates looked at the reflections in office buildings of trees or other buildings. Some very strong, and at times abstracted compositions, were seen with a mature use of media and mixed media. Supporting studies were innovative; exploring a range of ideas often mixing hand rendered studies and personal photography, and showed a clear and coherent journey to the final work. Bacon and Saville were the artists chosen by many to explore their ideas.

Mid and lower level candidates also had some innovative ideas but were hampered by poorer rendering and weaker compositions. Supporting studies at these levels indicated an inability to explore in depth and develop ideas.

Question 8: Sacred place

This produced mainly calm and reflective sanctuaries such as churches or buildings with an air of mystery or greyness. Some Buddhist temples were seen as well as books as a sacred space.

Most responses to this question were in the middle and lower ability range with popular imagery such as 'Stonehenge' taken from Internet photographs being frequently used within paintings and drawings. The outcomes were often dull and literal or had simply regurgitated very well used religious iconography. There were lots of pictures of religious buildings and religious figures such as Jesus Christ and a variety of Eastern deities.

A few candidates used personal spaces such as bedrooms as a motif but in these there was a lack of skill apparent in the manipulation of materials used. Disappointingly very few candidates indeed used their local culture as inspiration for either observational or interpretative work.

Question 9: Unearthed

This was not a popular question. The best work seen was of a gilded statue partially uncovered from the earth which was well painted in acrylic and supported by some good museum studies. There were some very good large paintings and pastel drawings of vegetables, which had just been dug up from the ground, and also archeological finds within the higher grades. Bold use of colour and texture was apparent in the best work with good understanding of how to use tone to create form.

The majority of responses were in the lower mark range and these tended once again to rely on secondary imagery from the Internet and copies of other artists' work as preparation for the final piece. Most at this level struggled with the rendering of surface qualities of objects that have been buried for a long time.

The weakest work contained very little preparation and development of ideas or imagery at all and the final pieces reflected this. Some submissions were incomprehensible, lacking in any sense of form or composition.

Question 10: Spiral structures

The topic was interpreted fairly liberally, perhaps the most unusual being organs spiraling out of a body. Many referred to Escher and the DNA helix, natural forms such as shells, trees, roots and flowers. Hair was a popular theme for this question. The very best work seen showed excellent research, and ability to draw from direct life studies and develop the spiral curls of the human hair into creative tresses and locks of richness. Others concentrated on abstract patterns based on spirals. It was a pity more candidates did not take the opportunity to observe and draw from spirals in natural and man-made forms from the objects themselves to understand these complex structures rather than relying on photographs or the Internet. One candidate took extensive photographs of all sorts of spirals in the urban environment some of which were then used effectively in an interesting photomontage.

Middle level candidates were able to complete a fairly successful final piece but there was little evidence of drawing from observation or second source to any significant degree. Candidates often drew from images taken directly from the Internet as the starting point and did not explain what the image was of or where it was found. It is important that candidates document the source of images used in their supporting studies especially when the image is not their own. These images were reproduced in a variety of media and colours and were sometimes manipulated to achieve a personal response.

Lower level submissions worked purely from these images printed off the Internet and copied them without developing any ideas of their own. Some even worked only from imagination and demonstrated no recording from observation or second sources.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/02
Design Assignment

General comments

All questions were responded to with **Q3: 'a vertical banner'**; and **Q4: 'museum wrapping paper'** being the most popular; followed by **Q5: 'fashion accessories'**; and **Q6: 'headdress design'**. **Q9: 'sculpture design'** was the least popular.

There were very few submissions that reached the higher achievement levels. However, the few that did indicated a very good understanding of the design process, and all included initial drawings from observation, personal photos and good references in their supporting studies. The very best submissions showed that a number of alternative ideas had been considered with good experiments with typography where relevant, strong relationships between image and text and a fit-for-purpose use of colour.

Candidates at the mid-level showed a more limited understanding of the design process and although there were some good ideas, the supporting studies often displayed only one idea which had then undergone few changes apart from experimenting with different colour-ways. Drawing from observation was rarely seen, and references were thin.

Requirements for the research and development of ideas were well explained within the questions set. At the lower levels it was obvious that many candidates did not read the questions carefully enough, or were poorly advised as all too often they had ignored the required shape or size or sources for research. There were very few links to the work of artists/designers. First-hand references were non-existent, and some of the submissions were the result of secondary sourced images that had simply been traced.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: A film featuring great journeys in your region by rail, river and road is soon to be released. Using research into your locality and various forms of transport, produce a design for the cover of a Blu-ray or DVD box.

This was a reasonably popular question that attracted submissions across a wide range of abilities. The best work demonstrated the use of the candidates' own photography and/or drawings to research the local landscape, collect images of local buses, land rovers, trains and boats. Some use of digital manipulation was seen, and some use of a more imaginative illustrative approach was evident.

Much of the work seen in the mid-range was less successful in integrating images with type, ending up with very fussy, overcomplicated designs. Overall, these candidates would have benefited from spending more time on initial research into current designs of DVD or Blu-ray packages, and producing more alternative ideas before committing to the final piece.

The weaker work tended to rely heavily on downloaded images, randomly put together with no coherent compositional skills.

Question 2: Design an internet homepage or double page-page newspaper advertisement for a restaurant chain that is looking to attract more families to its outlet. You should create a name for the chain.

Some very professional computer graphic work was seen from the best candidates. These candidates produced some excellent designs of the homepage, incorporating many alternative outcomes that had been thoroughly explored during the preparatory period. Candidates often chose foreign cuisine as a starting point and incorporated a range of cultural references in their work.

Difficulties arose with the less able candidates who choose to concentrate their efforts around a family theme and struggled to portray family groups, with all the problems around portraiture and figure drawing distracting from the final work.

Most opted for a safer alternative, where research mostly consisted of a collection of photographs of food or restaurant interiors which, in many cases, were simply 'cut and pasted' into the candidates' work.

Question 3: A college is staging a performance of music and dance. Create a design for a large vertical banner to hang outside the college to promote the event. Research the theme and produce a response showing the excitement, colour and movement of the performances. Your final design should be in a vertical format of 4:1.

This was the second most popular question.

The best work demonstrated first-hand research into figures, costume, typefaces and dance styles such as ballet, jazz and modern dance. Experimentation with a variety of media such as paint, stencil, collage, silk painting and weaving was evident in these submissions, and this research and experimentation was used to develop lively and well composed designs. Some creative use of digital media was also seen, using candidates' own photography. The use of flowing lines and repetition to convey movement was successful in many cases, particularly when combined with radical cropping of imagery which created strong contrasts between the physical edge of the banner and the imagery within. However, the use of colour to create a sense of excitement was not investigated to the same degree. A few submissions also included a photographic visualisation of the banner design in situ. Cultural references were a strong feature of these submissions.

Less able candidates were generally restricted to a limited range of ideas with only one option, such as ballet or tango, which had been developed from secondary source material.

The use of figures was popular in this question, but the weaker candidates struggled with this, opting to either use downloaded imagery or rely on their own less well researched efforts. Many silhouettes of dancing figures were seen, particularly at the lower achievement levels.

Many submissions completely ignored the design requirement of working to a vertical format of 4:1.

Question 4: A museum would like some new designs for the wrapping paper it uses in its gift shop. You will need to research artefacts or exhibits from a museum, and develop your ideas based on an aspect of the museum collection to produce a repeat pattern.

This was by far the most popular question, with the majority of submissions showing evidence of researching imagery through first-hand drawings and photographs taken in local museums. Local cultural artefacts were a strong feature.

The best work demonstrated that candidates had been equipped with methods to develop repeat patterns by considering each component pattern's relationship with its neighbours. The use of negative space was understood and had been integrated into the design. They had also been equipped with colour knowledge, some detailed technical skills and had been expected to evaluate their work as it developed. Colour co-ordinates had been explored as part of this process.

Unfortunately, the majority of submissions fell well below this level. Difficulties with repeat pattern techniques was evident with even the better submissions showing a tendency towards isolated design elements that appeared to 'float' in a grid. Most of the candidates had gathered visual research but mainly from secondary sources. The drawings demonstrated limited skill and led to poorly executed outcomes. At the lower end candidates had not explored the range of approaches to creating a repeat pattern and, on the whole, only used the tile format to communicate their ideas. Very few candidates had looked at a range of designs in order to inform their own ideas.

Question 5: Design at least two fashion accessories, such as bags, hat, jeweller, glasses or shoes, that are inspired by electronics.

This question prompted some interesting responses with some good experimental supporting studies of electronic equipment. The best candidates had developed their final examination piece through drawing directly from electronic circuits and components. The development of their designs demonstrated an understanding of appropriate styles due to well chosen and thoughtful research of fashion design. Quite a

few candidates decided to include electronic devices such as wires and metal in their work which sadly came unstuck and was sometimes damaged during transit. Candidates should always avoid using material that could cause injury when being handled.

Weaker submissions lacked a sense of the design process and many candidates submitted three pages of virtually the same image showing very little further exploration of the idea. Research, in order to inform ideas, was often very narrow and the concept of technology was reduced to looking at motherboards and electronic equipment such as telephone wires and plugs. Some candidates had looked at other designers to inform their ideas but this was often very limited.

Question 6: Design a headdress based on local wildlife, to be worn at a fund raising event for a conservation project. Research different aspects of local wildlife and produce some original and eye-catching designs.

Some very imaginative responses were submitted for this question, with designs including a variety of wildlife that floated above the head, birds flying and elephant trunks or snakes descending to cover the face of the person wearing the headdress.

The best work had been developed from initial first-hand study and thorough research into wildlife and conservation. These candidates produced some very imaginative responses with many animals, birds, insects and plants used to inform them. Studies were made of feathers, flowers, animal skin and so on, and these were then used to develop ideas into the final outcome. Research into the work of established milliners and fashion designers, as well as images of carnivals from around the world was also included. Candidates made their final pieces so that they could be worn. Making skills were excellent along with the choice of a range of materials. Supporting studies were included a number of designs which were well annotated and explained the decision making. The design of the headdress was well considered and diagrams explained how they would work.

Middle and lower range work was often reliant on poor quality sources with limited evidence of the candidates' own ideas and imagination. Some candidates showed satisfactory skills in drawing animal heads but then simply placed these on a human head in an unmodified form.

The worst submissions amounted to little more than copies of existing headdresses, Many had just copied North American native headdresses, showing no personal ideas.

Question 7: A new shopping mall is looking is looking for a design for a large stained glass window that will dominate one end of the building. Create a design based on the architecture of an urban area near you. Show how your final idea would look when set into one end of the shopping mall. The design should be in a circular format.

Very few candidates attempted this question. Unfortunately, some of the better candidates had not read the question carefully and produced the wrong shape for the final design. Other candidates did not reference architecture in the supporting studies or final examination piece.

Most candidates had produced rather formulaic designs using strong black outlines to break the design into blocks of colour, and abstracted shapes based on buildings. The best used studies and photographs of buildings in their own locality, and had used media to convey some sense of translucency, but very few were able to effectively show the final design set into one end of a shopping mall.

Question 8: Design a mural for the entrance of a new sports hall. Create a design that will fill the space above the entrance.

Due to the nature of the interior structure you will need to create a final design on two panels of the same size, in the vertical format of 2:1.

Not many submissions were seen for this question. Some candidates had not read the question and produced the work to the wrong proportion or just the one design. A large number of submissions used imagery of sports balls of various kinds, the Olympics were also used a source of inspiration. Many candidates attempted to use images of sportspeople; many had simply been traced with limited success.

Question 9: Design a sculpture based on the theme of the motor car, to be placed at the entrance to a Museum of Motor Transport. Develop your ideas from research into cars and car parts. Show how the final piece would appear when in place outside the museum.

This was the least popular question.

The best candidates demonstrated skill and control with a range of media, explored ideas thoroughly and took an individual approach to the brief. The work had considered how the piece was to be presented, materials it would be made out of and looked at the context of the motor car.

Whilst many had enjoyed making studies of cars, sadly most were just copied from secondary sources, there was little evidence of design development, with the weakest just producing a painting of a car outside a building.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/03

Historical and Critical Assignment

General Comments

Submissions were generally presented as either large or small sketchbooks; A2 sheets secured together; A4 written essays; A4 folders/files, scrapbooks or A5 to A3 books produced from web site templates. The levels of attainment were mostly within the '*limited*' to '*competent*' range.

All of the submissions seen at the 40+ mark range contained evidence of some first-hand experience of involvement with the subject matter, which had clearly benefitted the attainment levels of these candidates.

Assessment Objective 1: Gathering, Recording, Research and Investigation

The strongest submissions always contained evidence of a first-hand source for research and/or experience of the subject matter. Visits to Art Galleries, artist's studios, and sculpture parks and craft fairs had all provided material for visual and written analysis. Candidates found to be within the '*competent*' to '*outstanding*' levels had all exploited such sources. Satisfactory, Competent and Proficient levels of visual research had been achieved through making photographic records of visits to local sculpture yards in Zimbabwe.

Submissions at the lower levels of attainment contained little or no evidence of using a first-hand source for research. The Internet, (which is a second-hand source for research) had often been used to just download information and images. This often demonstrated a lack of awareness and understanding with one candidate even claiming to have interviewed Francis Bacon!

Assessment Objective 2: Exploration and Development of Ideas

Some candidates at the higher levels of achievement had made some perceptive observations by making intelligent comparisons between a local artist and well known western artists e.g. Picasso or Van Gogh. Interviews with artists were useful when intelligent questions enabled the artist to reveal insights of how their work develops as well as particular working methods and techniques.

The exploration of how artists, designers and craftspeople develop their work had enabled some strong candidates to make some significant personal judgements. In one particularly outstanding photographic submission, the candidate had made an evocative and emotional response, informed and inspired by the work of Ernest Cole (South Africa's first black photographer).

Submissions at the lower levels of attainment demonstrated very limited evidence of how artists and designers develop their ideas, exploring themes and/or addressing issues.

Assessment Objective 3: Organisation and Relationships of Visual and/or other forms

The presentation of the study is very important, and imaginative methods, appropriate to the subject were seen at the higher levels of achievement. The most popular form of presentation was the A4 folder or a clear plastic file. Some very personal hand-made books were in evidence, and all the submissions from one Centre were customised, ready-made sketchbooks. The use of 'presentation book' websites is becoming more prominent. Another method seen was the use of mounted A3/A2 sheets of card, attached with clips, string or staples.

The layout and design of each page/sheet is vital. Some weak submissions were hand written so badly that they became difficult to read. Some much stronger submissions were beautifully hand written in a traditional calligraphic style. Some outstanding photographic studies were seen with very strong and personal images.

Weaker submissions displayed poor images, often downloaded and randomly pasted on chaotic pages, making them confusing and difficult to 'read'.

A few poor studies were seen consisting of a written essay and no images, which were visually dull and the written content had clearly been downloaded.

Assessment Objective 4: Selection and Control of Materials, Media and Processes

The candidates own practical experiments, when clearly inspired and informed by their research and experience of other artists, demonstrated an engaged and personal involvement in their chosen topic. Some intelligent and perceptive visual analysis of the works of contemporary painters was seen. The candidates had dissected some Cubist works by Picasso and focused on details in an imaginative way. The visual explorations added a lively and colourful element, enhancing the project significantly. Several entries had made use of Photoshop in an attempt to liven up fairly dull photography.

Assessment Objective 5: Personal Vision and Presentation

Methods of presentation were discussed under Assessment Objective 3, and clearly have a direct connection with the personal qualities, also demonstrated through Assessment Objective 5, with personal commitment to the whole project through an interpretive and creative response.

Submissions seen at the lowest levels often contained no evidence of any personal judgements and were only copied and/or downloaded biographical and descriptive accounts, limited by a lack of curiosity, enquiry and enthusiasm. The strongest submissions presented an informed response through personal evaluation, reflection and critical thinking.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/04

Coursework Assignment

General comments

The majority of candidates had followed a Painting and Related Media course of study with just a handful were received for Photography, Graphics Design or Textile Design.

A wide range of responses were seen with evidence of imagination and the development of personal interests. The best work resulted from in-depth research from first-hand study of chosen subjects. Still-life, natural and man-made forms were very popular. There were examples of studies made in the local landscape and from around the home. Visits to local buildings of interest were also a popular choice of study. There were also a few that were based on the figure, using themselves, friends and family to work from and in some cases, pets and other animals also featured.

There were examples where the research into the work of other artists, designers or cultures had informed candidates' ideas. The best had been encouraged not just to copy the work of other artists but to analyse aspects of their subject matter or technique to inform their own work. However, there were still many examples comprising downloaded copies of written biographies, lengthy descriptions of technical processes and downloaded photographs of such poor quality or of images that had no relationship to the candidates' theme, that they could not be credited as having made any contribution to the candidates' own development.

There was evidence of over direction in a number of Centres, where all candidates had followed the same theme or approach. This approach can be very supportive to the less able students within a group, but with little freedom to develop individual ideas, the ability range tended to be very narrow with few candidates able to access the higher mark ranges, especially for Assessment Objective 5, personal vision and presentation.

In general terms the presentation of work for this component was of a good standard. The sheets in the supporting portfolio were clearly labelled with the final outcome being clearly identified and presented on top of the portfolio. Notation was generally concise and helpful, although a significant number of candidates had incorrectly labelled drawings that were very clearly from secondary sources as '*direct observation*' or '*first-hand studies*'. Teachers need to ensure that the distinction is made very clearly to students, *first-hand studies* are the result of working from direct, immediate experience of people, objects or places. This experience offers the potential for a candidate to see and sense much more about the subject and consequently, the work becomes more unique and personal.

Teacher assessments were mostly generous and significant scaling was applied in many cases. Whilst the order of merit in Centres was generally acceptable, teachers have a tendency to assume that their best candidates fall within the '*outstanding*' achievement level. This was rarely the case and marks within this band should only be given for work that is genuinely of the highest quality in meeting the criteria for all of the assessment objectives evenly.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

The vast majority of submissions were in Painting and Related Media. Watercolour, pastels and pencil were the most popular media, closely followed by acrylics. Many candidates had used Photography for first-hand investigation of their subject matter. Whenever the aesthetic potentials of viewpoint, light conditions and composition had been considered, this method assisted the development process considerably. However, it was disappointing to see a large number of photographs that were out of focus, poorly composed and badly printed. This type of quality of work inhibited development and usually reinforced other evidence of the candidate's limited critical awareness and technical ability.

The best candidates had explored their subject matter from first-hand experience using a variety of media. The work was always purposeful and informed by an understanding of the work of other artists. Experiments had a clear focus, such as, an examination of mark-making or the effect of light on space or different surfaces or an exploration of dramatic composition. The investigation of ideas and media was thoughtful, ambitious and sustained, which enabled skills to be acquired. Candidates were able to make independent choices about their work and personal ideas evolved into successful outcomes.

Some candidates in the middle range used media with sensitivity, there were some interesting ideas seen but the full potential was not fully realised. In some cases, this was due to an over-reliance on poor quality secondary sources which restricted the refinement of skills. In other cases it was the absence of any research of the work of other artists that had severely limited the candidates' ability to select and refine their own ideas.

Most of the weaker candidates' submissions lacked focus and often indicated that they did not have sufficient critical understanding to be able to develop their ideas or skills beyond that of a '*limited*' level of achievement. Some candidates submitted very little work; others submitted a random selection of drawings from secondary sources; a small number of others had made first-hand studies but of a very poor quality. Evidence of progression was absent and none of these candidates had informed their work with any research of the work of other artists.

Graphic Communication

Only a handful of submissions were seen for this area of study, but most were of a '*satisfactory*' or '*competent*' standard. Outcomes were varied and consisted mostly of logo and related business card and letterhead designs; with a few posters or CD/DVD designs.

The best work recognised the importance of typography and candidates had researched different type faces and had integrated the most appropriate with their own imagery which had been developed from their own photographs or hand drawn images, scanned and digitally manipulated.

Weaker submissions demonstrated an over-reliance on digital manipulation from downloaded secondary images. Candidates' own hand-drawn work was often limited to copies of their CAD printouts. Credit for creative development was limited.

Photography, digital and lens-based media

There were very few submissions for this area of study. The very best seen contained evidence of research with the camera documented with thumbnail prints. Digital enhancement was relevant in the development of the candidates' intentions.

Work seen in the low-range tended to consist of a small number of poor quality images that demonstrated '*very limited*' development or critical awareness. None of the candidates had researched the work of other photographers or showed an awareness of standard photographic practices, consequently skills and personal qualities were weak.

Textile design

There were a few successful submissions which consisted of lively and imaginative printed lengths of fabric, the supporting work included fabric samples and very thorough evidence of research and development. These particular submissions were clearly the result of well structured courses with well directed experimentation, culminating with the development of an impressive and well crafted textile pieces.

Three-dimensional Studies

There were too few submissions seen to make comments on.