

# ART AND DESIGN

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**Paper 9837/01–03**  
**Combined 1) Portfolio, 2) Critical and**  
**Contextual Study, 3) Project**

## General comments

It is pleasing to report that the number of candidates and centres increased again this year and that moderators found continued good work in many established centres. In these centres, delivery had been tailored to fully embrace the assessment objectives in creative and stimulating ways. Interestingly, the centres have not become stale; refreshing and revising their approach each year. They amply demonstrate that the flexibility afforded by this specification can support art education at its best, stimulating well-developed skills, intellectual understanding, creative individuality and exciting work. Last year some new design centres needed time to fully adapt to the ethos of the Pre-U, being wed to past approaches and expectations. While there is still work to be done, it was encouraging to note that several had improved. They had acted on the Principal Examiner Report, visited good centres and/or attended INSET.

Nearly all centres had invested considerable time and thought to the presentation of the final assessment exhibition. Many centres now present separate exhibitions for Components 1 and 3. Although not compulsory, this practice is to be encouraged where space permits. It allows moderators to identify evidence easily and, importantly, gives appropriate weight and authority to the presentation of Component 3. Centres are at liberty to present Component 1 in portfolios alone, but these should be placed in browser racks or on tables if moderators are to have easy access. Centres often mount a simple exhibition of Component 1 work in a classroom or corridor, leaving a larger hall or exhibition space for the Component 3 work.

Increasingly, candidates are being charged with curating their own Component 3 exhibition, which includes the writing of a wall-mounted statement. This is entirely appropriate of a component that requires a highly personal development of work over time, as well as an extended sense of ownership, personal creativity and intellectual rigour. It also provides examiners with a clear insight to work which, after all, is fresh to them.

It is extremely important for large centres to undertake rigorous standardisation of marks across groups, especially if different disciplines are offered. There is too much tokenism in respect of this requirement. At an early stage it is important to ensure that each discipline, while retaining its own unique demands and flavour, provides full and good coverage of the assessment objectives. In centres where this is uneven it is difficult to compare like with like. This can affect moderation. Generally, greater communication and co-operation between disciplines is to be encouraged in respect of this over-arching qualification that supports many different approaches.

## Comments on specific tasks

### ***Component 1: Portfolio***

This component is designed to act as a bridge between GCSE and the greater demands of the Pre-U Component 3. If structured well, it should provide a foundation of knowledge and understanding for candidates, irrespective of their background. It can certainly offer a good learning experience for those who are fresh to the subject or moving from another centre. In planning and delivering this component it is important that all assessment objectives are fully embraced. The candidate must not only explore materials and processes, but also engage with critical and contextual concerns that support intellectual and creative development. Centres are offered considerable freedom in the delivery of this component to reflect centre specialisms, opportunity and expertise. As a result, the range of delivery across centres is wide and interesting. Good planning and the prudent use of time are essential since the component influences greatly the development and final achievement of candidates in Component 3. Many centres are good at providing a range of experiences across different media and approaches and their candidates develop a useful battery of mark-making skills and a good working knowledge of materials and technique. The importance of recording from first-hand is mostly understood and some centres offer life-drawing as a way of developing

acute observation and focused concentration. Life drawing can be valuable for design students to increase their understanding of the human form, which can in turn inform project solutions. All candidates should be able to articulate of the understanding of their sources, especially the analytical appraisal of the work of others. It is essential that candidates are given the opportunity to acquire a visual vocabulary and learn to write in response to the work of historical and contemporary artists and designers. Written, as well as visual evidence must be supplied in sketch/workbooks to support and reward meaningful understanding. Too often, sources are not credited and comments regarding the work of others fail to move sufficiently beyond the most basic of preferential comment. Long biographies are neither required nor rewarded. Bullet points can be used to good effect. Candidates must be taught to analyse securely the work of others if they are to become practised in skills which are later required in the delivery of Components 2 and 3. Only in this way might their work fully reflect the four assessment objectives and gain access to the higher assessment bands. Although outcomes, as such, are not a requirement of this component, candidates should be offered adequate opportunity to develop and refine personal ideas and resolutions. Candidates who are denied this opportunity rarely go on to make good use of the extended time offered by Component 3. It is essential that centres are aware of the different weighting of the assessment objectives for each of the three components and that they tailor their teaching and delivery accordingly. Centres that generate a large quantity of group-directed work may need to select items for presentation if the individuality and difference between candidates is to be clear at moderation. Pleasingly, many centres deliver a stimulating and rigorous Component 1 that supports the emergence of confident and well-motivated candidates who, in addition to a range of useful skills, have the beginnings of a personal voice. Such an approach prepares candidates well for Component 3.

### **Successful elements of Component 1**

- A carefully devised course which delivers a comprehensive foundation for all.
- The four assessment objectives are fully covered by all disciples.
- The pathway and individual experience of each candidate is comprehensively and chronologically documented in an accompanying work or sketchbook. It must provide evidence of personal reflection and review, alongside the written analysis of connecting artists and/or designers. All sources should be credited.
- Digital workbooks (where used) are easy to access and navigate.
- The practical work is underpinned by good observation and drawing or recording in other appropriate ways.
- There is a range of purposeful experimentation and risk-taking within a context of skills-based learning.
- Design candidates have experience of and understand the demands associated with a customer/real life brief.
- There is evidence of personal engagement and the development and refinement of ideas which go beyond the initial demands of a group project.
- There is evidence of an emerging independent voice which is supported by the confident and effective handling of materials and processes appropriate to the different disciplines.

### **Component 2: Critical and Contextual Study**

Essays were well-presented and reflected appropriate research and argument. Many centres now have full measure of the expectations of this component and are to be congratulated on good preparation and the support of candidates within a culture of seriousness. The benefits associated with the production of the study are widely acknowledged and celebrated. It is pleasing to see that the component has encouraged engagement with live work through visits and trips, and some centres have organised visiting artists/designers or artists/designers-in residence. It is appreciated that this component continues to present a challenge for some candidates. Many centres have gained from establishing fruitful links with History of Art, History, English or learning support colleagues, facilitating support for all candidates. The keeping of a gallery visiting book during the first year, as well as those important opportunities to analyse the work of others can pave the way for this component. There are several excellent books that offer support for writing about contemporary art and design and galleries offer courses on approaches to critical and contextual study.

The first task is to submit a good Outline Proposal. The moderators are looking for a seriousness of intent and evidence of appropriate research and background reading. Each study needs an opening rationale that poses a question. This can be answered in the conclusion. Too often individuals show themselves to be ill-prepared and do not provide a considered reading list or details of other sources and visits. This is essential if the adviser is to assess properly its potential and advise accordingly. The listing of generalist websites alone neither inspires confidence nor serves to prepare the candidate well. Context is extremely important, and all candidates need to place their research in an historical and contemporary framework if they are to fully understand and appreciate their subject matter. Too many designers write about the mechanics of design without a wider consideration of context, which might include the historical, social and political.

Good planning and time-management are essential if candidates are to do full justice to their subject matter and develop a strong, independent argument over the course of their study. The 3000–3500-word count is not generous, and several drafts might be required before a candidate covers all points convincingly. Some find it helpful to break the study down into chapters. One or more can be tackled each week and makes the task more manageable. Most now understand that practical work is not a requirement of the component, but links with a candidate's own practical concerns in Component 3 are to be encouraged. One area can usefully support and inform the other, raising overall awareness and ambition. The Teacher Guide available on the School Support Hub discusses other possible approaches to the study, other than a conventional essay. A candidate could, for example, produce a website, provide educational notes to support a curated exhibition of an artist/designer's work or make a narrated film. In such cases, a transcript which fulfils the word requirement must be supplied. Parity of intellectual rigour and standard with a conventional essay is essential.

### **Successful elements of Component 2**

- The topic affords the opportunity for in-depth and sustained research and is pertinent to current art and design practice.
- Links with the candidate's own practical work are to be encouraged.
- The opening rationale provides clear parameters for the study along with a well-honed question which is answered in the conclusion.
- The candidate creates an historical and contemporary context and demonstrates an awareness of cultural, sociological, political and/or personal contexts.
- Academic conventions/systems are used such as a rationale, conclusion, footnotes, references and a bibliography.
- The best studies offer lucid, analytical writing which include informed opinion.
- A strong argument is developed over the course of the essay.
- Candidates deploy a specialist vocabulary and analyse the work of others with insight.
- Studies are well-planned and appropriately structured within the scope of the 3500 word limit.
- The study is simply but professionally presented.
- The OPF (with adviser comments) is included at the rear of the study.

### **Component 3: Project**

Component 3 should be viewed as a step up from Component 1. The extended time afforded to this component, implies that well-resolved and ambitious work of an independent nature is expected. Many centres should be congratulated on the range and standard of exciting work produced. The most successful candidates ran with the set theme to develop a personal and meaningful body of work, which created a seamless and personal exhibition of visual impact. It should be noted, however, that whilst candidates will respond and diversify in multitudinous ways, due regard must be taken of the theme. It cannot be totally ignored. The weighting of the assessment objectives is different for this component and reflects an expectation that a substantial body of work is to be produced. Outcomes should be fully resolved, reflecting not only the skills but also the interests of individuals. Some centres presented a paucity of work that did not reflect a year's engagement. Others spend too much time brainstorming or undertake a series of worthy but unconnected exercises or variations. A clear and early individual action-plan is recommended to enable the building of a substantial and connected body of work. It should not be forgotten that a significant and uninterrupted amount of time is available for this component and the final exhibition should reflect this. Enough time must be allocated to the production and resolution of the final piece(s) if genuine review and refinement is to take place. What to do for the outcome(s) should not be a problem since it/they should flow naturally from the explorative and developmental work which has preceded it. Importantly, the journey over the year should be a genuine preparation for the end goal. It is generally understood that candidates must record their journey in workbooks or the equivalent, but it is a mistake to think that critical and contextual concerns should be confined to Component 2. These must fully inform candidates' work and progress. Visual

and written analysis of an appropriate standard is expected in workbooks. All candidates must seek suitable and interesting examples of a good standard. Too often candidates select poor or mediocre examples from the internet when better, more exciting sources might have ignited their work. Designers must move beyond high street examples and seek the best contemporary and historical examples that offer a high aesthetic. Critical and contextual sources should comprehensively inform all candidates' work in such a way as to inspire and inform a level of ambition and risk-taking appropriate to the Pre-U qualification.

### Successful elements of Component 3

- Candidates build upon skills and approaches learnt in Component 1.
- Candidates demonstrate a confident handling of materials and processes to facilitate an individual approach and resolution of ideas.
- An early and clear action-plan is devised to maximise the time available and the development of a substantial exhibition of outcome(s) and support work.
- Design candidates respond with appropriateness to a brief which ensures that work is fit for purpose.
- Evidence of continuous development demonstrating that the candidate was not afraid to experiment, invent, review and refine as the project progressed.
- The work is underpinned by strong observation and recording.
- Outcomes are fully resolved, and enough time is devoted to their production and refinement.
- Workbooks and other supporting materials provide a seamless account of the candidate's development over time.
- Critical and contextual sources are selected with care and analysed with insight to the benefit of the practical work. This is evidenced in the workbook.
- Candidates present a distinct voice and a committed response demonstrating independence, enthusiasm, ambition, curiosity and creativity.
- The work is mounted as a considered exhibition that fully reflects the individual's journey. There is a clear demarcation between candidates' work.
- A wall-mounted statement of intent or curatorial statement is provided, in addition to a reflective conclusion in the workbook.