

# GCE A Level Examiners' Report

Design and Technology  
A Level  
Summer 2025

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## Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.<sup>1</sup>

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

## Further support

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                               |
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## Executive Summary

### Product Design

The 2025 Product Design exam demonstrated a strong alignment with the course specification, offering a comprehensive assessment of candidates' knowledge and understanding. Encouragingly, most candidates engaged well with the paper, with high attempt rates across all questions, reflecting effective teaching and curriculum delivery by centres.

The paper successfully allowed candidates to draw on a wide range of sources, including design movements, notable designers, and their own Major Projects. This breadth of opportunity supported differentiated responses and rewarded those who could contextualise their knowledge effectively.

However, candidates must continue to focus on:

- **Contextual relevance:** Responses must be tailored to the specific scenario presented in each question.
- **Extended writing:** Questions 8–10 require structured, analytical responses. Candidates who planned their answers and used clear paragraphing demonstrated greater clarity and depth.
- **Exam technique:** Underlining key terms and understanding mark allocations can help candidates provide more focused and complete answers.
- **AO3 responses:** These remain challenging due to the level of analysis and evaluation required. More practice in this area is recommended.

Mathematical elements were generally well handled, indicating good preparation in this area.

### Fashion & Textiles

The 2025 Fashion & Textiles paper-maintained consistency in structure and demand with previous series. While many candidates performed well, there was a noticeable increase in low-level responses and unattempted questions, suggesting a gap in readiness for A Level standards among some entrants.

Key observations include:

- **Strong performance** on questions related to viscose (Q3) and the Kitemark (Q6).
- **Weaker responses** to Q1 (innovative design) and Q2/Q4 (maths-based questions), with many candidates struggling to apply technical knowledge in context.
- **Q7 (critical path)** and **Q10 (Haute Couture)** were the least accessible, indicating gaps in industrial practice and subject-specific terminology.
- **AO3 responses** lacked depth, with limited analysis and evaluation.

To improve outcomes, centres should ensure:

- Systematic and thorough delivery of the specification.
- Regular practice with exam-style questions.
- Emphasis on reading and interpreting questions carefully.

## **Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)**

The NEA remains a vital component of the qualification, with several best practices emerging:

- Candidates must independently identify and define problems.
- Specifications should include measurable criteria and evolve through research.
- AI tools can support ideation but must be referenced appropriately.
- Sketchbooks and prototyping should clearly document the design journey.
- High-quality final prototypes and realistic manufacturing sequences are essential.
- Evaluations should include user testing and suggest meaningful modifications, with increasing use of video and QR codes to evidence work.

# GCE A LEVEL DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

## GCE A level

### Summer 2025

## A LEVEL FASHION & TEXTILES – COMPONENT 1

### Overview of the Component

The GCE A Level Fashion and Textiles 2025 examination paper followed a structure, style, and level of demand consistent with previous series. The questions covered topics from the specification and assessed candidates' knowledge, understanding, and skills developed during the two-year course of study. There has been a decrease in the number of candidates entered for this qualification.

Although many candidates produced strong responses, there was a noticeable rise in very low-level answers and unattempted questions, suggesting some were unprepared for A level standards. These candidates did not demonstrate the level of knowledge and understanding expected at this level, as a result, overall attainment was significantly below expectations.

The most accessible questions on the paper were **Question 3**, which tested knowledge of the regenerated fibre viscose and **Question 6**, the Kitemark. Responses to both showed good subject knowledge. **Question 9** asked for a discussion around durability versus sustainability. Overall good responses were seen, although candidates who offered overly long responses tended to stray from the context of the question.

A recurring issue is the failure of candidates to read the questions more carefully before attempting a response. **Question 1** was about innovative design. Most candidates simply described the images provided for (i) but did not demonstrate any detailed understanding beyond that. Equally disappointing were the responses to (ii) related to 3D printing, which were mostly superficial.

**Questions 2 and 4** included maths elements alongside technical subject knowledge. Whilst technical knowledge was good, the maths proved problematic for others. The maths questions relate to calculations that would naturally occur within manufacture. It is surprising that many could not access these.

**Question 7** was the least accessible question on the paper. Many candidates did not know what a critical path was or how it impacts manufacturing/delivery times. This question was related to industrial practice, not about Gantt charts and project planning for the NEA. Most candidates did not have a detailed understanding of an environmental management system (EMS) either, but gained some marks related to improving sustainability in industry; most responses were yet again superficial. Some candidates did not attempt this question.

Responses to **Question 10** were disappointing with the lowest attempt rate on the paper. Some candidates clearly did not understand the term Haute Couture, indicating a lack of subject-specific knowledge. As an AO3 question, there was little evidence of analysis or reasoning in some responses. Some candidates did not attempt this question. Candidates need to be taught the content of the specification, systematically and thoroughly throughout the duration of the two-year course. Candidates need to be familiar with examination-style questions and how to answer in a way that will enable them to maximise on the marks available. There are resources online to support future candidates with their preparations for the written examinations.

**Resources:** <https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceByArgs.aspx?subId=8&lvlId=1>  
<https://oer.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ProjectByArgs.aspx?subId=18&lvlId=1>

# **GCE A LEVEL DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

## **GCE A level**

### **Summer 2025**

#### **A LEVEL PRODUCT DESIGN – COMPONENT 1**

##### **Overview of the Component**

The 2025 exam covered a broad range of topics from the course specification, and it is pleasing to see that most candidates were able to understand and respond well to the questions, with very high attempt rates for each. This indicates strong engagement with the paper and suggests that centres are effectively delivering a well-rounded A Level Design & Technology course.

The paper provided opportunities for candidates to use the examples given in the question stems to exemplify answers, while also allowing them to incorporate additional knowledge from other products, designers, design movements, journals, or documentaries encountered during their studies. Candidates can also draw on their experience from their Major Project to reinforce their answers. This should be encouraged.

Questions are always presented within a specific context, and candidates should ensure their answers are relevant to that context to earn marks according to the mark scheme. Presenting knowledge in isolation from the context will limit candidates' ability to achieve marks at the higher end of the scale. This is explored in more detail below.

Overall, accessibility across the paper was very good. Nevertheless, candidates should practice writing longer responses for Questions 8, 9, and 10 to get used to building coherent answers that develop relevant points rather than repeating the same point. The use of standard English writing structures should be encouraged, with full sentences and clear paragraphs, particularly in the longer response questions. Candidates who broke their points into separate paragraphs often demonstrated more clarity in their thinking and less repetition.

For higher tariff questions, it is beneficial for candidates to plan their responses before writing. The highest-performing candidates often used a mind map or list to organise their thoughts, leading to more structured answers with minimal repetition.

When preparing for exams and practising questions, candidates should underline key words in the question to ensure they address all parts fully. It is also helpful to check the mark allocation for each question to ensure their answers are detailed enough to access the full marks available. Some candidates provided correct answers but lacked the necessary depth to achieve the highest marks.

Extended responses, particularly the AO3 question, often present additional challenges because of the depth, detail and skills required to reach the upper mark ranges. Practising this type of question would likely lead to improvements in average performance. It is not usually the content that candidates struggle with, but rather the level of analysis, evaluation, and judgement required, which can result in responses being placed in a lower 'basic' level. Candidates should be reminded that examination papers are not predictable year on year, so using a past paper as a mock does not guarantee success in future assessments.

Questions will be drawn from the breadth and depth of the specification, and it is unlikely that a previous question will be repeated in a similar form. This approach rewards the application of knowledge, understanding, and skills rather than rote revision.

Mathematics questions were generally answered well, and it is clear that candidates have prepared thoroughly, boosting overall performance

## **Comments on individual questions/sections**

### **Question 1**

#### **1(a)**

Candidates responded well, with most able to analyse the image of the computer mouse and explain how its design enhances comfort for the user. Many made good use of subject terminology, referencing ergonomic features and relevant anthropometric data. The strongest responses made a clear link between these features and everyday use of the mouse, often for extended periods. We saw good demonstration of knowledge and understanding of technical principles. Lower scoring responses tended to repeat ideas or lacked sufficient detail. A single justified point is unlikely to score full marks in a 6-mark question. Candidates should be reminded to consider the value of the question and ensure they include enough well-developed points to access all marks.

#### **1(b)**

There were many strong responses, with frequent reference to recyclability, the use of recycled materials, and the application of bioplastics. A number of candidates explained the need for materials to be adequately separated before recycling, which showed a good depth of understanding. Higher scoring responses provided full and justified explanations of material developments. Lower scoring responses often included simple lists or superficial statements, limiting access to the higher mark bands.

### **Question 2**

#### **2(ai) – 2(aiv)**

As in previous years, responses to the maths questions were strong. Most candidates were able to access full marks for parts (i) to (iii), with part (iv) acting as more of a differentiator. Candidates are reminded that partial marks are available, so it is always worth attempting a response, even if unsure of the final answer. This year saw an increase in candidates not presenting their calculations clearly or in a linear fashion, sometimes working appeared mid-page or between unrelated questions. Candidates should be encouraged to present calculations clearly, leave sufficient space, and signpost their working. This helps examiners identify correct steps and award marks even if the final answer is incorrect.

2(b)

Responses demonstrated a broad understanding of 3D printing technology. Candidates often referred to common faults such as filament jams or warping due to cooling. However, to access full marks, candidates needed to explain the impact of these faults on collaborative design projects. Some responses listed limitations (e.g. cost, build volume, or materials), which are features rather than faults, and could not be credited.

### **Question 3**

3(a)

Candidates generally performed well, explaining appropriate quality control (QC) measures during manufacture. The strongest responses were contextualised to the one-off product shown. Marks were often lost when candidates either gave a single point or failed to reference one-off production. Paragraphing can support clarity, while not awarded marks directly, it helps candidates structure and check the number of unique points made.

3(b)

This question was less well answered, with many candidates repeating answers from 3(a). Those who discussed internal or external quality assurance (QA) measures — such as staff training, production plans, or ISO standards — were able to access higher marks.

### **Question 4**

4(a) and 4(b)

These maths-based questions were generally well answered. Candidates who did not score full marks in 4(a) often still received partial credit for correct methods or formulae. Importantly, a correct answer to 4(b) could be credited even if 4(a) was incorrect. Very few candidates skipped this question, suggesting increasing confidence with maths. As with earlier maths questions, candidates should be reminded to present their calculations clearly and logically.

4(c)

Most candidates suggested suitable materials for the architectural model, with acrylic being the most common. Many responses included relevant discussion of material characteristics (e.g. opacity, manufacturability), often supported by experience from the Major Project. Some candidates misinterpreted the scale of the model and instead discussed materials suitable for full-sized buildings, these were not credited. Candidates should underline key parts of the question to support their reading and interpretation.

### **Question 5**

5(a)

At A Level, candidates are expected to show greater depth than at GCSE. In this question, some gave generic or contradictory properties of MDF (e.g. "tough", "brittle") without clear justification. Others cited incorrect features such as "very dense" or "extremely lightweight." The course specification clearly lists required materials knowledge, and candidates should revise this thoroughly.

5(b)

Most candidates accessed at least some marks, commonly referring to recyclability. The strongest responses explored wider environmental concerns such as dust extraction legislation and formaldehyde content, showing an excellent understanding of making principles.

### Question 6

This question was generally well answered. Many candidates demonstrated good subject knowledge, referencing focus groups and, in stronger responses, consumer advocacy groups such as *Which?* Some lower-scoring responses made limited reference to design impact or repeated the same point without development. To achieve higher marks, candidates must offer multiple, well-explained points.

### Question 7

7(a)

Candidates generally demonstrated strong understanding of CFRP and applied it well to the context of a phone case. The highest-scoring responses linked specific material properties (e.g. strength-to-weight ratio) to the demands of the product, rather than listing them in isolation.

7(b)

Fewer candidates answered this question well. Some veered off the question and wrote about injection moulding instead of comparing it to CFRP lay-up. Successful responses considered factors such as labour, machinery, post-processing, and time, showing clear evaluation. Repetitive or overly long responses were less effective than concise, structured ones.

### Question 8

To gain high marks, candidates needed to demonstrate understanding of the five-stage risk assessment process and apply it directly to the consumer safety context. Lower-scoring responses either listed the five stages without context or described product safety features in isolation. Stronger answers broke down each stage, analysing how it contributed to overall risk reduction. Planning this kind of high-tariff question using a list or mind map is recommended to ensure complete coverage and to reduce repetition. Structured, paragraph-based responses are especially effective in this context.

### Question 9

Candidates showed broad awareness of copyright as part of intellectual property (IP) protection. To access the higher mark bands, they needed to explain the benefits of copyright specifically. Some misconceptions were evident — for example, misunderstanding copyright as a registered right or confusing its duration. A few responses focused instead on trademarks or patents, which could not be credited. The best answers gave multiple accurate examples, linked to the designer's interests, with strong structure and no repetition.

### Question 10

The concept of Just-In-Time (JIT) manufacturing was well understood across the cohort, and almost all candidates attempted the question. To access the middle and top bands, responses needed to demonstrate a solid understanding of JIT and evaluate its effect on unit cost. Candidates often correctly noted that reduced storage leads to lower costs. However, higher-scoring responses went further — discussing, for example, reduced utility bills, less capital tied up in stock, and fewer obsolete components. Weaker responses tended to list features of JIT without linking them to cost. A well-structured, planned answer that fully addresses the question context will yield the best results in this final extended response.

### **Summary of key points**

- Read the question carefully and ensure that every part is addressed. Overlooking keywords or misinterpreting the context can significantly limit the marks awarded.
- Avoid rewriting the question at the start of a response. Candidates should use their time more effectively by focusing on developing their answer.
- Use the mark allocation as a guide to the depth required. Brief or underdeveloped responses, particularly to 4-mark questions, often fail to access the full range of marks.
- Plan extended responses before writing. This is especially important for high-tariff questions, where a clear structure and thoughtful sequencing of ideas can significantly improve coherence and reduce repetition.
- Draw on real examples from products, personal project work, or wider industry knowledge to support answers. This helps to anchor responses in context and adds weight to arguments or evaluations.
- Show calculations clearly in maths-based questions. Even where the final answer may be incorrect, method marks can still be awarded if the working is logical and easy to follow.

# GCE A LEVEL DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

## GCE A level

### Summer 2025

#### A LEVEL NEA – COMPONENT 2

##### Overview of the Component

- Candidates must independently identify a variety of problems, these should not be pre-selected or directed by the centre.
- **Initial specifications** must include specific, **measurable** criteria. A clear **Design Brief** must also be outlined. Further refinement to the Specification can come following further research and development.
- The use of **AI** is an effective tool for candidates to evolve their ideas; however, it must be referenced and not presented as the candidate's final work.
- Centres should continue to encourage the use of sketchbooks as an iteration tool.
- The **journey** candidates have followed should be clearly documented throughout the folio and sketch book and through evidence of their prototyping and testing.
- Several centres are making extensive use of 3D printing, this is acceptable and can access band 4/5 marks if, products are of a high quality and appearance.
- The final concepts and prototype should **look and feel** like a real product. The quality of finish is important - could the product be taken to an investor?
- Sequence of manufacture should clearly show how the product is to be manufactured. 'Making diaries' should only be used as a tool to evaluate issues encountered during the manufacturing process.
- Evaluations should contain end testing and user trials with clear suggestions of possible modifications to the product. Videos of Research, development, and evaluation are an excellent tool to evidence work. The use of **QR codes** is becoming increasingly common.

##### Comments on individual questions/sections

The work moderated at A Level component 2 has overall been well interpreted. Moving forward, consideration to the following comments and recommendations should be made.

##### Identifying and Investigating Design Possibilities

Centres must continue to ensure that candidates independently identify and analyse a variety of design possibilities. These should be in direct response to the contextual challenges set by the exam board. It is not acceptable for centres to direct candidates toward pre-selected briefs or contexts. Each candidate should develop their own brief, and it is not expected that all students in a sample work from the same context. The iterative design process should guide candidates through identifying diverse problems informed by client needs, user analysis, and the deconstruction of existing products. This supports genuine exploration and ensures a meaningful design journey.

## **Developing a Design Brief and Specification**

A clearly defined design brief is essential from the outset and must be supported by an initial specification containing specific, measurable criteria. Although some centres begin with an outline and allow students to refine their specifications later through research and development, high-band marks require comprehensive, fully detailed specifications. These must enable the product to be accurately and effectively developed to meet its intended function and user needs.

## **Generating and Developing Design Ideas**

Design folios continue to show strong evidence of the iterative process, often supported by the effective use of A3 layouts and sketchbooks. Centres should further encourage candidates to experiment and iterate using both physical models and 3D CAD, demonstrating the development of ideas over time. The sketchbook remains a vital tool for capturing these iterations and should be rewarded where it clearly shows progression. AI can be a helpful tool in idea development but must be properly referenced and must not replace the candidate's own design thinking. The design process may begin at any point—such as modelling or deconstruction—and should reflect the individual's creative journey.

## **Manufacturing a Prototype**

Prototypes should be completed to a standard that reflects a finished, market-ready product. A high-quality finish is essential, and centres should ask: "Could this product be shown to an investor?" While 3D printing is widely used and acceptable, candidates should not receive Band 4/5 marks unless the product shows signs of post-processing and attention to surface quality and realism. Only final prototypes are eligible for marks in this section—concept models and tests contribute instead to the design development section.

Centres should also include a detailed, logical manufacturing plan showing how the final product would be made. This should not be confused with generic project planning. Gantt charts may be used, but they must include realistic manufacturing detail—such as timeframes, health and safety, and quality control—to be meaningful. 'Making diaries' are useful tools for evaluating problems encountered during production but should not replace structured manufacturing sequences.

## **Analysing and Evaluating Design Decisions and Prototypes**

Evaluation continues to vary in quality, with many centres needing to dedicate more time to this crucial stage. Strong evaluations include thorough end testing, user trials, and clearly recorded feedback. Modifications based on this feedback should be visualised through annotated sketches or CAD renderings. Candidates are encouraged to use video documentation—linked via QR codes—to capture real-time evidence of testing and evaluation. Consideration of how the product serves its user throughout its full life cycle should also be included to reach the top bands.

## **Task Marking**

### **Comments on Approaches to Internal Marking**

Some centres still face issues with the administration of the moderation process. All candidates must submit a fully completed DT2 form, including final marks, totals, and authentication by both the candidate and teacher. Mark sheets should be annotated clearly to justify awarded marks, indicating both the strengths and limitations of the work—not simply restating the assessment criteria. Centres must also submit the sample print-out from IAMIS and a complete copy of the entry list. When these steps are followed accurately, moderation proceeds smoothly and fairly, ensuring a consistent experience for all candidates.

## Supporting you

### Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: **029 2240 4303**

Email: [designandtechnology@eduqas.co.uk](mailto:designandtechnology@eduqas.co.uk)

Qualification webpage: [AS and A level Design and Technology](#)

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | Eduqas](#)

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Please find details for all our courses here: <https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/>

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