

GCSE Examiners' Report

Design and Technology
GCSE
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.¹

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

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and component level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ 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.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
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Executive Summary

Component 1: The 2025 GCSE Design and Technology examination maintained a consistent standard with previous series and saw a high completion rate. The most popular material area was **Natural and Manufactured Timbers**, while **Electronic Systems** and **Papers and Boards** were the least selected and least successfully accessed. Candidates generally performed well on **qualitative and extended response questions**, demonstrating strong understanding of technical principles and command words, although **handwriting legibility** remains a concern.

Mathematical questions were approached confidently, with most candidates showing their workings. However, specific areas such as **percentage-to-fraction conversion** and **distance calculations** proved challenging. In contrast, topics like **area calculation**, **material costs**, **Market Pull**, **Smart Materials**, and **Environmental Considerations** were well understood.

Areas requiring improvement include:

- **Product Lifecycle** (often confused with Lifecycle Analysis)
- **Mechanical Systems** (e.g., motion, bell crank levers)
- **Microcontrollers**
- **Material Discriminators**
- **Exploded Diagrams**

Candidates effectively used visuals to support their answers, though **note and sketch questions** revealed a need for more practice. Some marks were lost due to misreading questions, though many responses showed excellent familiarity with exam structure and expectations.

Component 2: The NEA process is well-established across most centres, with increasing candidate numbers. However, **administrative inconsistencies**—particularly in new or transitioning centres—persist. All DT2 marksheets must be fully authenticated, and accurate mark entry is essential.

Moderation outcomes showed that while most centre marks were fair, **24% required downward adjustments** due to over-generous marking, often two bands above the appropriate level. This highlights the need for **greater adherence to banded assessment descriptors**.

There was clear evidence of **high-quality, innovative work** in many submissions, though **time management** and **portfolio organisation** were issues in others. The **iterative design process** remains underdeveloped in several centres, and **teacher-led approaches** continue to limit student creativity.

The increasing use of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** in NEA work necessitates strict adherence to JCQ guidelines. AI-generated content cannot be credited, and candidates must ensure their work reflects their personal design journey.

GCSE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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COMPONENT 1 – WRITTEN EXAM

Overview of the Component

The examination paper in GCSE Design and Technology was generally of a similar standard to previous examination series and had a very high paper completion rate. Natural and Manufactured Timbers was by far the most popular selected material in Q6. As in previous series, few candidates selected Thermoforming and Thermosetting Polymers, Ferrous and Non-Ferrous Metals or Electronic Systems. The Facility Factor (F.F.) was consistent across most material areas with Electronic Systems and Papers and Boards being the lowest selected and the least successfully accessed by candidates. Answers requiring qualitative responses were tackled well by a high number of candidates, though many wrote more than is required to attain full marks, but there is little evidence of candidates planning responses to these questions. Many candidates are now accessing the extended answer questions well throughout the paper and are able to demonstrate their broad knowledge and understanding of technical principles, in an articulate, justified way showing a very good understanding of command words. However, handwriting was noted as being an issue on several occasions.

Mathematics questions are being tackled well by candidates and workings are almost always included within the answers provided. Candidates did struggle with:

- converting a percentage into a fraction (Q1) (a)(ii)
- calculating distance travelled (Q3) (b)(ii).

Candidates demonstrated they are familiar with and can calculate:

- area of shapes (Q5) (c)
- material costs (Q6) (b)

The following topics were well understood and well-answered:

- Market Pull (Q1) (b)(ii)
- Technical/Smart materials (Q2) (a) and (b)
- Properties and characteristics of a range of materials (Q4) (b) & (c) and (Q6) (c) & (d)
- Anthropometric consideration and aesthetic improvements (Q5) (a)
- Environmental consequences and batch production (Q5) (d)

Knowledge of materials and their associated working properties continues to improve whereby candidates are able to justify and support how or why the properties chosen were appropriate to the product(s) being discussed.

Areas that need revisiting for improvement:

- Product Lifecycle. Candidates often referred to Lifecycle Analysis instead (Q1) (b)(iii)
- Motion (Q3) (a)(i)
- The function of a bell crank lever (Q3) (a)(ii)
- Microcontrollers (Q3) (c)
- Discriminators of wood (Q4) (d)(ii)
- Exploded Diagrams (Q5) (c)

Candidates continue to use the visuals in the paper to help devise appropriate responses to questions. Various and mixed responses to notes and sketches questions were seen and did highlight the need to practice these questions leading up to the exam, perhaps through practical experiments. Marks were lost by candidates not reading some questions carefully which resulted in incorrect responses. However, some responses were outstanding, demonstrating candidates are familiar with the structure of both the question paper and the expected depth of answers required.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1: Design and Technology and our world

Candidates are now very good at using the images provided to attempt every question even if the subject matter is unfamiliar to them.

- (a) Candidates were able to read the bar chart presented and calculate the total percentage of wood that was recycled. Most candidates could calculate the total percentage of material waste recycled but many found converting the total percentage as a fraction in its lowest form challenging.
- (b) Fad products were not clearly understood by candidates, but the product images did enable some to gain marks. Marks were lost by a large percentage of candidates who could not draw an accurate product lifecycle of a fad product, choosing to draw a traditional bell curve instead. A number of candidates got confused and chose to draw a Lifecycle Analysis cycle. Clarifying the difference between these two very different illustrations is recommended.

Question 2: Materials technology

Candidates showed a very good level of understanding of smart and technical materials providing some excellent, supported answers throughout this question.

- (a) Candidates used the images of a helmet and hockey stick successfully to describe a property of carbon fibre and were able to explain why this technical material might be avoided by designers. Some guesswork did take place but often effectively. Some candidates did struggle with the meaning of Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP), emphasizing the importance of teaching all materials listed in the specification.
- (b) Most candidates recognised the smart material used for the kettle body was thermochromic. Discussing why consumers would purchase a kettle that changes colour was approached very well, with clear justifications throughout responses provided. Many candidates wrote more than was required to access the three marks. Ensuring candidates are aware of how marks are allocated may give them more time to access more marks elsewhere in the paper.

Question 3: Electronic systems, programmable components and mechanical devices

Although the attempt rate was high, candidates did struggle with a number of the questions posed.

- (a) Candidates often drew the three motions listed, showing a clear understanding of each, but products provided were not facilitated by the motion and often were linked to the image of the bike. The question clearly asked for 'other products' to help candidates gain marks. Encouraging candidates to highlight key words within the question (which is not often seen) should help eliminate this error. Few candidates knew the function of a bell crank lever, suggesting that analysing the function of a range of mechanical products would be useful.
- (b) Most candidates could calculate the number of rotations the driven gear made but candidates did struggle with calculating the distance the electric bicycle travelled. They often chose, incorrectly, to simply multiply the diameter of the wheel by 10, not including the circumference measurement. There are few simple calculations involving mechanical systems and responses provided suggest further testing may be required in the classroom. Candidates used their own experiences and knowledge to answer very successfully the reasons why a cyclist would buy a non-electric bicycle instead of an electric one.
- (c) Most candidates could give a basic definition of a microcontroller, but a number were unable to relate this knowledge to their use in a bicycle. Candidates did gain marks, but few accessed all five marks. Teaching how programmable components function in a broad range of products makes understanding more 'real' and should help candidates answer questions within product contexts.

Question 4: Materials

Knowledge of materials and their associated working properties has notably improved over each series. The most successfully answered question in this 2025 paper was Question 4. Candidates were able to justify and support how or why the properties chosen were appropriate to the product(s) being discussed.

- (a) Almost all candidates understood paper is light-in-weight and therefore 35gsm was the most appropriate response. All candidates could suggest an improvement to the lampshade for a child's bedroom, most suggesting a change in colour. Some candidates failed to explain why colour would be a suitable improvement. The mark scheme highlights how the two marks could have been achieved with a simple explanation/justification.
- (b) Perhaps using the colour of the metal used in the storage box allowed candidates to identify copper as a primary metal. Not all candidates knew brass is made from copper and zinc. Ensuring candidates can give, and understand the heterogeneous mix of materials, using product examples, may help solidify their knowledge of alloy metals. Candidates, however, could understand and identify properties of each material (brass and PVC), particularly when considering the environment, the storage box was kept in.

- (c) Although most candidates could not identify the term microfibre (Tactel and Tencel are listed in the specification) they did know nylon is a synthetic material. Candidates could evaluate with very good clarity the properties of nylon and relate these properties to the puffer jacket. In past series candidates have struggled to answer questions about textile materials. This year answers provided were well structured and justified emphasising that classroom teaching has been honed to cover textile materials. Many candidates were awarded full marks.
- (d) In previous series candidates struggled to identify a stock form for any material. This year almost all candidates could identify correctly a stock form of wood. The most popular responses were sheet or plank. The term discriminator was not recognised by a number of candidates and although attempts were made, the clarity of answers provided showed a weakness in knowledge. It is worth highlighting that key terms listed in the specification will be tested, forming a glossary with candidates may be a useful starter exercise.

Question 5: Camping Products

- (a) A high proportion of candidates were able to identify an appropriate anthropometric consideration for their chosen product and could describe with clarity how the product could be made more attractive. Many candidates suggested improvements to the design (rather than aesthetics) which showed the creativity of these D&T candidates.
- (b) Understanding how products function and are used within contexts was shown successfully when describing why their chosen product was used for camping.
- (c) As with previous series, candidates are still struggling to transfer their knowledge from their NEA into an examination. Few candidates were able to explain reasons why exploded diagrams are included in final design drawings, often – incorrectly – suggesting a way to identify product improvement. It is useful to draw attention to 2.2 Designing and Making Principles of the specification and ensure this content is taught along with 2.1 Technical Principles.
- (d) Candidates are very familiar with environmental consequences of product manufacture and found question 5(d)(i) very accessible. Although there was evidence of batch production knowledge, candidates did struggle to analyse the benefits in relation to seasonal products. This highlights the importance of testing candidates' knowledge within contexts.
- (e) Q5(e) was a high tariff question and was accessed surprisingly well by a number of candidates. Most were able to calculate the area of a cylinder although a number did find calculating the area of a conical shape challenging. Surface area and volume are mathematical skills required to be tested and reference to page 50 of the specification is highlighted.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 6: Electronic systems, programmable components and mechanical devices

- (a) Most candidates were unable to identify the polarised capacitor and the through-hole soldering method correctly. Candidates typically performed well when describing the advantages of using a guillotine to cut circuit boards, often referencing the clean edge it provides. The extended response, which required words and sketches to explain how to produce a PCB in school, revealed significant variation in knowledge. While a few candidates demonstrated a secure understanding, accurately identifying multiple stages and supporting their answers with appropriate sketches; the majority were unfamiliar with the whole process. Candidates who performed best typically drew on practical experience from school-based projects. Centres are advised to ensure that students have hands-on experience and visual references of the PCB production process to support both written and sketch-based exam responses more effectively.
- (b) Most candidates correctly calculated the number of copper boards required for 750 circuit boards. The percentage-based selling price calculation (500% mark-up) proved more challenging. Many candidates confused this with a 50% increase or attempted to subtract instead of multiplying. Similarly, while the question on calculating the reduced board cost was better attempted, candidates provided the total cost as 2/5ths not 3/5ths. Reading the question carefully is highlighted here.
- (c) Candidate responses to the analysis question were variable. Most showed an understanding of the basic advantages of automation, commonly citing speed, efficiency, and reduced errors. However, only a minority progressed beyond general comments to offer detailed comparisons supported by relevant examples or technical vocabulary. Responses that achieved assessment criteria in Band 3 typically included a clear structure, referenced cost savings through reduced labour, and explored advantages such as miniaturisation, consistent quality, or scalability. Less successful answers often relied on vague or repetitive statements without deeper explanation. Centres should support students in developing extended analytical responses by modelling how to build logical chains of reasoning and incorporate subject-specific examples. Sharing mark schemes with candidates and encouraging planning prior to responding to questions may help.
- (d) While most candidates were able to list the benefits of CAD software, only a small proportion developed their ideas into full evaluative comparisons with physical modelling. Higher-level candidates offered a balanced response, acknowledging that while CAD offers simulation, time savings, and digital sharing, physical modelling provides valuable opportunities for testing and design refinement. Lower-level responses tended to be descriptive rather than evaluative, with limited reference to disadvantages. To support improvement, centres are encouraged to explore more frequent opportunities for students to reflect on design decision-making through both digital and hands-on methods and share mark schemes with candidates for them to see the broad responses that are accepted.

Question 6: Paper and Boards

There was an increase in candidate's selecting Paper and Boards as an optional material this series.

- (a) Most candidates were able to state the name of a suitable material for the pizza box but few could state the name of the middle layer of the corrugated cross-section. Candidates typically performed well when describing the advantage of using a die cutter to cut corrugated board, often referencing the clean/accurate edge it provides. The extended response, which required words and sketches to show how a development net can be marked out using hand tools, revealed significant variation in knowledge. While a few candidates demonstrated a secure understanding, accurately identifying multiple stages and supporting their answers with appropriate sketches, the majority were unfamiliar with the whole process. Most candidates could draw a net but were sparser on naming correct tools and processes. Centres are advised to ensure that students have hands-on experience and visual references of net development, marking and cutting out to support both written and sketch-based exam responses more effectively.
- (b) Most candidates correctly calculated the cost of materials required to manufacture 750 pizza boxes. The percentage-based selling price calculation (180% mark-up) proved equally as accessible. While the question on calculating the reduced pizza box cost was better attempted, candidates often provided the total cost as 1/3rd, not 2/3rds. Reading the question carefully is highlighted here.
- (c) Responses to analysis questions were variable. Most candidates could identify the most common properties and characteristics of paper pulp but not all could relate the selected properties and characteristics to the moulding of the egg box, limiting the analysis requirements of the question and reaching Band 3 assessment criteria. There is often little logical structure to the answers provided where planning prior to starting a response may help candidates achieve the higher Band. Practicing analytical style questions, using Banding criteria may help candidates fully understand the expectations of a five-mark response. It is clear candidates have the knowledge, but some find it hard to use the knowledge in an analytical way. The mark schemes are detailed so sharing with candidates should help them see the broad responses that are accepted.
- (d) Similarly to (c) responses, evaluative questions were variable. However, candidates did find it easier to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of foil-lined paper bags and duplex board for storing hot food and cake. Discussing advantages and disadvantages helps candidates structure their answer and provides an easier approach to justifying examples given. A number of candidates did achieve Band 3 criteria. Often candidates write too much. Planning responses prior to answering the question may help remove unnecessary answer content and free-up more time for paper checking and amending.

Question 6: Natural and manufactured timber

The most popular question 6 chosen as candidate's optional material.

- (a) Most candidates were able to state the name of a softwood though some did provide, incorrectly a hardwood. Most candidates could state the standard component shown was a dowel. Candidates typically performed well when describing the advantage of cutting wood with the grain, often referencing the clean finish it provides. The extended response, which required words and sketches to show how a cam lock knock-down fitting would be used in bookcase construction, revealed significant gaps in knowledge. Many candidates incorrectly described the dowel joint again rather than addressing the cam lock fitting as required. Some candidates produced outstanding sketches, but sadly of the wrong component. Centres are advised to ensure that students have hands-on experience and visual references of a range of joining methods to support both written and sketch-based exam responses more effectively.
- (b) Most candidates correctly calculated the cost of materials required to manufacture 750 bookcases. The percentage-based selling price calculation (360% mark-up) proved equally as accessible. While the question on calculating the reduced material cost was well attempted, candidates often provided the total cost as 1/3rd, not 2/3rds. Reading the question carefully is highlighted here.
- (c) Responses to analysis questions were sound. Most candidates could identify the most common properties and characteristics of plywood and MDF and some could relate the selected properties and characteristics to flat-pack furniture manufacture reaching Band 3 assessment criteria. There is often little logical structure to the answers provided where planning prior to starting a response may help candidates achieve full marks. Practicing analytical style questions, using Banding criteria may help candidates fully understand the expectations of a five-mark response. It is clear candidates have the knowledge, but some find it hard to use the knowledge in a fully analytical, logical way. The mark schemes are detailed so sharing with candidates should help them see the broad responses that are accepted.
- (d) Higher-performing candidates showed sound technical understanding to evaluate why a designer would select a softwood and manufactured board for the carcass and back of the bookcase. Most candidates were able to identify the benefits of both materials, with some also addressing the disadvantages. A number of candidates did achieve Band 3 criteria. Discussing advantages and disadvantages helps candidates structure their answer and provides an easier approach to justifying examples given. Often candidates do write too much. Planning responses prior to answering the question may help remove unnecessary answer content and free-up more time for paper checking and amending.

Question 6: Ferrous and Non-Ferrous Metals

Few candidates selected metals as their optional material.

- (a) Most candidates were able to state the name of a suitable metal for a bike's metal frame. Very few candidates could state the manufacturing process used to produce the crank arm. Candidates typically performed well when describing the advantage of a radius on the end of a section of the bicycle frame, often referencing the strength of the joint. The extended response, which required words and sketches to show how to weld a section of the bicycle frame, revealed significant gaps in knowledge. Few highlighted the importance of clamping parts together or using flux and melt welding rod. Health and safety considerations were rarely identified. Centres are advised to ensure that students have hands-on experience and visual references of practical processes to support both written and sketch-based exam responses more effectively.
- (b) Most candidates correctly calculated the cost of materials required to manufacture 750 bicycle frames. The percentage-based selling price calculation (360% mark-up) proved equally as accessible. While the question on calculating the reduced material cost was well attempted, candidates often provided the total cost as 1/3rd, not 2/3rds. Reading the question carefully is highlighted here.
- (c) Responses to analysis questions were variable. Most candidates could identify the most common properties and characteristics of metals, but not all could relate the selected properties and characteristics to the gravel bicycle frame, limiting the analysis requirements of the question and reaching Band 3 assessment criteria. Aluminium and steel were, appropriately, the most commonly identified metals. Lower-level responses discussed just one metal limiting marks that could be awarded. There is often little logical structure to the answers provided where planning prior to starting a response may help candidates achieve the higher Band. Practicing analytical style questions, using Banding criteria may help candidates fully understand the expectations of a five-mark response. It is clear candidates have the knowledge, but some find it hard to use the knowledge in an analytical way. The mark schemes are detailed so sharing with candidates should help them see the broad responses that are accepted.
- (d) Similarly to (c) responses, evaluative questions were variable. Candidates were more comfortable discussing the advantages of using CAD software to model bicycle frames rather than the advantages of physically making bicycle frames. A consequence was few candidates were able to meet Band 3 assessment criteria. Higher-level candidates showed a sound, logical structure to their responses aided by discussing the advantages and disadvantages of both modelling methods. Often candidates write too much, and not all is relevant to the question. Planning responses prior to answering the question may help remove unnecessary answer content and free-up more time for paper checking and amending.

Question 6: Thermosetting and thermoforming polymers

Very few candidates selected polymers as their optional material.

- (a) Some candidates were unable to identify correctly a thermosetting polymer, often providing a thermoforming polymer example. Very few candidates could identify the molecular structure shown was of a thermoforming polymer. Additionally, few candidates knew the function of a gerbil. The extended response, which required words and sketches to explain how to prototype bowl is vacuum formed, revealed significant variation in knowledge. While a few candidates demonstrated a secure understanding, accurately identifying a range of stages and supported their answers with appropriate sketches, many showed a poor knowledge of vacuum forming and steps shown were not articulated well. Candidates who performed best typically drew on practical experience from school-based projects. Centres are advised to ensure that students have hands-on experience and visual references of the such production process to support both written and sketch-based exam responses more effectively.
- (b) Most candidates correctly calculated the cost of materials required to manufacture 750 bowls. The percentage-based selling price calculation (420% mark-up) proved equally as accessible. While the question on calculating the reduced material cost was well attempted, candidates often provided the total cost as 1/3rd, not 2/3rds. Reading the question carefully is highlighted here.
- (c) Responses to analysis questions were variable. Most candidates struggled to identify the most common properties and characteristics of both thermosetting and thermoforming polymers suited for moulding the bowls, often confusing the properties of each and therefore limiting the analysis requirements of the question and reaching Band 3 assessment criteria. There is often little logical structure to the answers provided where planning prior to starting a response may help candidates achieve the higher Band. Practicing analytical style questions, using Banding criteria may help candidates fully understand the expectations of a five-mark response. It is clear candidates need to find more confidence identifying the various properties of plastics and relating them to a range of products in the classroom may help. The mark schemes are detailed so sharing with candidates should help them see the broad responses that are accepted.
- (d) Similarly to (c) responses, evaluative questions were variable, but candidates were more comfortable discussing the advantages and disadvantages of both types of polymers but found it difficult to relate to the design of a bowl. A consequence was few candidates were able to meet Band 3 assessment criteria. Planning responses prior to answering the question may help identify the content requirements giving candidates time to consider the question requirements. Practicing questions that compare both polymers would help with general revision and using mark schemes with candidates would help reiterate their properties.

Question 6: Fibres and Textiles

- (a) Only some candidates were able to identify correctly a pile fabric, usually velvet was cited. Very few candidates could identify the woven structure of a plain weave, citing a twill weave instead. However, most candidates were familiar with an advantage of cutting fabric on the bias. Few however, cited that stretch occurs when fabric is cut on the bias, choosing to state, correctly, the fabric is less likely to fray. The extended response, which required words and sketches to explain how to join together fabric with top-stitched plain seams was tackled well. Candidates who performed best typically drew on practical experience from school-based projects. Many candidates knew how to produce a plain seam and highlighted some quality control checks. Some did not know how to top-stitch. Centres are advised to ensure that students have hands-on experience and visual references of the such production process to support both written and sketch-based exam responses more effectively.
- (b) Most candidates correctly calculated the cost of materials required to manufacture 750 dresses. The percentage-based selling price calculation (360% mark-up) proved equally as accessible. While the question on calculating the reduced material cost was well attempted, candidates often provided the total cost as 1/3rd, not 2/3rds. Reading the question carefully is highlighted here.
- (c) Responses to analysis questions were variable but some candidates did manage to analyse the characteristics of both woven and knitted fabrics to meet Band 3 requirements. Most candidates could identify the most common characteristics of knitted and woven fabrics but couldn't always relate these characteristics to garment manufacture, showing an analytical response. There is often little logical structure to the answers provided where planning prior to starting a response may help candidates achieve full marks more frequently. Practicing analytical style questions, using Banding criteria may help candidates fully understand the expectations of a five-mark response. It is clear candidates have the knowledge, but some find it hard to use the knowledge in a fully analytical, logical way. The mark schemes are detailed so sharing with candidates should help them see the broad responses that are accepted.
- (d) Similarly to (c) responses, evaluative questions were variable, but candidates were more comfortable discussing the advantages and disadvantages of polyester pile fabric for a winter dress and linen fabric for a summer dress. A consequence was, responses were well structured, and answers related well to the seasons of winter and summer. Band 3 assessment criteria were met by some candidates. However, candidates sometimes write more than is required and thus the structure of the response become less logical and sequenced. Planning responses prior to answering the question may help identify the content requirements giving candidates time to consider the question requirements.

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COMPONENT 2 - NEA

Overview of the Component

The requirements of the non-examined assessment (NEA) are well established in most centres that examine through Eduqas. Numbers continue to rise year on year. Visiting moderation revealed some administrative issues in both new centres and others as they adjust to meet Eduqas requirements. Please be advised that all DT2 candidate marksheets must be fully authenticated for every entry, irrespective of their inclusion in the sample. It is the responsibility of the teaching staff to ensure that marks are accurately entered into the system and correspond with the candidate marks on the DT2 forms. During moderation week, team leaders and the Principal Moderator may also visit a centre. This is an internal quality assurance procedure and does not reflect on any individual centre. Many issues outlined in this report have been raised before. A significant concern is the inaccuracies in applying assessment criteria as it has a direct impact on candidate outcomes. This issue remains unaddressed in many centres.

Following external moderation, most centre marks were deemed accurate or fair. Some centres had their marks adjusted to align with the national standard, resulting in a reduction in marks. The banded assessment descriptors determine the correct band where the most appropriate mark should be awarded. Centres found to be generous across the sample and assessment strands, awarded marks from incorrect bands, sometimes two bands adrift of what the work deserved. Greater attention to descriptors is needed when assessing candidate work. In some centres where assessment was inaccurate or inconsistent the entire entry was moderated. This ensures that all candidates receive a fair and accurate assessment. Nearly 24% of centres had negative adjustments applied to their marks, with only one positive.

There was strong evidence of high-quality, innovative outcomes and well-organised portfolios in all specialisms. These candidates clearly took great pride in their NEA submissions. However, many other portfolios were disorganised or incomplete, indicating time management issues for several candidates.

NEA submissions are expected to illustrate an iterative process, emphasising a cyclic approach of 'think - test - evaluate - rethink'. This involves developing, modelling, testing, and refining potential design ideas against a clearly defined design specification. This is still under-developed in many centres.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly used by candidates, although there are clear guidelines regarding its proper use. While AI can help generate initial ideas or text, work that is created by AI cannot be credited as the candidate's own. JCQ has published guidance for centres: *AI Use in Assessments: Your role in protecting the integrity of qualifications*. Candidates should take responsibility for their work and ensure it reflects their individual design journey. This process begins with identifying a realistic design opportunity and culminates in a fully functioning prototype that meets the needs, wants, and values of the intended users. Some NEA submissions were influenced by teacher direction, while others did not adopt an iterative approach. Teacher led approaches often limit design creativity and undermine the objectives of the non-examined assessment.

Comments on individual questions/sections

(a) Identifying and investigating design possibilities – 10 marks

This area was generally assessed fairly across centres although the marks should reflect the relevance and quality of the work not its quantity. Centres should guide candidates to allocate time based on the marks available - 10 marks in this section equates to about 10% of their time. A lean and focused approach is recommended.

Identifying design opportunities is key to developing possible design briefs. Candidates should analyse as many contextual challenges as they choose, not predetermined by centres. Marks should reflect the variety of problems identified. Focusing on a single issue or having a preconceived idea warrants a lower mark. Innovative solutions arise from recognising genuine problems and this approach should be applied across all specialisms. Research and investigation should prioritise quality and relevance over quantity to support idea development and a meaningful specification. The work of professionals or companies should only be considered where it is appropriate, as stated in the assessment criteria. Candidates should avoid using their work just to fill space. Mood boards should have a clear purpose rather than a random collection of images.

User needs, wants and values should be considered throughout the iterative process and is referenced in all assessment strands. Using celebrities is unrealistic. Engaging with real users or stakeholders is a far more effective means of understanding a problem. On-going dialogue with genuine users is better than generic questionnaires. This needs further consideration in some centres.

(b) Developing a design brief and specification – 10 marks

To justify awarding marks in the top bands, candidates must consider a range of problems and outline a few design briefs before selecting one final brief. This decision should be made after thorough analysis of relevant and focused research. Whilst this approach was evident in some centres it was not universally observed. Some candidates had preconceived ideas regarding their projects and did not explore alternative options which limited their opportunities and potential marks. This requires further consideration in some centres. All criteria listed in the design specifications should be based on a thorough analysis of research, investigation and some early testing or modelling of ideas. Some candidates produce general lists of attributes with little or no reference to the research and investigation. In some specifications, dimensions and costs are listed without explaining how these numerical values were determined. A well-developed specification serves as an effective design tool that supports the evaluation of ideas as they develop. Few candidates use it in this way.

A robust specification should also indicate how the finished product will be tested, which is essential when evaluating the success of the outcome. Specifications require refinement and further development in many centres.

Most centres assessed this strand fairly, but some awarded high marks to superficial work that deserved lower scores. Centres should refer to exemplar projects on the secure website to better understand the assessment criteria.

(c) Generating and developing design ideas – 30 marks

Centres that fully understood the iterative process achieved better results. Candidates there thoroughly modelled, tested, and refined their ideas, and included practical testing with proposed materials. This hands-on approach showed clear development and justified high marks.

Conversely, some centres over-rewarded candidates for minimal evidence of development, such as a few sketches, a few CAD models with minimal testing. In textiles, producing a few seam constructions and /or decorative techniques done as class exercises is not considered iterative, reflecting marks in lower assessment bands.

In addition to developing ideas, it is important to consider technical details related to materials, dimensions, finishes, and production techniques. Further development is needed in many centres in all specialisms.

Every step of a candidate's design journey should be recorded. Design should be focused, relevant and well-documented with clear evidence of analysis and evaluation of ideas, test pieces and models as ideas progress towards a final solution. The path to the final prototype should be evident. In many NEA submissions this journey was unclear.

Application of the assessment criteria for this section varied from mostly fair to over inflated and generous. Centres are reminded to carefully consider the assessment descriptors when applying marks and to consult the exemplar NEAs for standardisation purposes when assessing work in future.

(d) Manufacturing a prototype – 30 marks

Assessment within this strand ranged from accurate and fair to overly inflated and generous. High marks were frequently awarded where the descriptors in the band below sometime two bands below would have been more appropriate. To justify awarding marks in band 3 and 4, there must be high levels of accuracy and precision in all aspects of construction, with careful attention to the quality of the finish. It is apparent that some centres do not fully understand the precise criteria required to award marks in the top bands.

Candidates must provide a detailed pre-emptive logical sequence for the manufacture of their prototype ensuring that it is clear enough for a third party to replicate. The sequence should also include a defined timeline as per the assessment criteria, health and safety considerations, constraints and reference to end testing. Please note a pictorial diary of manufacture is not required as it is not mentioned in the assessment criteria. Overall manufacturing sequences still need refining.

During moderation week many well-made, fully functioning prototypes were seen. These outcomes, which met objectives deserved marks in the top bands. Modern manufacturing techniques such as 3D printing are increasingly used alongside traditional methods, however, textiles candidates are yet to fully embrace this technology. The skills demonstrated and the quality and accuracy of outcomes showed significant variation. Several outcomes in all focus areas lacked finesse or were presented in a partial or incomplete state. There is a concern that non-specialist staff delivering this course can limit candidates' learning experiences.

(e) Analysing and evaluating design decisions and prototypes – 20 marks

Candidates do not need to repeat the analysis and evaluation of ideas and design decisions within their summative evaluation as it should occur naturally alongside the development of ideas. In some centres, this aspect was not addressed because the candidate did not submit a summative evaluation.

The quality of summative evaluations varied significantly. This section is worth 20% of the overall mark therefore a substantial body of work is needed to secure marks in the top band. Marks were often awarded generously in this assessment strand. Summative evaluations frequently consisted of a brief reflection of the specification criteria with superficial references to testing, modifications and/or improvements. This approach is indicative of descriptors in bands 1 or 2 but were often awarded marks in higher bands. To award top marks, summative evaluations should critically appraise the design brief and specification, include views of users, provide evidence of end testing and further modifications. More robust specification criteria would aid candidates especially with testing against measurable standards.

Most centres need to give more attention to this assessment strand as it often seemed rushed, incomplete, or missing. Allocate sufficient time here since up to 20 marks are available.

Internal marking of NEA submissions

Eduqas provides exemplar NEA projects on the secure website to help centres achieve accurate assessments. Centres are strongly advised to use this resource for standardisation to avoid mark adjustments. It is clear some centres are not utilising these exemplars. Centre reports give feedback on assessment accuracy following moderation. Internal standardisation between teachers and specialist areas is mandatory. However, some centres failed to implement this or did so ineffectively.

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@edugas.co.uk

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