PRINCIPAL MODERATOR'S REPORT

LEVEL 3 FOUNDATION DIPLOMA IN ART AND DESIGN

SUMMER 2023

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Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at: https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Unit	Page
General Comments	1
Scheme Development	2
Outcomes	2
Administration and Assessment	4
Standardisation	5
Moderation Conference	5
FAD Awards	5
Conclusion	5

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FOUNDATION DIPLOMA IN ART AND DESIGN

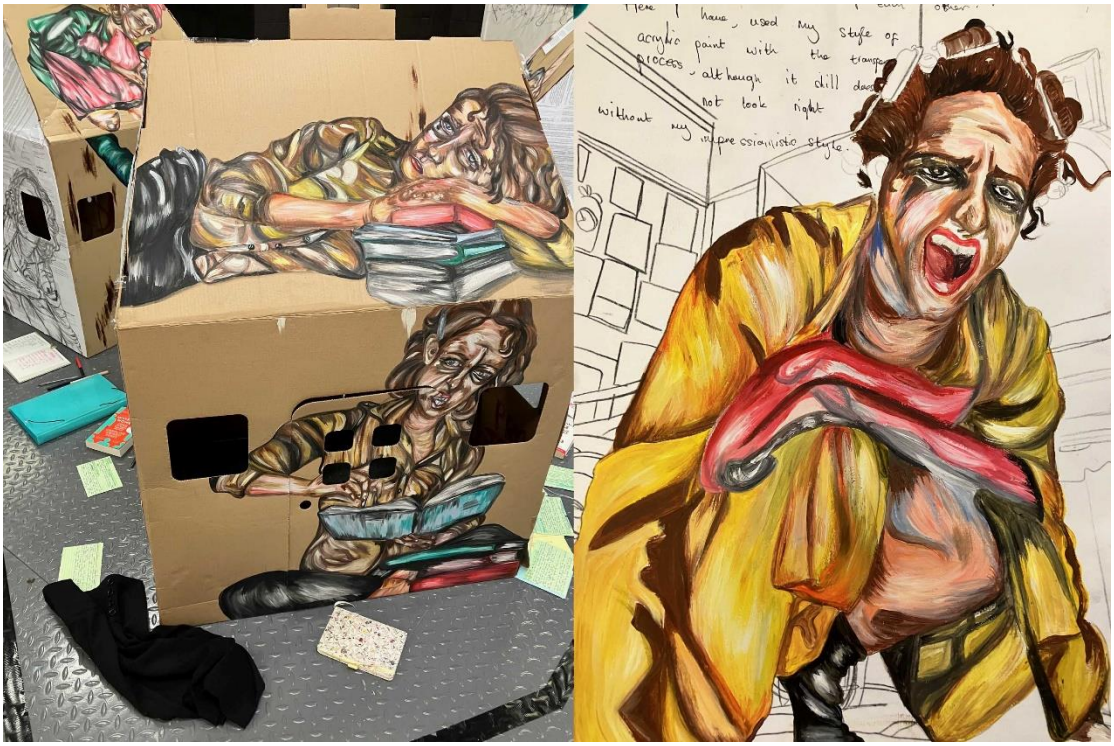
Level 3

Summer 2023

General Comments

With the end of the Covid 19 pandemic this year has seen a return to near normality for all courses within the WJEC FAD scheme. The ‘near normality’ references the fragility of some candidates with regard to their confidence. This has not been evident in all centres. Where it has been identified the course leaders and their staff, together with college wide pastoral teams, have successfully negotiated positive outcomes ensuring all candidates were given the best learning environment to achieve their creative potential.

After the restrictions of lockdowns and online moderation, the continuance of physical moderation visits is greatly appreciated by course leaders and their teams. The in-person exchange of knowledge, experiences and opinions helps generate an atmosphere of informative, professional yet exciting Moderation days. This is another unique aspect of the WJEC provision. The Moderation visit is not inspectorial in its approach and is welcomed by centre staff as a collaborative exercise. It is rigorous, in its examination and analysis of assessment and adherence to the WJEC specification, but it is also advisory and validating in its confirmation of national standards of assessment and achievement.



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Scheme Development

Enrolments have increased slightly this year despite the uncertainty caused by the pandemic to many potential candidates. Several courses have reported an increase in applications for the next academic year and, with new centres already swelling enrolments, the future is looking positive. There is no doubt that the annual Board of Studies (BOS) meeting helps in the development and marketing of FAD. Contacts made through the BOS have resulted in the running of WJEC FAD schemes in an increasing number of centres in England.



Outcomes

A key feature of this year's outcomes was the proportion of very high Distinction grades. This, of course, does not show up on the statistical analysis but it is worth noting that the awarding of the WJEC 'Student of the Year' at each centre has proved a challenging, but very pleasurable, task for moderators.

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Throughout the scheme there was good progression to a wide variety of HE institutions but also a slightly increased tendency, this year, for candidates to seek further study, or employment, closer to their home base.

FAD students took part in several extra-curricular activities with local projects related to art and design. Course teams facilitated involvement of their FAD students in a wide variety of experiences that will benefit them in future. Apart from creative art and design inputs, projects involved organisation, verbal and written communication, teamwork, financial awareness and production.

Digital 'sketchbooks' were much in evidence. This is a spin off from the requirement of HE receiving centres for applicants to submit a digital portfolio prior to being invited for interview. Whereas this is probably a time saving exercise for those degree courses, it does not give a clear picture of a candidate's work ethic let alone an accurate snapshot of their capabilities and potential. Hence the vast majority of centres require a physical portfolio and a face-to-face meeting with a potential candidate after the digital portfolio.

This is the problem with the digital sketchbook or workbook when presented to moderators. Because of its original purpose the digital sketchbook only contains selected pages and often these are cropped, enhanced and presented, quite naturally, to give a 'best impression'. Moderators need to see actual sketch/workbooks to determine the thought process, development and progression of a candidate. Digital books will only be accepted if they are actually produced digitally. In other words, a candidate has, via computer and other digitising means, produced imagery, analysis and development that is entirely computer based. Except in some very rare cases this is not possible on the FAD course.

Here we must pause and be reminded that FAD is underpinned by five key principles: research, analysis, experiment, development and production. These five broad reaching words can be applied to all stages of the FAD course but become particularly relevant for the Unit 6 – the Final Major Project (FMP). The sketch/workbooks are an integral part of the project. Without them it is difficult to determine thought processes, idea realisation and development. Although the final outcome - the production and exhibition of the project - is vital, understanding how a candidate gets there, what the source material is; how they pursue alternative ideas and strategies; how they make decisions whilst rejecting other avenues of progress, is also essential.

It is requested that all centres ensure that candidates have physical books or work sheets that illustrate the five key principles listed above. FAD is not about producing facsimiles of existing visual solutions. The purpose of FAD is to encourage the candidate to produce original and creative outcomes based on ideas generated by research. The preparatory work is crucial.

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Administration and Assessment

The confidence of centres in producing and recording the administrative details necessary for our FAD provision is reflected in the moderators' positive reports on administration and assessment. A hardware glitch had prevented one centre producing the print-out of the proposed assessment results before the moderator arrived. It was, however, available before the start of moderation. Records of assessment processes and the results of assessment throughout the year are well kept by everyone in the scheme. It is worth noting that in all centres where the moderator was able to meet candidates, there was verbal feedback of an awareness and understanding of assessment criteria. This included the reasons for assessment and the times and records of such. A physical record of the candidate knowledge of assessment criteria is an important aspect of the process and centres show an appreciation of this.

All course teams made careful reference to the criteria sheets for Unit 6. This unit, the Foundation year Final Major Project (FMP), has the assessment that produces the final award of the grade. It is important, therefore, that course teams keep notes* on their satisfaction that each criterion for a particular grade is accomplished. As all criteria for the award of a particular grade must be met, many centres have begun by considering the D criteria first. Should any of the criteria not be met then the assessment continues with the M band. And so on down to referral (indicated at this stage by Fail on the proposed grade sheet).

**The notes are not needed as a formal submission but should be kept by assessors for possible discussion with the moderator on grading decisions.*

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Standardisation

The Principal Moderator and the Chair of Moderators conducted the standardisation of grading decisions at the Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC). Benchmarks for all grades were agreed and formed the basis for the following day's moderator training.

Moderation Conference and Training Day

We are indebted to Lou Thornton, course leader at CAVC, for facilitating the Conference and Training Day once again. With the uncertainty caused by the pandemic WJEC were extremely fortunate to be able to call upon CAVC for the last three conferences. Whilst being convenient, for quality assurance and impartiality reasons it would be unwise to continue with the same centre next year. In the past the conference has been held at Priestley College Warrington, Swansea Met University, Coleg Gower Swansea, University of Wales Newport, Coleg Menai Bangor and UWIC in Cardiff. It is obviously important that the conference is held at the beginning of the moderation routes in any particular year. Three of these centres have been amalgamated and no longer offer the FAD course. There is also the requirement that a course has a cohort of 20 plus in order to offer the range necessary for accurate benchmarking. We are lucky to have an offer from Coleg Menai to host the conference at their facility in 2024. Confirmation of this should be made at the start of the next academic year.

Foundation Awards

As previously mentioned, there were some outstanding Distinction candidates in many centres. There were situations where the Student of the Year could have been awarded to any one of three or four students. It is to be hoped that sponsorship can be obtained, again, so that in addition to the certificate a prize may also be given for student excellence.

Conclusion

The course teams continue to contribute excellent teaching and administration often with pressure to reduce teaching hours. Everyone involved with the delivery of the Foundation experience is to be congratulated on their outstanding efforts that are fully appreciated by everyone involved with FAD.

Many course leaders were able to invite visiting artists/designers to contribute to their course and enrich the candidate learning experience This is an excellent initiative and allows candidates to appreciate the opportunities for progression in many aspects of the art and design world.

Small cohort courses continued to produce distinctions to match the best of the large intake centres. The early standardisation and training enables moderators to confirm national standards and it is fitting that were WJEC to re-introduce the FAD Excellence show then our courses throughout the scheme would all be able to confidently contribute to such an exhibition.

Candidates illustrated the ability, encouraged and developed by FAD, to think creatively and to process thoughts and ideas in an original way. This goes back to the earlier mentioned process of research, analysis, experiment, development and production. This separates them from the 'rote learning' cohorts and provides the country with a unique resource of creative problem solvers.

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