PRINCIPAL MODERATOR'S REPORT

LEVEL 3 FOUNDATION DIPLOMA IN ART AND DESIGN

SUMMER 2022

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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.

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General Comments

This has been an unprecedented year with it being the first live external moderation for two years. There was widespread relief, from course leaders, moderators, and all concerned that visits were, once again, being made. In the world of art and design education, and all that encompasses, it is essential to see work at first hand. Three-dimensional look arounds together with an appreciation of texture, mark making and media is essential. Photographs and videos do not replicate the true quality of final shows. Just as important is the research, analysis, experimentation, and development work that is the preparation for the students FAD exhibition.

Another vital aspect of a WJEC moderation visit is the interaction between the course leader, and team, and the moderator on the day. Discussion and advice are seen as essential tools in confirming, or adjusting, predicted grades. The moderator brings a WJEC scheme-wide perspective to the grading system. Feedback from the course teams show appreciation of knowing that the final grades reflect, and have national, equivalence. Speaking with students is also informative in both directions and not only gives students a feeling of the value of completing the FAD course but provides further insight to the course structure, facilities, teaching, and assessment.

There were five centres benefitting from their first live moderation. The moderation confirmed that there was a great understanding of the specification criteria for assessment. Accurate application of the criteria during assessment was evident throughout the new centres and, as expected, those more established with WJEC.

The work produced by students on the WJEC FAD course continues to be of an exceptionally high standard. This is due to the students' hard work, the application of care, and excellent teaching, by staff, and the adherence to a scheme that encourages creativity and flexibility.

Inevitably Covid restrictions did affect some students more than others with an increase in Special Considerations. There was also a slight increase in referrals with allocation and application of time being a cited residual effect of long lockdown hours.

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Scheme Development

The addition of three new centres this year has been a welcome boost to the WJEC FAD portfolio. Colleges at Bexhill, Leicester (Gateway) and Pontefract (New College) joined the scheme. Together with the joining last year of Newtown College and Afan College (under the management of Neath Port Talbot College) these five centres extended the geographical spread and significantly contributed to the eclectic nature of the FAD provision.

The Covid restrictions, and the knock-on effect, undoubtedly helped cause a reduction in the total enrolments in many of the WJEC established centres. Two centres increased their numbers but most either maintained or reduced their cohorts this year. On a more positive note, all centres reported an increase in applications for the academic year beginning September 2022.

Student Progression

An indicator of the success of the WJEC FAD course is found in the list of destinations that the students' progress to. They are continuing studies in many of the high-profile art and design HE centres that are the norm for ambitious students. However, apprenticeships in Graphic Design, Jewellery, Ceramics, and other art and design specialisms have also been taken up. In addition, and as a direct result of the open and enthusiastic teaching and support on FAD, students are progressing to higher education in Economics, Music, Librarianship, Finance, the NHS, Architecture at Cambridge University and entry to the new Jimmy Choo Academy in London. The trend for some students to go directly into the world of work continues, with employment and self-employment increasing in number. This emphasises the value of FAD, not only as an outstanding grounding for art and design but also as a valuable learning and development course for so many post A level students.

Assessment

Assessment at all centres was of a very high standard with the inevitable borderline decisions being the only moderated resolutions needed.

There was concern regarding the input of grades with regard to the timing. The specification states that the grades must be submitted in advance of, and a printout made before, the moderators arrival.

All centres used the Grade descriptor sheets for Unit 6 the final major project. There was varying use of the comments space on the sheet. It is not necessary to make a comment on every criterion on the grade descriptor sheet. However, assessors usually make notes when assessing and distil a comment from these notes to put on the grade descriptor sheets. It follows that such notes would be invaluable as an aide memoir for staff when discussing the decisions. This issue has previously been discussed and will again be debated at the next Board of Studies in the hope that agreed guidance can be published.

There are examples at the moment where Internal Verification (IV) of Unit 6 tends to indicate the assessment decision is correct based on observation of the students' preparation and final outcome work. This is a visual analysis giving an often experienced but 'gut-feeling' verification. This is fine but it also needs to be an in-depth look at the actual process, including recording, of assessment. In other words the IV is not just about confirming assessment by agreeing with decisions made. It is also about verifying that the correct process of assessment has been used, (individual assessment, cross marking, group discussion etc) and the way this is recorded.

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Without exception the administration of the delivery, assessment, achievement and record keeping in centres is excellent. There have been one or two minor issues that have been discussed on moderation days but there is an increased confidence among FAD staff that their 'paperwork' is in order. This is supported by moderator's comments.

Pastoral care continues to be a responsibility for course leaders and teams and this aspect is often overlooked in the cold statistics of recruitment, retention and achievement. Most centres now have specialist staff to aid with this work but the front-line staff under the direction of course leaders do an important job in identifying issues and providing early support. All are to be congratulated on performing a hidden but essential task so well.

Foundation Awards

Unfortunately, this year the annual 'WJEC Student of the Year' that is presented to an outstanding student at each centre, and sponsored by Seawhite, was unable to take place. It was decided with the sponsors, in February, that the uncertainty Covid caused in planning the prizes and certification in June made the presentation at all centres unpredictable. Work from Distinctive students' final project work will be shown on the WJEC Lightbox web resource and Facebook page. The re-introduction of the awards will be made next year and further details will be announced at the BOS in the autumn.

Conclusion

Staff and students at all centres are to be congratulated on a very successful FAD year with many Covid induced fears unrealised. There was an enthusiasm and optimism indicated throughout many of the courses despite the traumas of the past two years. A pleasing features this year was the large number of centres inviting visiting artists/designers to contribute to their course and enrich the student learning experience. Local, national, and international artists, designers and makers were generous with their time and efforts. Notable among these was the on-line session with photographer Rankin and the visit to, and work with, the 2021 Turner prize winners the Array Collective. Visits to galleries and museums were curtailed but, again, there was optimism with some centres managing long journeys to London. One centre had the innovative idea of a virtual trip and this proved most valuable and entertaining. With applications increasing and the enthusiasm of staff for next year we can look forward to another very successful academic year in 2020-2023. The BOS meeting in the autumn will provide an opportunity for staff to once again exchange ideas and contribute to a very promising FAD year. Hopefully our five new centres, together with two new course leaders, will be able to attend this CPD opportunity and enjoy and contribute to the exciting WJEC FAD community.

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