

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

BGCSE FASHION & FABRICS 2024

PAPER 1: WRITTEN PAPER

General Comments

Centres facilitators are encouraged to ensure complete syllabus coverage so as not to disadvantage candidates on knowledge and skills they could otherwise have obtained. It was evident in candidates' responses that they were unfamiliar with the concepts assessed e.g. production flow chart and decision making to attain quality production.

Centre facilitators are advised to assist learners in the art of reading and answering questions, candidates were challenged by items that required them to describe or discuss. They tend to give bullet points instead of continuous writing.

Comments on Individual Items

- 1 (a) Almost all the candidates were able to relevantly identify the sources of fibres; common correct answers were natural and manmade fibres.
- (b) Majority of the candidates were able to identify parts of a woven fabric; common correct answers were weft and warp threads. However a few candidates erroneously stated a true bias as an answer, the bias is not a part of a fabric but how the fabric could be laid out/held.
- (c) Most candidates were able to list three uses of a seam ripper. Few candidates however repeated the same point by rephrasing using acronyms for "unpick": undo, remove, unstitch and rip off, which in essence is one point and was credited as such.
- (d) Most candidates relevantly listed fabric finishes applied on cotton fabrics however some candidates listed some fabric edge finishes e.g. binding, others listed fabric construction techniques. Candidates should be advised to read the questions carefully to minimise chances of making assumptions/ predicting how the questions would end.
- (e) Majority of the candidates relevantly interpreted the care symbols given in parts ((i) and (ii)) of this question.
- (i) The candidates were given a symbol for Drip dry to interpret and they performed well in that.
- (ii) The candidates were given a symbol for Hand wash and they performed well.
- (iii) Most candidates were not able to interpret the care symbol as "dry clean with all solvents", lack of qualifying or interpreting the letter "A" in the symbol constituted an incorrect/part answer.
- (iv) Most candidates could not interpret the care symbol for "use chlorine bleach", some incorrect answers were general e.g. bleaching.
- (f) Majority of the candidates gave generalised advantages of an industrial machine over a domestic overlocker and not addressing performance, such answers included big and has a variety of stitches. Correct answers included it can easily cope with thick fabrics, has high efficiency etc.

- (g) Majority of the candidates provided general answers and not hazards as required by the question of hazards such as accidents, safety rules, protective clothes.
- (h) Most candidates relevantly answered the question stated answers included: colour of the room, theme, gender, room size, space etc.
- (i) (i) Majority of the candidates managed to get at least one point on the use of permanent stitches commonly stated answer: hold/join pieces of a fabric permanently.
(ii) Majority managed to relevantly provide the required two answers on functions of decorative stitches, common answers were to decorate and to add colour to a fabric.
- (j) Majority of relevant uses of fasteners stated by most candidates were: used of decoration and for closure of openings.
- (k) Majority of the candidates stated correct factors to consider when planning a family budget as: family size, income, and health condition.
- (l) Majority of the candidates got challenged by the question (examples of expenditure that would appear on a business budget) they provided incorrect answers e.g. expenditure and budget. A few candidates however were able to answer relevantly.
- (m) Most of the candidates were not able to relevantly describe selling concepts:
 - (i) Cash sales: candidates were not able to give a full description.
 - (ii) Majority of candidates in an effort to describe referred to forms of procuring standing order, and credit account.

Section B

- 2 (a) (i) Majority of the candidates were not able to define the term notions instead they either stated functions/uses or examples of notions e.g. to decorate, hook and eye, press studs, fasteners, and threads.
- (ii) Most candidates relevantly suggested an alternate fastener for the back neckline of the garment, common answer was button and loop.
- (b) (i) Most candidates were not able to state the meaning of ** given on a pattern envelope.
- (ii) A few candidates attempted the question, they however gave an incorrect answer e.g. "length" of fabric instead of the correct "width" while majority left a blank space.
- (c) Majority of candidates were not able evaluate to give relevant properties of fabrics that make them suit the style of garment given.

- 3 (a) Majority of the candidates managed to state the textures (commonly stated were rough and smooth textures) but were not able to explain the resultant effect on the colour of fabrics. Their focus was on the effect of texture on a body figure/silhouette. Incorrect answers included explanation of colour application techniques, general effect of texture without mentioning the type of texture incorrect identification of textures as dull, medium and heavy.
- (b) (i) Few candidates stated the correct answers for the question. The relevant answers stated were French seam, double machine stitched, and machine fell, incorrect answers included overlaid and slot seam.
- 4 (a) Majority of candidates managed to state at least two openings but were not able to describe them. Common openings stated were bound opening and faced openings. Some candidates incorrectly described types of closures/fasteners e.g. zipper, button and buttonhole.
- (b) Most candidates were able to state the reason why consumer education is important but could not expand their answers.
- 5 (a) (i) Almost all the candidates failed to complete the flow chart, most illogically sequenced the steps. From the responses it was evident that most candidates were not familiar with the flow chart. Centre facilitators are encouraged to ensure complete coverage of the syllabus.
- (ii) Almost all candidates could not interpret the diamond shaped boxes in the flow chart.
- (b) Almost all candidates could not identify relevant decisions about quality that may be taken during production.

Section C

- 6 Majority of candidates were not able to discuss the differences, instead most stated similarities between natural and synthetic dyes. Some candidates had misconception/confusion as they discussed differences between natural and synthetic fibres instead of dyes.
- 7 Most candidates' responses were focused on discussing what a franchisee and/or franchisor is as opposed to advantages and disadvantages of a franchise as a type of business. A few candidates' discussions were on sole proprietorship and partnership.

PAPER 2: COURSEWORK

Administration Of the Submission

Centres are appreciated and commended for making relevant submissions to facilitate moderation processes. Compared with the previous cohort (2023) there has been a significant change in the number of incomplete projects from one (in 2023) to eight (in 2024) - the candidates submitted item/garment without folders. Centres are advised to encourage candidates to submit complete projects and strengthen coursework monitoring tools with the aim to have a 'zero' incomplete project submission. There has been a commendable significant decline in the number of absent candidates.

The projects were generally well packaged and labelled in Botswana Examinations Council (BEC) branded boxes, this was also an area of improvement compared to previous examination cycles. There were however a few Centres whose method of packaging was unstable thus increasing chances of wrinkle and crease formation on the projects, this may have affected the general appearance of projects. Centres are applauded for packaging projects sequentially and encouraged to keep up the act. There was however a concern that some Centres make late submission of Centre projects which delayed moderation processes such as sampling and standardisation. Centres are reminded that coursework is an examination and are advised to treat it as such; they are encouraged to meet BEC set timelines.

There was a notable improvement in errors made by Centres in filling out data and information in documents submitted especially unaccounted for cancellations, this improvement is highly appreciated, submissions were neatly filled in. BEC recommended abbreviations were well used in filling out the attendance register(s) for absentees, withdrawn candidates etc.; however, there was a candidate who had no candidate number. Centres are encouraged to timely follow up (with BEC) on issues of late registrations and or candidates with no candidate numbers who sat for examinations to curb challenges with data capture and result release of affected candidates. There were fewer Centres which made their own Centre order of merit forms; such Centres are encouraged to print out the system provided Centre order of merit and summary marksheets after inputting the data into MALEPA. Although, most Centres generally had fewer errors as compared to 2023 cohort, the following errors were still evident:

- Errors in calculations i.e. totals in individual mark sheets incorrectly calculated, Centres are advised to be vigilant in calculating candidates' individual and total marks as these not only affect the candidate but render the submitted documents invalid.
- There was a mismatch of marks against comments and quality of work assessed: the Centre examiners are advised to give honest and adequate annotations on quality of the work assessed to support the mark(s) allocated. This mismatch tended to lean towards over leniency in scores/marks awarded.
- There were a few Centres that had overwriting especially in individual marksheets, Centres are advised to neatly cancel any change to the marks and or comments then append a signature next to the cancellation as opposed to overwriting.
- Some Centres' chief invigilators did not append their signatures in the summary marksheets as required to validate the submission as a true record of the Centre's marks/scores.

Centre examiners are still implored to exercise vigilance when assessing, calculating; transcribing marks and verify that entries are accurately captured. Chief invigilators are advised to ascertain that these entries submitted to BEC are a true, fair and an honest reflection of the quality of candidates' projects.

Interpretation Of the Marking Criteria

Centres are applauded for having had internal standardisation prior to assessing candidates' work, there was an increase in the number of Centres that standardised. The quality of candidate(s)' project(s) used for standardisation was in most cases fairly assessed in line with Centre standards, however, in assessing the remaining candidature, the examiners tended to be lenient than maintain the standard that they reached in standardisation. Some Centres used one project for standardisation, this is insufficient to reach a common understanding and standard since projects are varied in quality and complexity, it is advisable to standardise with a sample that would represent all the candidature ability levels and diversity of skills in the Centre. The Centres are advised to keep to the nationally agreed standards and to ascertain after assessing that the Centre order of merit is a true reflection of the worth of candidates' work in their Centres.

It is a concern that some Centre examiners' annotations were not in line with the quality of work assessed e.g. comments would indicate that an aspect was correctly done whereas the aspect was not relevantly done especially under planning, costing and or processes. Examiners are advised to write fair and honest comments that are in line with the work assessed and allocate marks accordingly.

Feedback On the Moderated Sample

Most Centres deviated from the national standards with a tendency to be too lenient in certain aspects of the project. The few Centre that adhered to their Centre standard are applauded for the effort they made however they are encouraged to adhere to nationally set standards. There are some Centres, which could be said, make a habitual 'hiking' of marks without due reason, this does not put the Centre nor its examiners in a good reputable professional light. Centre examiners are advised to be consistent, fair and honest when assessing candidates' projects in their Centres.

It is worth noting that for 2024 most candidates' projects had processes that did not share nor covered stitchery of other processes, this is an improvement compared to previous cohorts. Compared to 2023, there was a slight improvement in the variety of items selected by candidates for the projects however similar skills/processes were selected for assessment.

Portfolio

Problem/situation

This aspect was well attempted by most candidates: candidates' problem/situation statements were complete and clearly set. The names of items related well to the stated problems/situations. The candidates were able to state relevant sizes that addressed their project need. Most candidates were able to fully justify the choice of the items in relation to the problem/situation.

Planning

Most candidates were able to submit sketches: most of the sketches lacked some item features especially top stitching and centre-back seams, the button and buttonholes were in most cases not well depicted either incorrect positioning or lack of buttonhole. Most candidates relevantly listed pattern pieces required for their items, a few candidates gave a general name such as facings instead of dress front facing etc.

Most candidates were able to relevantly name fabrics required however, for notions candidates gave general names e.g. thread, zipper, and interfacing without specifying the notion well. Centres are advised to encourage candidates to give specific names for notions e.g. invisible zipper, iron-on interfacing. Most candidates either over or under quantified notions e.g. sewing thread.

Plan of action

Most candidates' plans showed realistic time frame, time however was not well distributed amongst the activities e.g. simple activities were given more time as compared to complex processes (a closed seam vs. waistband). Most candidates' methods of construction were not adequately summarised (there was too much detail or had additional information that is not part of garment construction). Some candidates in an effort to summarise, left out some activities or erroneously repeated the activity which affected clarity and sequencing of methods. Some of the moderated candidates' methods though well sequenced were not relatively easy to follow due to missing work/method detail.

Costing

Generally, most moderated candidates relevantly identified resources and method for calculation was generally correct however incorrect quantities of time (from incorrect additions) and or notions used affected the costing of direct and indirect costs, total cost, profit and price of the item. The candidates used the hourly rate and price mark-up percentage that were relevant i.e. within the ranges given in the assessment syllabus. Future candidates should be cautioned on the effect an incorrect quantity has on cost calculations. There were a few candidates as compared to 2023 who had conversion errors, this is a notable improvement.

Presentation of the folder:

Generally, all candidates submitted folders that were fully labelled, securely bound, clean and correctly arranged. Candidates are encouraged to keep up the good practise.

Product/item

General Appearance

The candidates' items in most cases were partly functional for intended purpose, in some cases the item size differed with the one stated in the folder. There was a notable improvement in cleanliness in projects especially on areas which are generally over handled e.g. zipper, waistband etc. Although most candidates did not have cuts, there were notable iron marks on candidates' work particularly at the zipper area, waistline and darts. Future candidates are advised to make use of pressing cloths where possible to avoid iron prints and shine on the items. Most items were mainly inadequately pressed.

Choice of fabrics and notions

Most candidates made relevant choice of fabrics and notions for their items i.e. compatible in terms of colour, weight, design, however there some cases where the fabrics and notions were not compatible in care.

Correct grain

Generally, most candidates' items were cut on the relevant grain however they generally did not drape well. Candidates should be advised to be cautious when stitching to avoid negatively affecting the drape of their items.

Alignment of joints

Majority of candidates were able to align joints well within 3-5 mm range however most hemlines and waistlines were off alignment by as much as 20 mm. Future candidates should be advised to take note of and match balance marks, fold and stitching lines well before they do permanent stitching.

Processes

This cohort did not make a wide range of garments as compared to the 2023 cohort, the common items were: culotte pants, two-piece sets of skirt/pants and shirt, shirts, A-line and fitted skirts. The candidates' submissions were a selection of functional processes in line with the requirements of the component however there were candidates from some Centres whose selection of processes for assessment included part of the decoration bound hem, pin or wide/spaced tucks. That is, they indicated the decoration as a process. Most of the tucks made were not functional (i.e. not disposing fullness) but were more decorative (e.g. horizontal across the item) hence a few of the candidates fell short by a process to make the required five. Although candidates had a wide selection of items; their selection of processes to assess was no different from the previous years' i.e. they did not select from the new processes featured. It is worth noting that most Centres did not explore the creativity of candidates as Centre candidature presented similar items, this in most cases disadvantaged candidates by the complexity of the items' pattern/design/style.

Labelling

Most candidates labelled their items well. However, there were a few candidates who either did not indicate processes to be assessed or indicated more than the required five, this brought about a wide difference in Centre marks and moderation. Centres are encouraged to guide candidates to label items in line with the assessment requirements and examiners to mark only those processes indicated on the label.

Common processes for most candidates were open, closed or French seams, hem, darts, zipper, facing, inverted pleats, waistband. There were very few candidates who selected set in sleeves, pin tucks, casing, binding, button and buttonhole, hooks and eyes and press studs for assessment.

Stitchery

This is an aspect common to all processes. The stitchery was generally not straight, uneven and inconsistent/unbalanced tension in most processes, it was similar quality to the previous cohort. There were instances where it was evident that the stitching quality was due to machine fault e.g. evidenced by similar skipping of stitches within centre candidature. Centres are advised to not only encourage candidates to make relevant adjustments to stitchery where required, but to also service the machinery and or procure new machines to allow candidates to showcase their sewing decision making skills.

Pressing

This aspect, like stitchery, is common to all processes. Majority of candidates' processes were inadequately pressed during construction especially seams, facings, hem and waistband; Centres are advised to encourage future candidates to press each process during construction.

Seams

Most candidates made at least two different seams in one item i.e. a garment having open/plain seam on centre back and French or closed seam on sides. In most cases candidates were challenged in making

the seam allowance straight and of even width. The seam allowances were generally within the recommended seam allowance width and correctly directed.

Darts

Most candidates' darts were not even in width and length, did not taper to a point, and not correctly finished. The common finishing in this year's items was stitching back/retreated stitchery this method proved to be challenging to most candidates, in stitching back it tempered with the darts point rendering them not to taper to points. Almost all items' darts were correctly directed.

Inverted/knife pleats

Most pleats had uneven depth but were well spaced. Most were pressed flat and in correct direction.

Zipper

Most candidates used centred or lapped zipper method however they were not well enclosed according to the method selected. Most zippers were well neatened and relevantly secured to the seam. Majority of zippers were not aligned at the top. Future candidates should be advised to use a zipper foot when working on the zipper for better stitching.

Hook and eye, press studs

Most candidates were able to position the fasteners well (spacing) however most candidates did not attach them using relevant stitchery; they mainly used over sewing. The fasteners were generally not well aligned especially where two or more press studs/hook and eye were used. They were relevantly sewn on double fabric.

Facing

This process was not carried out well by most candidates. Most facings were not under or top stitched, those with under/top stitching the stitchery was too far (5 mm or more) from the joint to serve the purpose intended. Majority of the facings were not sufficiently trimmed. Candidates should be encouraged to trim/layer seam allowance to the relevant width. Most facings were adequately neatened.

Waistband

Most waistbands were not flat. The waistbands were generally of the correct width which in most cases was not uniform. The waistbands were adequately trimmed.

Hem

Most hems were not flat especially at seam joints, were incorrectly worked (circular hems their fullness was not eased in this led to puckering and unevenness in hem width), were well secured and of correct size. The hems were generally well neatened.

Set in sleeves

There were very few candidates who selected this process for assessment. The sleeves were generally not well positioned either; an incorrect height of sleeve cap, incorrectly drafted armhole curve(s) or possible reverse attachment i.e. a right-hand sleeve being attached to the left armhole. This process was of the same quality as the previous cohort. Some candidates' sleeves were not eased in well leading to puckering/undistributed fullness not consistent with sleeve/item style. Centres are advised to encourage candidates to take extra precaution when cutting out, transferring pattern markings and attaching sleeves to follow processes well.

Creative and decorative work

There was a variety in choice of decorations: rosettes, bows, fabric covered buttons, applique, piping, binding, embroidery, there was a wide variety than the previous cohort. Most candidates showed creativity in the decoration presented. The work was generally suitable in terms of colour, well balanced and proportional in size. However, majority of decorations were generally not neatly worked.

Advice to Centres

To exercise vigilance, fairness, honesty and consistency when assessing candidates' work. There is need to increase the number of projects used to standardise with at Centre level to ensure that examiners have reached a common standard in assessment of varied processes.

To ensure that equipment candidates use for coursework are sound enough to be used without negatively affecting candidates' manipulation skills e.g. servicing and or procuring sewing machines, procuring sharp scissors for clean cutting of pattern pieces etc. Chief Invigilators to verify entries for compliance with examination regulations.

In-service training of subject teachers to be enable them to guide candidates relevantly in coursework processes, this could be done internally. It is evident in some cases that the personnel either lack the knowledge or do not know how to apply the knowledge acquired, benchmarking is also a good way for skill sharing to improve performance.