PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

BOTSWANA EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

BSSE TEXTILE, CLOTHING & DESIGN

2025

PAPER 1: WRITTEN PAPER

General Comments

The candidates' work was generally neat, clearly presented, and relevant to the subject. Most candidates attempted the questions, though many responses fell short of fully addressing the requirements. A few candidates skipped certain items entirely, particularly Question 4. Overall, candidates performed better on Question 1 compared to Questions 2 and 3. Question 4 was especially challenging many scored very low, and some left it completely unanswered.

Observation

Candidates continue to struggle with question interpretation, often responding off-topic (e.g., confusing CAD/CAM or discussing finishing instead of raw edges). Responses were frequently incomplete, particularly in comparisons, and lacked precision vague terms like "prevents fraying" instead of "prevents raw edge fraying" cost marks. Many failed to apply theory to practice, such as explaining design elements in real garments, and showed weak understanding of core technical concepts like dart function, seam types, and 3D pattern-making.

Recommendations

Moving forward, centres must focus on precise terminology, and structured answering techniques to improve clarity, completeness, and alignment with mark schemes.

Comments on Individual Items

Section A

1 (a) (i) Most candidates correctly identified polyester as man-made and silk as natural. A few used subcategories like "synthetic" for polyester or "animal" for silk which limited their marks.

(ii) While many identified warp and weft yarns in woven fabric, most failed to describe the structure. Stronger responses explained how these yarns interlace perpendicularly, as in plain weave, to form the fabric.

(iii) Most struggled to provide a full comparison between crocheted and knitted fabrics. To score well, candidates needed to clearly present key differences instead, many described only one, missing the contrast (e.g., "crocheted fabrics are breathable," without comparing to knitted ones).

(b) Most candidates named appropriate fabric finishes but didn't link them to sportswear instead, they gave general definitions. A few listed finishes not suitable for sportswear, and some confused fabric finishes with edge finishes, which was off topic.

(c) (i) Nearly all candidates answered well, correctly identifying risks of working in confined spaces as outlined in the mark scheme.

(ii) Most identified and clearly explained the two required impacts, meeting the question's demands effectively.

2 **(a)** Most candidates discussed CAD like pattern design instead of CAM, focusing on design rather than manufacturing. A few gave relevant CAM responses, but their answers didn't fully align with the mark scheme, so they missed full marks.

(b) Many listed valid advantages, but their responses were incomplete or lacked depth, limiting them to partial credit. Some strayed off-topic by discussing general production instead of logo-specific processes.

(c) Most identified sewing faults linked to the bobbin but explained them vaguely or incorrectly. Few answered fully; many gave generic issues like "thread breaks" instead of specific ones like "lower thread breaks." Others cited general machine faults, not those directly related to the bobbin, hence could not access all the marks.

3 **(a)** **(i)** Most candidates focused on the garment rather than the raw edge e.g., "to neaten the garment" which limited their marks. Some gave negative phrasing like "so the edge doesn't fray" instead of positively stating "to prevent fraying of the raw edge," making the answer incomplete and imprecise and reducing access to full marks.

(ii) Few candidates provided three full, clear differences to earn maximum marks. Most managed two. Some correctly described one aspect like facing or binding but failed to contrast it accurately with the other. For example, stating "binding is visible on both sides" and then "binding is not" creates contradiction and no valid difference, so no mark was awarded.

(b) **(i)** Many responses were off topic e.g., "to prevent fraying" which didn't address the actual requirement. Some left the question blank. Only a small number gave correct, relevant answers.

(ii) Most identified methods to reduce a bulky waistband like trimming, grading, or notching but few described them in enough detail to earn full credit. Explanations lacked precision. For example, "grading" should specify cutting seam allowances to different widths, with the inner layer cut wider many just said "cutting off excess," which is too vague.

(c) Very few candidates named the correct qualities of a hem, and even fewer explained them well enough for full marks. Common points included: the hem should be strong, even, and flat but explanations were shallow or missing.

(d) **(i)** Most correctly identified the dart's shape triangular, V-shaped, wider at one end and tapering to a point. However, few linked this shape to its function: the wider part removes excess fabric where it's not needed, and it tapers to where a closer fit is required. Many gave generic answers like "for a good fit" without explaining how the shape achieves this.

(ii) Only a few addressed the question correctly. Most gave irrelevant responses like "pressing" or "ironing." The accurate answers included: topstitching along the fold or stitching along the placement line on the wrong side to secure the dart.

(e) **(i)** Nearly all candidates gave correct answers, most commonly “overlocked seam.” A few said, “welt seam” or “bound seam,” which were also accepted.

(ii) Most listed seam examples like French seam or double-stitched seam, and described how to make them, rather than identifying *types* of seams. Only a few correctly named categories like *exposed/conspicuous* vs. *enclosed/inconspicuous* or *neatened* vs. *self-neatened*. Even then, none explained these types clearly enough to gain full credit.

(f) Most identified relevant factors like garment purpose, style, or fastener placement but explanations were weak. Some didn’t include examples, making answers incomplete and unmarked.

4 **(a)** **(i)** Similar to Question 3(a)(ii), most candidates failed to present a clear distinction between elements and principles of design. While some gave accurate information about one, they omitted or misrepresented the other. Without a proper comparison, no marks could be awarded.

(ii) Nearly all responses were incomplete. Candidates described general effects like vertical lines creating a slimming illusion by guiding the eye up and down but missed the required depth. To earn full marks, answers needed to link line placement to specific design features (e.g., princess seams, vertical stripes, or the drape of a full flare skirt) and explain how these visually elongate the silhouette.

(b) **(i)** Only a few gave relevant answers. Most listed general pattern-making methods like drafting or copying, which didn’t meet the question’s focus. Full marks required responses like *draping*, *modelling*, or *3D CAD* few provided these.

(ii) On average, candidates answered reasonably well, but some listed general symbols (e.g., grainline, place on fold) that don’t directly assist in sewing. The question asked for marks that guide construction like *notches*, *stitching lines*, *balance marks*, or *registration symbols* (dots, stars, squares, etc.) which only a few identified correctly.

PAPER 2: PRACTICAL PAPER

General Comments

In all centers, candidates who sat for the exam attempted the practical component, which is commendable. However, a small number of registered candidates did not appear for the examination. Among those who participated, none completed all required processes. Most submitted incomplete garments, with the **hem** being the most omitted step across all centers. Other unfinished elements included embroidery, button plackets, tailor's tacks, buttonholes, sleeves, and collars. As a result, many garments were submitted with pins, tacking threads, and loose ends, which negatively impacted the overall presentation and finish.

Additionally, it was noted that the fabrics selected by most centers were **slippery and difficult to handle**, likely affecting candidates' ability to work accurately. Centers are advised to choose more manageable, beginner-friendly fabrics in future to support better performance and execution.

Observation

Despite effort, many candidates struggled with technical accuracy, completion of processes, and adherence to instructions. Key weaknesses included finishing techniques, seam construction, and attention to detail.

Recommendations

- To improve, centres should ensure full task completion under timed conditions, prioritise precision in construction and hand techniques, and use suitable fabrics like cotton or poplin.
- Regular practice of full garment production, aligned with mark schemes, will build confidence, fluency, and neatness, especially in pressing, trimming, and hand-finishing.

Comments on Individual Questions

1 (a) (i) This question was generally well handled. Almost all candidates cut the fabric along the correct grain, which is commendable. However, a few failed to match checks or plaids where applicable. Candidates should be reminded to always align patterned fabrics properly for a professional finish.

(ii) Candidates were required to cut out all pieces needed for the left side of the shirt and to cut the pocket from the contrasting fabric provided. Most candidates did not complete this fully, many cut incorrect numbers of pieces (e.g., two sleeves instead of one, or two backs instead of cutting on fold), and some cut only one pocket instead of two. In several cases, the pocket was cut from the main fabric rather than the contrasting one as instructed.

Additionally, the mark scheme required smooth, clean edges on all pattern pieces, but many submissions had jagged or uneven cuts. While all candidates used the correct pattern size, very few cut interfacings for the embroidery area, though most did so for the collar and button placket as required.

(iii) Candidates were expected to transfer all pattern markings accurately. Most transferred key markings correctly but missed some critical ones especially the pocket position and stitching

lines for the embroidery template. A few attempted embroidery that did not follow the provided template, resulting in lost marks.

(b) **(i)** Candidates were required to prepare the patch pocket and topstitch the upper fold. Most attempted this, but only a few executed the topstitching neatly and accurately. A small number did not attempt the task at all.

(ii) Two hand embroidery stitches were required to decorate the pocket. Few candidates completed this fully, many used only one stitch instead of two. While some achieved even tension and secure ends, most missed the padding element. Only a handful included padded embroidery as expected.

(iii) Candidates had to attach the pocket in the correct position, reinforce the corners with the right shape, and press it neatly. Very few completed all four steps correctly. Most managed position and corner shape but failed to reinforce properly or press the pocket for a clean finish.

(c) Buttonholes

(i) Candidates were required to interface the button placket. Most attempted this, but only a few applied the interfacing correctly, many placed it outside or too far within the marked lines, affecting accuracy and finish.

(ii) The task required three well-made buttonholes with consistent stitching, correct placement, even spacing, and accurate size. Very few candidates attempted this fully. While most used the appropriate stitch type, stitching was often uneven, and placement, spacing, or sizing was incorrect.

(iii) Candidates were expected to leave the tailor's tacks in place after marking the buttonhole positions. Most did not attempt this, and those who did often failed to create or preserve the tailors tacks properly, making it difficult to verify accurate marking.

(d) Back Yoke

(i) Candidates were required to face the back yoke pieces. Most attempted this, but only a few did so accurately. Common errors included folding only one yoke piece instead of both, or mismatching the facing and yoke, resulting in uneven edges.

(ii) The yoke was to be attached using a run and fell seam one that lies flat, is neatly trimmed to an even width, and is correctly finished. While most candidates attempted the seam, only a few executed all three aspects correctly. Many managed two, but some used the wrong seam type altogether.

(iii) Candidates were expected to overlock the center back edge of the yoke. This step was largely overlooked only a few completed it, and many did not attempt it at all.

(e) Shirt Seams

(i) Candidates were required to join the front and back at the shoulder using a French seam. Only a few achieved this correctly most used a different seam type. Some attempted a French

seam but constructed it inside out, leaving raw edges exposed. Even among correct attempts, many were poorly pressed, unevenly trimmed, or lacked consistent seam width.

(ii) A closed plain seam was required for the side seams. However, most candidates used an open seam instead, and many failed to enclose the raw edges. Only a few produced a properly closed seam neatly pressed, trimmed evenly, directed toward the back, and with uniform width as specified.

(f) Collar

(i) Stay stitching the neck edge

Candidates were required to apply stay stitching to the neckline and leave it in place. Most did not attempt this. Of those who did, none executed it correctly either omitting the stitching entirely or removing it after construction.

(ii) Preparing the shirt collar

Candidates had to interface the collar, trim the corners neatly, topstitch evenly, and ensure a flat finish. While most attempted this, very few completed all four steps. Most only applied interfacing, with minimal attention to shaping, trimming, or stitching.

(iii) Attaching the collar to the neck edge

To score fully, candidates needed to grade, under stitch, and maintain even collar width. Only a small number completed all three techniques. Most did not attempt this step, and those who did often missed grading and under stitching, resulting in a bulky or uneven finish.

(iv) Pressing the collar

Most candidates did not earn marks for this step, as they had not attached the collar. Without completion of attachment, pressing could not be assessed.

(g) Set-in Sleeve

(i) Underarm seam (plain, unneatened)

Most candidates correctly used a plain seam for the underarm without neatening this was well attempted. Only a few skipped it entirely.

(ii) Setting the sleeve into the armhole

Candidates were expected to ease the sleeve cap smoothly into the armhole, matching notches and seams without puckers or pleats. Very few achieved this. Most failed to align notches, and some mistakenly used the right sleeve on the left side. Pleats and excess fullness were common.

(iii) Pressing

The majority did not press the sleeve after setting, affecting the overall finish and resulting in lost marks.

(h) Shirt Hem

Candidates were expected to finish the hem using a slip hemming stitch with secure, evenly spaced, and inconspicuous stitches on the right side. Very few attempted this, and most used machine stitching instead of the required hand stitch, resulting in lost marks.

(i) Presentation

Candidates were expected to remove all pins, tacking threads, and loose ends, and to press their garments neatly without iron marks or damage. Most submissions still had hanging threads or pins, and some included tacking. While most garments were free from iron marks, a few showed cuts or improper handling, affecting overall presentation.

PAPER 3: COURSE WORK PAPER (PBA)

General Comments

This Provider-Based Assessment (PBA) consists of two components:

- **Colour Application Task** (with supporting portfolio)
- **Pattern Adaptation Project** (with supporting portfolio)

Detailed marking criteria were provided to ensure consistent and fair assessment across all centres. However, as this was the **first administration** of the revised Paper 3, **significant inconsistencies** were observed in how centres interpreted and applied the marking guidelines.

These inconsistencies include variations in:

- Interpretation of performance descriptors
- Awarding of marks for evidence of process and creativity
- Assessment of technical accuracy and presentation

As a result, **candidate performance in 2025 is not directly comparable** to that of previous years. Centres are strongly encouraged to review the official marking criteria thoroughly ahead of the next assessment cycle and to participate in standardisation activities to ensure greater alignment in future marking practices.

Administration of the Submission

Centres are commended for submitting relevant materials that supported the moderation process, including completed projects and supporting folders for both the Colour Application Task and Pattern Adaptation Project. The majority provided full sets of candidate work, which is acknowledged and appreciated.

However, three centres were significantly unprepared. Moderation venues were arranged only upon the arrival of moderators, and in some cases, candidates displayed their projects during the moderation session. This lack of advance preparation disrupted the schedule and reduced the efficiency of the process.

Several centres failed to submit essential administrative documents, including:

- Attendance registers
- Summary marksheets
- Centre order of merit

The absence of these documents caused delays, as moderators had to wait for information to be retrieved or reconstructed. In several cases, cancellations on marksheets were not properly recorded, with missing signatures or no justification provided.

Candidate projects were often not arranged in candidate number order, nor clearly labelled, making it difficult to match work to records. In multiple centres, projects were not pre-displayed candidates set up

their work only after moderators arrived. This indicates insufficient planning and undermines the integrity of the moderation exercise.

Additionally, some centres hosted Paper 3 moderation alongside Physical Education assessments in shared spaces such as multipurpose halls or conference rooms. These arrangements resulted in noise disturbances from quarantined candidates and created an unsuitable environment for detailed assessment. In a few instances, poor hygiene and inadequate lighting or space further compromised the marking conditions.

While most individual marksheets were complete and totals accurate, several issues were observed:

- Use of correction fluid or overwriting
- Unauthorised cancellations without proper documentation
- Marks awarded without supporting comments
- Missing signatures for verification

Despite these inconsistencies, most awarded marks were consistent with the evidence and commentary provided, indicating sound professional judgment in most cases.

Interpretation of the Marking Criteria

Centres are commended for efforts in internal standardisation, particularly where moderation teams reviewed benchmark work and aligned their judgements with national standards. In many cases, the initial standardisation process was conducted rigorously and contributed to consistent marking.

However, inconsistencies emerged during the assessment of individual candidates. In several centres, examiners applied the criteria more leniently after standardisation, resulting in higher marks that did not reflect the actual quality of work. This deviation undermined the reliability of the process.

Notably, some centres did not conduct any formal standardisation before marking. In these cases, teachers assessed work independently, leading to wide variations in interpretation and marking practice. This lack of alignment resulted in scores that were not comparable across candidates or centres.

A general trend of overmarking was observed, with many candidates awarded high scores for work that did not fully meet the top-level descriptors. In some instances, marks were inflated without sufficient evidence in the portfolio or product.

Further concerns were raised about examiner annotations:

- Comments often praised work as “excellent” or “well executed” despite clear deficiencies
- Feedback sometimes contradicted the awarded mark, lacking honesty or critical engagement
- Some comments were generic or vague, offering little justification for the score

Such discrepancies between comments, marks, and actual performance compromise the credibility of the assessment.

Feedback on the Moderated Sample

A significant number of centres **deviated from national marking standards**, with a consistent pattern of **overmarking** across both components. In several cases, **marks awarded were disproportionately high** relative to the quality of work submitted. This leniency compromises comparability and fairness, and centres are strongly reminded to assess work **objectively, consistently, and in strict alignment with the marking criteria**.

This year, a small number of centres introduced **techniques not permitted under the syllabus**, such as **painting fabrics** for the *Colour Application Task*. These methods fall outside the approved scope of textile processes and are **not acceptable** for assessment. Centres must ensure that all techniques used are **within the curriculum framework** and reflect taught skills.

Additionally, concerns were identified regarding **lack of differentiation between tasks**. In some centres, candidates submitted **identical projects** for both the **toile (mock-up)** and the **Pattern Adaptation Project**, which defeats the purpose of progressive skill development. The toile should serve as a draft; the final adaptation must demonstrate clear evolution in design and construction.

While most centres successfully adapted the **basic block skirt** into new styles showing creativity in silhouette and detailing **very few extended the adaptation to the bodice or sleeve**. This limited scope suggests a need for broader application of pattern manipulation skills beyond the lower garment.

Key Observations

- **Overmarking remains a critical issue** centres must calibrate marks to actual evidence
- **Unapproved techniques** (e.g., fabric painting) must be discontinued
- **Toile and final project must be distinct** no duplication
- **Adaptation should be comprehensive**, not limited to skirts

Centres are encouraged to use past chief examiners' reports and sample portfolios to better understand expectations for innovation, technical range, and authenticity of process.

Observation

Three centres were unprepared for moderation, with last-minute setups and missing documentation. Marking inconsistencies and overmarking were common, often due to weak or absent standardisation. Candidates showed limited technical skill, relying on basic techniques like tie-dye and skirt adaptations, with poor fabric choices and weak pattern work. Folders lacked research, analysis, and justification. Many failed to complete processes or communicate ideas clearly.

Recommendations

Centres must enforce full task completion, use correct materials, practice under exam conditions, and prioritise precision, standardisation, and syllabus compliance to improve outcomes.

Comments on individual questions

Task 1 – Colour Application

Overview

Centres demonstrated a limited range of colour application techniques, with most candidates relying on tie-dye and stencil printing. While these are valid methods, few explored more advanced or diverse processes such as batik, tritik, or dot printing. This narrow scope suggests a need for broader exposure to traditional and experimental textile techniques within teaching programmes.

Suitability of Materials

Most candidates selected appropriate fabrics that allowed effective dye absorption and paint adhesion. Natural fibres such as cotton and viscose performed well, with dyes penetrating evenly and stencil paints adhering without flaking.

However, some centres used unsuitable materials, including:

- **Synthetic fabrics** (e.g. polyester lining, nylon) which resist dye uptake
- **Denim** often overdyed or tightly woven, limiting absorption
- **Poor colour contrast** e.g. maroon paint on maroon fabric, reducing visual impact

These choices compromised the clarity and effectiveness of the colour treatments.

Consistency

Most projects lacked consistency in application. Uneven dye distribution, patchy stencilling, and irregular coverage were common. Very few candidates achieved a uniform, controlled finish across their work.

Additionally, shading and highlighting key techniques for adding depth and dimension were rarely applied and even more rarely effective. Their absence contributed to flat, one-dimensional outcomes.

Creativity

Creativity varied significantly across centres:

- A few candidates produced highly imaginative work, using unexpected colour combinations and innovative techniques
- Most showed moderate creativity adequate but predictable choices (e.g. primary colours, basic patterns)
- A small number relied on basic, uninspired applications with minimal originality

Centres that encouraged experimentation produced more visually engaging results.

Attention to Detail

Only a minority of candidates demonstrated consistent precision and neatness in execution. Most showed some care in specific areas (e.g., clean stencil edges), but lacked overall consistency.

Issues included:

- Bleeding beyond stencil lines
- Uneven tie-dye folds
- Smudging or smearing
- Inconsistent spacing in repeated patterns

These flaws affected the professional finish of the work.

Overall Outcome

A small number of candidates achieved cohesive, harmonious results, with thoughtful colour-material pairings and well-executed techniques. Notably, two centres consistently produced standout projects in this task. The majority achieved acceptable but unremarkable outcomes, with functional but uninspired designs.

However, a significant number submitted work where colour techniques were mismatched to materials for example:

- Tie-dye on synthetic fabric → minimal dye uptake
- Paint on non-porous fabric → poor adhesion

These mismatches undermined the technical and aesthetic quality of the final products.

Folder (Supporting Documentation)

The folder component was poorly executed in most cases.

- Very few candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of colour theory, suitability, or creative intent
- Some applied research skills adequately e.g. mood boards, fabric swatches but lacked analysis
- Evaluation was almost entirely absent candidates rarely reflected on what worked, what didn't, or why
- Colour schemes were often listed, but not explained or justified

Most folders contained superficial content with limited evidence of planning, development, or critical thinking.

Task 2: Pattern Adaptation Project

Overview

Most candidates focused on skirt adaptations, reflecting a common and well-established trend across centres. While this demonstrated competence in basic pattern manipulation, it also revealed a limited scope of exploration. A small number of centres showed greater diversity by adapting shirts, shorts, and dresses, indicating stronger design thinking and broader technical application. These submissions stood out for their range, ambition, and innovation.

Suitability of Sketches

Sketches were intended to present a clear design solution to a defined problem. However, only a few candidates produced relevant, focused sketches that directly addressed the stated challenge.

- Some candidates presented multiple problems without clarifying which one the design responded to
- Most submitted sketches that were generally relevant, but lacked key details such as seam lines, construction methods, or design features
- A few sketches were unrelated to the stated problem, suggesting a disconnect between concept and execution

This indicates a need for clearer guidance on defining the design problem and ensuring visual solutions are directly aligned with it.

Quality of Sketches

Overall, sketching skills were underdeveloped.

- A few candidates demonstrated a strong grasp of design elements and principles—proportion, balance, line, and silhouette presented with clarity and purpose
- The majority showed a basic understanding, but execution was inconsistent sketches were often rudimentary, lacking detail or technical accuracy
- A small number submitted work that was disconnected from the task, with poor presentation and minimal effort

  Sketches should not only show *what* the design looks like, but also *how* it solves the problem. This level of communication was largely missing.

Pattern Adaptation

This core component was poorly executed across most centres.

- No candidate demonstrated mastery of pattern adaptation techniques
- None produced adaptations that offered innovative, effective solutions to the stated problem
- Most applied only basic manipulations such as darts, pleats, or simple flare additions without advancing the design meaningfully

There was a notable absence of creative interventions, such as:

- Structural reconfiguration (e.g., asymmetry, panelling)
- Proportion play (e.g., elongated hems, dropped shoulders)
- Functional enhancements (e.g., adjustable features, modular elements)

While some adaptations partially addressed the problem, they lacked originality, technical refinement, and design intent. A few candidates made no adaptation at all, submitting garments that were identical to the original block, which does not meet the requirements of the task.

Key Observations

- **Over-reliance on skirts** limits exposure to full-garment adaptation
- **Weak sketching** undermines design communication
- **Basic techniques dominate**—little evidence of advanced pattern skills
- **Lack of innovation** in solving design problems
- **Minimal connection** between sketch, adaptation, and final product

Pattern Markings

Accurate pattern markings are essential for correct construction and alignment. Only a few candidates clearly and correctly marked all necessary symbols (e.g., grainline, notches, dart legs, fold lines) in accurate positions on every pattern piece

- The majority demonstrated basic competence—most markings were present and reasonably placed, though some omissions or misplacements were noted
- A small number showed very limited marking, with symbols missing, incorrectly positioned, or inconsistently applied—compromising the usability of the pattern

Common errors included:

- Missing or misplaced notches
- Grainlines drawn at incorrect angles
- Fold lines not indicated on symmetrical pieces
    - Dart markings incomplete or unclear

These issues suggest a need for greater attention to technical accuracy and standard pattern annotation practices.

Pattern Layout

Effective layout ensures economical and correct fabric use.

- Very few candidates demonstrated full accuracy in placing all pattern pieces correctly respecting grainlines, fold lines, and layout instructions
- Most achieved partial success most pieces were well positioned, though minor errors (e.g., reversed grain, misaligned notches) were present
- A limited number showed poor layout practices, with multiple pieces incorrectly oriented, placed off-grain, or overlapping

Additionally, a few candidates submitted pattern pieces without the accompanying folder, making it impossible to assess planning, rationale, or development. This incomplete submission significantly affects the overall evaluation and must be avoided.

Problem Solving

The ability to identify and respond to a design challenge is central to this task.

- A few candidates developed highly relevant, focused solutions that directly and creatively addressed the stated problem
- Most showed partial alignment—some aspects of the design responded appropriately, but the solution lacked depth or completeness
- A small number demonstrated weak problem-solving, with designs that were off-topic or unfocused

A recurring issue was the identification of multiple problems, but the design response addressed only one, leaving others unresolved. This lack of comprehensive thinking limited the effectiveness of the outcome.

In stronger responses, candidates:

- Clearly defined the problem
- Justified their design choices
- Showed how adaptations solved specific challenges

This level of intentional design thinking was rare.

Evaluation of the Project

Evaluation is a critical stage in the design process, allowing candidates to reflect on challenges, assess outcomes, and identify areas for improvement.

- Only a few candidates provided clear, insightful evaluations, thoughtfully analysing technical difficulties, material limitations, or design flaws
- Most responses lacked depth evaluations were either vague, generic, or included irrelevant statements not tied to the actual project
- A small number simply described what they did, without reflection, analysis, or learning insights

Strong evaluations should:

- Identify specific challenges (e.g., fit issues, fabric behaviour)
- Explain how they were addressed (or why they couldn't be)
- Suggest realistic improvements for future work

This level of **critical thinking** was evident in only a minority of submissions.

Justified Adaptations

Candidates were expected to explain and justify their design choices in relation to the problem.

- A few candidates offered well-articulated, logical justifications clearly linking adaptations to functional, aesthetic, or user needs

- Most provided basic reasoning e.g., “I added pleats for style” or “I changed the neckline to make it more modern” which was satisfactory but shallow
- A small number merely listed changes (e.g., “I made it longer, added pockets”) without any explanation of purpose or impact

Justification should go beyond description to answer: *Why this change? What problem does it solve? How does it improve the design?* This level of reasoning needs strengthening across most centres.

Communication

Effective communication ensures that design intent is clearly conveyed through both visual and written elements.

- A few candidates communicated exceptionally well their sketches, annotations, and written commentary were coherent, purposeful, and aligned with the task
- Most were able to express core ideas, though some sections revealed gaps in understanding or inconsistent terminology
- A small number struggled significantly their work was disorganised, poorly labelled, or lacked logical flow, suggesting limited grasp of the project requirements

In weaker cases, folders did not support the final product, and design decisions were not traceable from concept to outcome.