

Frequently Asked Questions

GCE Art and Design

OCR Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced GCE in Art and Design

H160-H166 and H560-H566

Are there any differences to the Marking Criteria?

Yes. Firstly there are only four Units required, two at “AS” and two at A2 for the award. There are now six bands in the Assessment Criteria, which are weighted differently for both “AS” (page 58/59) and A2 (page 60/61). Experimenting and Developing are emphasised at “AS” with Recording and Presenting emphasised at A2.

Do we *have* to produce written work?

Yes, in Unit 3 (A2) for a related Personal Study of between 1000-3000 words. At “AS” this is not compulsory but most candidates are already doing so through annotations, evaluations and stand-alone presentation, which is good practice as it prepares them for the requirements at A2.

Does the quality of written work affect the final mark?

When the candidates use continuous prose they are to be assessed on the quality of written communication. Refer to page 43. Most candidates already annotate and evaluate their work through annotations and descriptions seen in sketchbooks and presentation sheets. At AS level if it is included it is assessed. At A2 it is included and assessed.

How are overseas students going to cope?

The qualification is in the English language (page 53). It is the Centre’s responsibility to determine how appropriate linguistic support is given. For candidates whose first language is not English, they can use bi-lingual translation dictionaries. They are not permitted to have translators, either electronic or human in an exam and are not permitted to write coursework in their own language and take it to a translation service. These are English qualifications and must be written in English.

What is a Coursework Portfolio?

This is the name of Unit 1. It is the unit that replaces the Research Project and the old Personal Investigation. In this sense a portfolio refers to a collection or set of work that shows exploration, research, technique and skill. It may be presented in a portfolio, but it could be organised into a sketchbook, workbook, on presentation sheets or a form of digital presentation. Students could consider and work on one theme or one set of inter-related themes throughout the year or on a number of discrete units or starting points. Life drawing or study trips could be mixed with more conventional studio based projects. Students are free to work on a wide range of materials and processes, but need to be mindful of their chosen endorsement. In effect, if something is working well in your centre continue to develop these strengths.

What format does the Portfolio have to take?

There is no set format and it could be a variety of sizes, scales, materials and processes (see above).

Does the idea of selecting work for the Portfolio go against evidencing the general development process of the outcome(s)?

There must be sufficient evidence of work to satisfy all AO's (page 9). Too much unselected work or a 'pick and mix' approach when selecting work could cloud the process. It simply means that it is the quality, not the quantity of work which is important. The evidence should support the candidate's choice of approach and the development of ideas, leading to a final, informed outcome (s). This evidence can be sketchbook based on separate sheets of paper supporting the candidate's response.

Why is AO3 not the first Assessment Objective when many teachers use it as the basis for starting a project?

The Assessment Criteria are not designed to be used in a linear sequence from AO1 to AO4. AO3 could be used as the basis for lesson delivery but a project could equally begin by developing ideas (AO1) or experimenting with media and materials (AO2). Centres can continue to develop their successful teaching strategies to suit their own requirements.

What is a related Personal Study?

This is a written account of between 1000-3000 words, which must be related to the practical work of Unit 3. This could be embedded into the work or presented in a variety of different ways, including a sketchbook, presentation sheets, digital presentations or a stand-alone essay. Generally, the subject or theme of the study will reflect the endorsement, however, it could be possible to go outside the endorsement area, for example, textile students could produce a written and illustrated study of the colour and pattern of Matisse's work if they were intending to print fabric. The study should have a clear focus, which will inform the practical work.

Where are the AO's for Critical and Contextual Studies?

These are embedded in the Assessment Objectives. AO1 (Developing) by looking and analysing artwork as an aid to informing the development of personal ideas. AO2 (Exploration) could be influenced by artist research and analysis. AO3 (Recording) by selecting recording styles and realising intentions. AO4 (Present) by making critical connections, either visual, written or oral. (For Assessment Criteria see pages 62-65 of the Specification.)

Is there an A* Award at AS?

No

Does the Mature Band in the Assessment Objectives relate to A* standard?

Generally yes, but this is not automatic. 320 UMS marks are required over four Units, but there must be at least 180 UMS marks at A2. The Raw Marks, however, could show some variation in the Assessment Bands in some Units.

How is the A* awarded?

Page 46 of the new specification gives a detailed explanation. The essence of it is that a candidate must do very well in the A2 units, particularly Unit 3. Obviously a good performance at AS is also required.

Are the Grade Boundaries going to be re-aligned?

The intention is to seek a more stable grade boundary. The grade boundaries are only determined at the Grade Award Meetings, which follows the Moderation process. The new marking criteria should be adhered to. Please refer to the Examiner's Report for Summer 2008 with further key guidance to come in the Report on this summer's series.

Why do I need to give candidate work to the Moderator for OCR?

It is extremely important that work is received from centres in order for the awarding process to take place. This reflects the work from the whole country and will allow levels to stabilise. OCR greatly values this work and the efforts of the centre to provide it. We use the work also for training purposes and any work retained is carefully tracked. Work we do not use will be returned as quickly as possible to the centre.

OCR suggests that candidates and/or centres photograph the work. This includes the exam work, under supervision, so that any work can be shown at interviews where necessary. An interview portfolio can also be constructed from work not selected for assessment. Whenever possible OCR will return the work to the centre by courier or send it direct to an agreed location, in time for a candidate interview, to be returned to OCR if requested via the same method. Centres need to contact OCR at least 14 days before the work is needed to give OCR time to process their request.

Is the same Moderator going to assess both the legacy and New Specification?

Yes, but there will be a break between moderating the two separate Awards, which will require separate paperwork. The legacy work will be moderated first.

Can students paint their canvas, cut stencils and prepare practical materials before the five hour Controlled Assignment?

At "AS" the five hour test (15hrs for A2) should be used produce the creative outcome. Some technical processes will require suspension of the creative outcome, which can be continued later. Most preparation could be done prior to the day of the exam. Everything can be prepared in advance, but effectively the students work on the "blank paper" or canvas at the start of the test. Centres are reminded to refer to the New Examination Requirements, which have been circulated to all Examination Boards by QCA.

How are students working with ceramics expected to produce an outcome in the five hour test?

By producing a small-scale resolution, of part or whole of the final idea, including maquettes. Preparation of the clay, drying and firing times need not be included.

My candidates are producing clay based work based on direct observation. Which Endorsement should I use to enter them?

Either Endorsement, but the Fine Art Endorsement, in particular, would accommodate the sculptural approach.

A2 and AS Critical and Contextual Endorsement

What should the portfolio Unit 1 contain?

The contents of the portfolio submission are clearly outlined. They are formulated to give candidates a wide range of activities as an introduction and foundation for the Critical and Contextual studies course. Therefore it must contain the following:

Selected area of study: e.g. Human Form, then a timeline, analysis of 20 named works, two 1000 word essays, evidence and records of a gallery or exhibition visit, use of and understanding of subject terminology and vocabulary, a mixture of text and relevant images or art work. (Pages 34-37 in specification)

Why is the Critical and Contextual question paper included on the general art paper?

There is no longer a separate compulsory written paper as in the legacy specification. Instead the Art question paper now contains 2 sections for answers from the Critical and Contextual endorsement: Section 4 Art in Context, which has written starting points and Section 5 Visual Starting points. Candidates can respond with a written essay with illustrations, a design outcome with written evaluation, practical work with through annotation.

Can there still be a written response to the examination?

All Critical and Contextual starting points allow the option for a written response in essay format. Whilst this should be researched and studied in advance the final, illustrated version must be completed in the allotted time for the set papers.

Why does the Critical and Contextual endorsement have its own assessment criteria?

This is necessary as the use of subject language and written critical analysis is a compulsory part of the endorsement and therefore needs more emphasis on the written response whilst it still contains the same 4 assessment objectives as the rest of the Art specification.

Will assessment be more difficult?

This should be no more demanding than current assessment procedures. Centres already have to mark written submissions in the current specification. The difference now is that the centre assesses the examination work as well. There will only be TWO units to assess instead of three.

How different is the A2 part of the endorsement?

Unit 3 on aspects of Public Art is little different to the current practice on the legacy specification. The related study will be linked in some way to the main body of work as an added written project. This part replaces The Personal Study. For Unit 4 there will be two sections on the Art paper and candidates must respond to ONE question with either a Written Essay, a Design Project with detailed written information, or practical work with detailed analysis and annotation.