



# Expressive Arts

GCSE

Expressive Arts

J367

Frequently asked  
questions

*It's all about  
the making!*

**Q** *For how long is an assessment of a unit valid?*

**A:** Assessment tasks may be undertaken and internally assessed at any point between release of the task by the centre and the examination series for which the task must be submitted. Each assessment task will be valid for submission in a single examination series only.

**Q** *Are re-sits available?*

**A:** Candidates are only able to re-take a qualification in its entirety. It is no longer possible to re-sit individual units.

**Q** *How is the course assessed?*

**A:** The controlled assessment units, A691 and A692, are internally marked and externally moderated. Unit A693 is externally assessed by an examiner who marks the portfolios and also marks the realisations and outcomes by visiting the centre.

**Q** *What does controlled assessment mean?*

**A:** All work submitted for assessment in Units A691 and A692 will have to be done in the centre, under the supervision of the teacher/tutor. Recordings of performances will have to be made under the teacher's control.

**Q** *Does this mean the candidates cannot leave the classroom?*

**A:** They may leave the classroom but any work they produce for assessment outside the classroom must have been observed by a member of staff so the centre can authorize the work as being that of the candidate.

**Q** *How are assessments recorded?*

**A:** OCR recognises that in a subject of this sort there is a great deal of practical application of the skills, and that sometimes evidence can be ethereal. This provides a challenge for a public examination. In trying to meet the needs of the subject OCR has developed an assessment strategy that uses a series of bullet points. For the controlled assessments the teacher highlights the bullet points that apply, and then make a judgement taking into account the evidence provided. There is a box on the assessment form that teachers can use to indicate other evidence such as their own notes of discussions or video that may be available. This is a best fit approach, but the mark must be supported by evidence in whatever format the evidence may be.

**Q Do centres have any input into the examined unit?**

**A:** As this unit is externally set and marked, there is no formal recording of teachers' marks. However, the teacher will have seen the development of the work over an extensive period and the examiner just gets the summation of all that work, and so there is an opportunity for the centre to indicate their view of the criteria that have been met based on the evidence. This follows the same format as the controlled assessments, and teachers highlight the comments within each criterion that they feel is appropriate.

**Q How do the three units work?**

**A:** The first unit, A691, is concerned with the work of practitioners and their works across the art forms. This is done by the application of Areas of Study so that candidates understand how and why practitioners have created work. This leads to the candidate devising work inspired by the work of practitioners.

The second unit, A692, is concerned with candidates considering a theme, and applying the skills and techniques learnt from unit A691, along with the influences of three further practitioners that they would have studied as part of this unit. Once again, the method used is by applying the Areas of Study to the work of practitioners and their own work, but this time the focus is on producing a realisation to fulfill the demands of a theme. There are several topics set that can be found listed in the specification.

The third unit, A693, is an examination. A paper contains ten commissions. The candidate selects one and then has a six-week period during which research can take place into the topic of the commission itself; selecting a community and intended audience; considering possible ways of realising an outcome; exploring possible practitioner influences on their ideas; and making a plan of how the examination time will be used. The examination is for a twelve-hour period.

**Q Must the two controlled assessments be carried out in the published order?**

**A:** They may be done in any order but the recommendation is that Unit 1 is completed first as the specification is designed for Unit 2 to follow on from Unit 1.

**Q What evidence is needed for the A693 examination?**

**A:** There are two pieces of evidence that must be provided. Each candidate must produce a portfolio during the 12 hours, and a realisation. The portfolio should record the planning and process of devising, how the areas of study have been applied, the community the realisation is for, and the intended audience. Each candidate must also provide a realisation of his or her ideas in an outcome.

**Q Is the portfolio an essay?**

**A:** No. It can be a collection of writings, notes, drawings, sketches, diagrams, photos – in fact anything that provides evidence of the process the candidate has gone through to develop and produce the outcome. It must contain some continuous writing.

**Q How does the portfolio have to be presented?**

**A:** The style of presentation is up to the candidate. Any format is allowed as long as it can be easily taken away by the examiner for marking.

**Q Does the realisation or outcome have to be a performance?**

**A:** No. It can be a performance, but may also be an installation, an artefact or artwork, a book or contain some film and photographs. The outcome and its form should be appropriate to the community for which it was developed, and the audience for which it is intended. The specification contains a list of possible ways a realisation can be demonstrated.

**Q There is a lot for the candidate to remember. How can the candidate be helped?**

**A:** The examination paper contains very clear instructions as to what the candidate must consider.

**Q: The students really enjoyed using one of the practitioners in Unit A691. Can we use this practitioner again in Unit A692?**

**A:** No. Different practitioners must be used. Students will be able to choose their practitioners from those studied in both units when they respond to the commission in Unit A693 so they will have the opportunity to use that practitioner again then.

**Q: Do the students choose the practitioners?**

**A:** This is the responsibility of the teacher in the centre. It is recommended the teacher makes the choice. Students can of course select and use additional practitioners, or a centre may set their course up in such a way that student selection of practitioners follows the way the course is being taught.

**Q: Is there any advice about which practitioners should be chosen?**

**A:** One approach is to select practitioners to match the Areas of Study. Some practitioners will demonstrate a particular area of study more successfully than others.

**Q: If students are working in a group, do they all have to do the same art forms?**

**A:** No. Each candidate can contribute through different art forms as long as it is not contrived or the art forms do not appear bolted on without any real connection with the outcome. It may be that students have different talents and so it would be sensible to utilise these to the maximum in developing an outcome.

**Q: Can candidates use more than three practitioners in the coursework units?**

**A:** Candidates can use as many as they like as long as they use a minimum of three.

**Q: How many art forms must I use in my realisation?**

**A:** In the coursework units candidates must use at least two artforms. In the examination candidates must use at least three. Any number over the minimum may be used.

**Q: When using the practitioners to explore and understand the areas of study, do I have to use every area of study with each practitioner?**

**A:** The focus is on the candidates understanding and using the areas of study. How many areas of study a practitioner demonstrates is up the candidate and centre. To have a different practitioner of each area of study would be unmanageable

As long as all the areas of study are covered across the three practitioners as a whole, the requirement is met. It is best to select areas of study that are best represented so that students get strong examples to help their understanding.

**Q: Do I have to use new practitioners for Unit A693, the externally examined component?**

**A:** No. You may do if you want but it is fine to use any three or more of the six practitioners you have used in Units A691 and A692.

**Q: Can candidates do work at home and bring it in to add to their portfolio?**

**A:** Only work completed under the supervision of your teacher can be used as assessed work. This does not mean candidates cannot carry out research at home, and centres experienced in this subject find this is a very useful way of enriching the context for ideas generation.

**Q: Candidates had a great time in the introduction to the course and had some wonderful ideas. Can this be used in work for either of the controlled assessment units?**

**A:** Controlled assessment rules mean that the material used in the coursework units must be new and not worked on before. It is like doing a test – albeit a rather long one.

**Q: In the past some centres have used writing frames to help the weaker candidates. Is this appropriate?**

**A:** Writing frames are not allowed as they direct the candidates to what they should produce. General guides that mirror the format of the examination paper are acceptable. Experience has shown that writing frames actually restrict the more able candidate, and narrow responses by the weaker candidate.

**Q: Can photography or film be used as an art form?**

**A:** This is not a media course and photography and film are not one of the five artforms this specification covers.. Photographs and film can be used as part of the outcome, but the focus must be on the elements that make up the medium. It may be the dramatic construction of an event in a photo or a scene in a film; or it may be the artistic construction of a photo for effect; or it may be creative storytelling through the medium of animation or IT.

**Q: Can Q-base and other music making programs be used?**

**A:** It is not the use of the programme that is important, it is how it is used to create candidates' own work. The same applies to an animation program. If all you do is use what is provided by the programme you are unlikely to achieve good marks.

Technology should be used in the same way that a painter uses a brush, an actor a voice or a musician an instrument, as a tool for creativity.

**Q:** *What about music mixes?*

**A:** This is an area that needs care. Music mixes use existing music, but often create something very original out of the combination of sounds. If what is produced is something new and deliberate, and perhaps has a little of the candidate's own composition as well, then it is likely to be acceptable.

**Q:** *Is it safer to do something simple as an outcome and make it really good?*

**A:** The key is in the word 'safe'. It is likely that such work will have a low level of difficulty and so there will be less opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate skill. Teachers must take the level of difficulty into account when assessing work. On the other hand, candidates should not attempt things that are so hard that they are unable to demonstrate any real level of skill.

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