OCR
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A LEVEL

Moderators' report

ART AND DESIGN

H600-H606

For first teaching in 2015

H600-H606/01/02 Summer 2024 series

Contents

Introduction

Our moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Online courses

We have created online courses to build your confidence in delivering, marking and administering internal assessment for our qualifications. Courses are available for Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016).

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Following this you can also complete a subject-specific Focus on Internal Assessment course for your individual Cambridge Nationals qualification, covering marking and delivery.

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We recommend all teachers complete the introductory module Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, which covers key internal assessment and standardisation principles.

Following this you will find a subject-specific course for your individual qualification, covering marking criteria with examples and commentary, along with interactive marking practice.

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This is a text-only version of this moderators' report. To see the full version with images, please visit [Teach Cambridge](#).

General overview

Moderators reported that most centres had provided stimulating and well-structured courses designed to build skills and contextual understanding. Nevertheless, approaches to work, contexts researched and materials used, all continue to evolve. Changes in GCE A Level Art and Design include:

- evolution in candidates' practices driven by technological advancements and societal attitudes or changes

- impact on how candidates create, exhibit and perceive their work.

It is therefore noted that both the Personal investigation and Externally set task submissions continue to be more succinct, with focused outcomes or conclusions. Increasing numbers of candidates use digital media, which has become much more commonplace and readily available. Across the specialisms, digital portfolios as a means of presentation for assessment and moderation are increasingly popular, allowing some candidates to fully select their work before the final submission. However, some candidates include copious numbers of slides or pages, creating lengthy repetition rather than a focused and sustained investigation.

Some of the approaches presented in 2024 are cutting-edge, including sound and light installations, computer animation, digital painting, computer game graphics, filmmaking, web and app design, computer-supported textile designs, documentary and moving image.

Specialist practitioner-led workshops that empowered candidates to explore their own ideas and resources augmented techniques and skills specific to the specialism entered. Candidates being able to use their own imagery or use materials within the workshops and then applying the knowledge gained to support more sophisticated developments was, for some, the most successful way to accomplish successful outcomes.

Organised visits to galleries or museums have seen a continuing recovery in 2023-2024, supporting candidates in their contextual research. To provide first-hand experiences and relevant research materials, many candidates also undertook self-arranged visits to relevant locations, galleries or museums.

The candidates responded in a variety of ways to the personal or organised excursions, using these experiences to enhance and extend their ideas, where visits had been possible.

For candidates, the experience of seeing art, photography, craft or design first-hand, or having the dedicated experience of a practitioner in person was hugely impactful and helped them to convey personal, informed and independent projects in direct ways.

Climate change, shifting demographics, geopolitics, identity and equality all featured in the work produced in 2024 alongside traditional themes and/or subject matter. The work produced clearly showed that GCE Art is a dynamic landscape where innovation, technology, and evolving societal values are emerging, potentially converging.

Administration

All centres had uploaded the marks through Interchange and received a confirmation email with a list of the candidates required for moderation. Many centres forwarded the relevant documentation to moderators by the 31st May deadline, however in several cases this was not done.

The 'non exam assessment – centre marks form: NEA/A/H600-H606' must be sent to the moderator in advance of the moderation visit.

The majority of centres continue to use the Interactive Assessment Summary Form and it is strongly encouraged as this assists in the avoidance of arithmetical error.

Full instructions are to be found on the reverse of this '**NEA/A/H600-H606**' form.

Digital files should be labelled to remove candidate names and ensuring clear and consistent identification of files. Candidate names should also be removed from within the presentation.

The format this should take is:

Centre Number / Specialism / Component / Candidate Number / Mark, e.g.:

62007_H601_PI_0413_85.

This should be completed in advance of the moderation in 2025.

Moderation

Moderators again reported in 2024 that centres take considerable satisfaction in 'guaranteeing that candidates' work is displayed to the best advantage for moderation'. Moderators once again universally praised the time and effort that centres invest in this vital aspect of the assessment process. Typically, submissions were exhibited vertically on walls or display boards with sketchbooks or other supporting studies at hand. Often the work was carefully labelled, thoughtfully 'mapped' and, of **vital importance, in rank order**.

Centres are reminded that each component should be presented separately and in rank order for moderation purposes.

During moderation, a member of staff responsible for the department should be available at any time to deal with administration or submission related queries.

For digital submissions, centres must facilitate appropriate access by which the moderator can readily make comparisons between the performances of individual candidates. **Invariably more than one monitor/screen is required for moderation.**

Centres are asked to provide a table for the moderator.

In addition, the supporting work of candidates, including sketchbooks or journals should not be placed on the floor.

A parking space should also be reserved for moderators travelling by car.

Personal investigation

The focus of Personal investigations ranged from the conventional and established to the thought-provoking or challenging.

2024 themes included: Decay and Renewal; Cultural Diversity; Portraits of the Young or Elderly; Still Life; Nostalgia or Memories; Body and Human Form; Nature and Environment; Symbolism; City Life; and Human Emotions.

Concerns and the challenges of modern life were reflected in these and other starting points. Moderators also reported the themes included or referenced personal possessions, family photographs or heirlooms, pets or animal welfare and a growing awareness of environmental issues.

In contrast, there was great creativity to be found in the study of contemporary practitioners such as, Beeple (Mike Winkelmann), Shepard Fairey, Ai Weiwei or Kerry James Marshall, many of which have large followings on social media platforms.

Opportunities to be personal, creative, and in-depth are elevated by thoughtful consideration of themes.

Teachers should be mindful of safeguarding practices and the appropriateness of content, both visual and written, for entry into a public examination when considering themes and content.

The work submitted showed that many candidates had independently visited museums, galleries and other external sources of inspiration. This allowed these candidates to gain a significant and important experience, which directly supported their work and the exploration of their ideas.

In-depth exploration of current issues affecting society has allowed for topics and contemporary issues such as worldwide conflict, the impact of social media and migration. It was clear that where candidate-set themes were developed, there was a great deal of individual and significant thoughtfulness as themes and work progressed.

Traditional themes such as portraiture continue to maintain a strong following albeit with many different approaches. Digital enhancements to candidates' own self-portrait photographs were often used as an effective basis for further exploration. Inspiration and ideas gained from the profusion of material available on platforms such as Pinterest, Instagram or X, supported many candidates in their individual journey through the creative process.

Once again in 2024 it is important to stress that at GCE Level, individually negotiated themes appear to be a successful model in which candidates review and reflect on their work and identify their strengths.

Less successful submissions tend to be descriptive rather than show sustained critical analysis. To provide insights into their intentions and progress, candidates should pay attention to the analysis of their own work and that of others. Reviewing and selecting is important in producing a portfolio that represents the 'best of achievement'.

For the purposes of assessment, candidates will provide evidence of all the Assessment Objectives through the **careful selection and presentation** of their work.

Teachers are reminded that the work produced in response to this GCE Art and Design Specification, as specified in the 'Core Content' section, indicates clearly that the aims which the qualification set out have been achieved in terms of candidates being able to show:

- *intellectual, imaginative, creative and intuitive capabilities*

- *investigative, analytical, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgement*

- *independence of mind in developing, refining and communicating their own ideas, their own intentions and their own personal outcomes*

- *an understanding of the inter-relationships between art, craft and design processes and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate*

- *knowledge and understanding of art, craft, design and media and technologies in contemporary and past societies and cultures*

- *an interest in, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of art, craft and design.*

Related study

The aim of the Related study element is to enable candidates to develop a wider understanding of the context of their practical work. The specification states:

Learners are required to establish through this written and, where appropriate, illustrated component, the related context in which their chosen practical portfolio exists.

This may be established by exploring the genre, subject matter, movement or historical framework of the overarching starting point, course of study or theme selected.

The aim of the related study is to enable learners to develop their ability to communicate their knowledge and understanding of art historical movements, genres, practitioners and artworks, considering the way that these change and evolve within chronological and other frameworks. It also builds their understanding of the relationship between society and art: art historical terms, concepts and issues; methods of researching, investigating and analysing; and how works are interpreted and evaluated.

The related study should be separate and clearly identifiable from the contextual research embedded in the development of the practical portfolio. Learners should also highlight their own work and clearly distinguish it from collected or transposed material.

Learners may produce the related study in an appropriate form of which the following are some examples: an illustrated essay, digital presentation/ blog, illustrated study sheets or written report.

It is a requirement of the related study that all source material and research are listed and acknowledged in a bibliography and should be clearly identifiable in the work presented for assessment.

The Related study continues to allow candidates the opportunity to produce research that is an extension to their practical work. For many, there was a close connection between the contextual references included in the Personal investigation and the work that was analysed in greater depth in the studies. This allowed the cross-pollination of ideas between contextual understanding and creative practice however this approach may not fully support the *'related context in which their chosen practical portfolio exists'*.

The most successful studies were resourcefully developed, with candidates creating objects d'art that matched the aesthetics of their chosen genre. The purpose of the Related study in allowing candidates to reflect upon their creative practice was evident in these instances. The enlightening and convincing analysis allowed candidates to draw pertinent conclusions that made it easier to see and read the evidence of sophisticated investigations or research.

However, for some candidates, the Related study became rather descriptive in repeating the review and refinement of their own contextual research embedded in the practical portfolio. Where this was the case, there was little evidence of an extension to the practical work or insightful reflection.

Some centres favoured the creation of traditional illustrated essay responses, where candidates referenced artistic images alongside written prose, however other centres encouraged more creative ways to produce/present the Related study.

Once again in 2024, in some instances, images were not included in the Related study, or shown only on a small-scale which did not allow for visual reflection or direct analysis. Centres should seek to ensure candidates create a balance between text and images to strengthen their skills in visual communication. Where there was evidence of careful consideration of imagery, the application of visual understanding allowed candidates to generate more sophisticated responses.

Some Related studies made associations to social pressures and demonstrated an awareness of contemporary topics, including racism, gender, historical or cultural identity. Occasionally, the complexity of the topics chosen by candidates were not fully developed and a narrower field of investigation would provide greater opportunity for real critical appreciation.

Many candidates produced a Related study using digital approaches, including video presentations with audio analysis, digitally designed magazines, PowerPoints as well as the traditional illustrated essay response applied using platforms such as 'Google Slides' or 'Microsoft Sway'. News articles and YouTube videos were often cited as well as more conventional book research. The most successful candidates were able to analyse research from a wide range of sources, which led to mature responses. Some candidates had the chance to speak with artists via online platforms or by dropping by their art studios.

Bibliographies, are in the main included as required by the specification and it is pleasing to see that Harvard Referencing was used by many candidates, preparing them for academic study in higher education.

Externally set task

The quality of work presented for the Externally set task showed that most candidates had embraced their chosen theme and applied their skills, knowledge, and understanding in a focused way. The range of media was extensive, as was the scale of work, with some centres displaying large-scale outcomes in all the specialisms. Candidates' ideas and responses to the selected themes have been critically informed by a wide range of artists, practitioners and craftspeople.

Moderators stated that candidates should be commended for their performance in this component stating that 'responses to the selected themes showed creativity and ability in equal measure'.

A diversity of approaches was seen, and the work produced was a vibrant and pleasing celebration of candidate achievement.

Theme 1: Feline

A popular choice across the specialisms but best received by Fine Art candidates with Options (a) and (b) frequently chosen or referenced. Links with artists named in option (e) were rare, instead artists such Louis Wain and Agathe Singer prompted many candidates to take a decorative and illustrative approach to the subject. While this encouraged some thoughtful observations, moderators reported some predictable and straightforward development of imagery.

The potential to investigate either associated contexts such as those alluded to in Options (c) and (d) or the potential cultural explorations of cats, suggested in Option (e) were less explored. However, a number of moderators commented on seeing interesting work which evolved from words in Option (a) focused on the physical qualities of felines, such as agility and grace.

Examples included ballet imagery linked to feline grace and contextualised through the study of Edgar Degas' paintings and pastels. Moderators commented that many candidates looked to their own pets for inspiration.

While this produced some carefully rendered studies, the quality of observation proved variable, with some candidates lacking the technical skill to manage the complex anatomy of cats and possibly relying too heavily on snap shots of pets with unhelpful distortions and foreshortening.

Other interesting interpretations were noted in H602 submissions, where candidates developed packaging for cat food and other related products.

Imaginative and skilled submissions seen in Textiles and Three-Dimensional Design were noteworthy, however and surprisingly, photographic responses were less in evidence.

Theme 2: Science

'Science' was a very popular theme across the specialisms and most frequently selected in Fine Art entries. Moderators stated many candidates favouring the open-ended nature of the theme, allowing for varied and multiple interpretations. While some candidates veered towards the exploration of space travel and wider scientific innovation, the majority explored sub themes related to biology and chemistry.

Words and images given in Options (a) and (b) inspired observations of the human body and plant and animal cellular structure. Some very accomplished textile and mixed media work was observed by moderators both in Art, Craft and Design and Textile Design.

Some candidates had taken a sculptural approach to visually dissecting and reconstructing organic structures using a range of materials. In Three-Dimensional Design, 'cellular structure' prompted some large-scale ceramic pieces, elsewhere the textures and shapes of marine life informed jewellery design.

Several moderators commented on the lengths gone to by candidates to research this theme, citing contact with local hospitals and science departments within relevant institutions.

While direct reference to Option (c) was rarely seen, the link between a scientist and their laboratory practice initiated some very inventive and visually rich photoshoots in Photography and Fine Art. Indeed, scientists and scientific pioneers were themselves a topic of exploration, with a number of candidates producing compositions which represented and celebrated leading innovators, including the 'hidden figures' of NASA.

Theme 3: The Dinner Table

A popular theme with candidates, across all the specialisms. Clearly this theme had offered many candidates flexibility to explore both the physical qualities of food and its serving and consumption, alongside wider cultural and religious meaning.

Many moderators commended approaches which focused on uncomplicated, yet in-depth observations of foodstuffs in direct response to practitioners such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Edward Weston. Many candidates interpretated this theme culturally, drawing on their own food heritage to create rich imagery influenced by practitioners such as Nickolas Muray and Anjola Awosika.

Plates of food featured frequently, and often unexpected references enabled some imaginative developments, such as illustrations of food sliding from plates inspired by Yousuke Goda.

A number of candidates explored Dutch 'still life' art or 'vanitas' imagery in reference to Option (e). Another popular reference from Option (e) was Carrie Mae Weems, whose *Kitchen Table Series* inspired both photographers and painters to create compositions studying domestic dynamics centred around the dinner table. In one notable Textiles example, Caitlin Winner and Pam Ingolls' depictions of domestic life set the context for embroidery onto tablecloths.

For some, religious painting, such as Caravaggio's *The Supper at Emmaus* or Leonardo's *Last Supper* sparked ambitious photographic and painterly set pieces of figures around tables. The practicalities of dining were investigated by Three-Dimensional Design candidates who interpreted the theme to design tableware or food containers. One notable example included table mats designed to both protect and act as discussion prompts around the dinner table.

A wide range of exciting and diverse practitioners in all the specialisms were used to inform and support individual directions, with contemporary artists such as Alai Ganuza and Jane Dunn Borresen a good example.

Theme 4: Bridge

A lesser subscribed choice across the specialisms but well received by some Graphic Communication, Photography and Three-Dimensional Design candidates.

In these cases, bridge structures provided location shoots for photographers and design briefs for three-dimensional designers. Graphic Communication candidates explored the interrelationship between text and image in a range of applied approaches.

Some moderators did report predictability in literal responses. However, other moderators reported much innovation in evidence, examples being the form and structure of suspension bridges used to inspire furniture design within Three-Dimensional Design and the exploration of alternative bridge structures, such as a 'violin bridge' in Fine Art.

Several moderators reported interesting interpretations of the theme to explore cultural bridges, resulting in studies of the links between Japan and the West. Some candidates went beyond the obvious, prompted by artists such as Chiharu Shiota, which inspired further conceptual exploration using string and wire to link forms. Generational bridges and bridges through time inspired creativity in these cases.

Theme 5: Conserve

Although not one of the more popular themes, this was well represented across the specialisms. Many candidates who choose this theme were Fine Art or Graphic Communication entries.

Some candidates elected to consider 'food conservation' referencing the work of Janet Fish, from Option (e) and/or Lorn Curray to investigate the reflective and transparent qualities of food packaging. Elsewhere, the environmental links prompted by Option (d) and (e) especially proved inspiring to some candidates. Notable examples included mixed media pieces both utilising and highlighting waste materials and textural, expressive paintings of waste in the ocean.

Some moderators reported personal and inventive responses to the conservation of memories and heritage, no doubt inspired by the word 'cherish' in Option (a), including responses to the work of photographer Toni Luciani.

Further, wider interpretation was seen in submissions exploring the theme from the standpoint of mythology, with the myth of Pandora featuring in painting work for example, in Fine Art.

Theme 6: The Sky

There was a steady response to this theme, especially among Fine Art and Photography entries.

Some expected references to historical artists, such as John Constable and J. W. M. Turner were seen especially in Fine Art. The Impressionists and Post-Impressionists also proved popular among some candidates. However, some more unexpected links were made, such as views from plane windows inspired by the work of Trevor Young and Jim Darling.

Other candidates explored mythology associated with the 'sky'. While this could prove derivative, on the whole moderators reported such ventures into the 'narrative' as successful and highly personal. In less successful examples, moderators often found candidates drawn to imagery associated with astrology, where they struggled to move beyond the plethora of existing and variable quality of imagery already in existence.

A number of candidates explored religion or personal faith and moderators commented that this often proved to inspire moving and personal responses.

The theme proved especially popular with candidates submitting work in Photography, with some technically challenging photography of night skies seen. Moderators reported seeing some inventive approaches to the theme, with candidates exploring tactile gestural qualities in their work, especially in relation to changes of weather and time of day. The resulting imagery was enhanced by this.

Theme 7: Print

Not widely seen by moderators, but when selected it proved equally popular within all the specialisms.

The theme's possibility to focus on or spotlight 'process' was exploited by candidates, appreciating the opportunity to explore both traditional and/or digital applications to abstract and repeat imagery.

Interpretations were not limited to two-dimensions, with moderators commenting on thoughtful abstractions of observed forms being taken into both two-dimensional and relief print for mixed media or sculptural outcomes.

Printmaking in lino and screen were seen, alongside digital print processes used in both Graphic Communication, Textiles and Three-Dimensional Design. Indeed, in Textiles, some candidates worked with ambition to create their own motifs from observational studies, which were developed into printed fabrics and then translated/transferred onto garments.

In Photography, interesting examples of double exposure and some analogue photography were reported, with artists such as Anne Marie Petri and Grant Legassick referenced. In a number of centres, cyanotypes were explored successfully with reference made to the work of Anna Atkins, Angela Chalmers, Chloe McCarrick, Gohar Dashti and Joy Gregory, among many others.

Assessment Objectives

AO1: Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.

Knowledge and research are driving forces in A Level Art and Design, with contextual understanding a crucial element across the submissions to support a journey of concepts; from the initial planning stages to the final refinement of work in achieving/producing intended outcomes.

Traditional practitioners, craftspeople, installation artists and film directors were among the contextual sources across the specialisms. The themes were kept current through references to popular culture with television programmes, film and social media all cited. There was a resurgence of research into classical works in art and literature this year.

The wide scope of research led to exciting responses that synthesised a range of media and approaches from historical and contemporary practitioners. Many candidates were working beyond transcriptions to show a deeper understanding by making connections through genre, style or subject matter.

For many candidates, creating transcriptions from their chosen artists gave opportunities to develop skills and practise techniques. However, for some, the use of transcriptions was not only a starting point but a full realisation and, in these cases, work became pastiche and did not reflect truly personal development of ideas.

Work that is easily accessible through social media such as Instagram was referenced, sometimes using QR codes to showcase the images and clips that the candidates had seen and responded to. Digital research works best alongside first-hand research, where candidates had visited exhibitions and even artists' studios. Continued and all-embracing use of Pinterest and Instagram to find practitioners, while individual, do not always bring underlying qualities of formal artists.

In practical work, most candidates were able to communicate levels of understanding of their selected works through developmental studies and personal departures incorporating techniques and compositional devices learnt from their artists. In some instances, candidate perception and analysis were mixed, with some candidates repeating biographical information, rather than truly reflecting on the specific artworks they were engaging with.

Advanced concepts or abstracted works which sparked investigations, while clearly personal and interesting, were not always applied successfully to the candidates' own work.

AO2: Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.

Use of media and the exploration of techniques has been impressive once again in 2024, with many candidates achieving high levels of technical proficiency. In sketchbooks, on worksheets and through supporting studies, candidates have shown skill and accomplishment, but this has not always fed into final outcomes or been reflected in culminating pieces.

Drawing, paint in oils and acrylics, collage, and digital painting and drawing were all seen, as well as use of animation and product design. For some, exploration became somewhat repetitive, with multiple test strips and re-creations of existing photographs, without leading to any personal or meaningful refinement. This approach was especially evident in Photography.

Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, alongside Procreate were used in many centres to record and explore the development of compositions. There is increased evidence of considering compositions, but it has not quite achieved the illusion of depth on a flat surface expected in Fine Art, for example.

Where exploration was less extensive, the output appeared unoriginal rather than advancing the growth of concepts or ideas.

Many departments are continuing to place much emphasis on providing candidates with opportunities to explore the qualities of a an amazingly diverse range of materials, processes and techniques linked to intended outcomes.

AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.

Recording continues to take many forms, including a large amount of drawing in many centres. It continues to be gratifying to see and was generally well-executed, showing candidates' skills and abilities in communicating ideas.

In many submissions, written ideas communicated truly personal and fascinating insights into the candidates' work and clearly communicated their understanding of the role of art and design in our society.

Recording through photography continues to be commonplace and enhancement using digital manipulation the norm.

The recording of ideas and observations was thorough and there was much evidence of skill and refinement.
A range of media had been utilised and for many candidates, directly connected to intentions, however, in some submissions there was evidence of a lack of consistency in the recordings undertaken. The recording of observations and ideas was wide-ranging but, in some cases, became repetitive, rather than truly explorative.

When recording, candidate awareness of the 'formal elements' continues to see a new renaissance, with work showing an awareness of foreshortening, considered viewpoints and illusionistic compositions. Placement of images, the nuances of different types of mark-making in conjunction with line, form and colour allowed candidates to record and resolve their work with a high level of technical skill.

AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

For many candidates, outcomes have moved beyond a singular item and are often entwined with other media, such as projections and audio, as well as installation spaces. Where candidates had carefully considered the display of their work, they were able to showcase a sophisticated response to 'final pieces'.

Increasingly candidates in Textiles are taking work off the wall, off the mannequin and into the environment to create installations, reflecting the contemporary practice in galleries.

Many teachers commented that most candidates were proud of their responses and felt that they had selected and presented to the best of their ability. Some candidates presented the full body of work

because they did not appreciate this was unnecessary and the mixture of work of an inconsistent standard submitted was potentially disadvantageous.

Moderators commented again in 2024 that most candidates had made the most of their abilities in all the specialisms and those who had '**organised, selected and presented**', most effectively submitted work that truly represented the best of their ability.

There is rightfully a clear focus on final outcomes and/or extended pieces, but for some candidates these did not always reflect the skills, ambitions or potential demonstrated in earlier studies.

Especially evident in the Personal investigation component:

Some candidates are not truly selecting and presenting their work in an organised manner, rather presenting the whole of their output over their course. This proved disadvantageous for many, and centres should encourage their candidates to organise, select and present their work to communicate their ideas more effectively. A lack of selection resulted in too wide a range of material, often not relevant, which undermined candidate achievement.

Digital technologies across the specialisms

Art, Craft and Design (H600/01/02)

Combinations of 'areas of study' are considerable with Fine Art and Textiles, Printmaking and Photography, 3D reliefs and installations, Fashion and Graphics were all employed to explore a variety of ideas incorporating digital technologies. Moderators highlighted digital sketchbooks, cloud-based files and in-tablet camera technology captures practical work and enables placement into digital sketchbooks or further editing with mobile applications.

Fine Art (H601/01/02)

Fine Art continues to be far from solely a 'painting and drawing' biased discipline of the past. It is commonplace for moderators to witness submissions that incorporate:

- digital drawing, including the use of Procreate on tablet devices
- graphic tablets for drawing straight into Illustrator and Photoshop on a desktop device
- possibilities to animate illustrations and timelapse recording a workflow.
- exploration of projection including projection mapping content to objects.

Graphic Communication (H602/01/02)

Moderators noted that candidates increasingly use:

- InDesign for desktop publishing and e-publications containing moving image and linked content
- digital tablets with mobile versions of adobe products and applications such as Procreate, connect seamlessly with desktop edits.

Photography (H603/01/02)

In this specialism moderators continue to note:

- digital imaging, sophisticated in camera technologies, user-friendly interfaces, high-quality output, and more versatility in-one-camera technologies, including moving image at 4k and above and in slow motion. Premiere for moving image editing and Adobe Action for sound editing. Greater emphasis seen in audio recording for still and moving image works including soundtracks to films, computer games and podcasts
- in studio technologies including software such as Capture 1 to view images as they are shot on a screen or projector, supporting sophistication in quality of the recording
- Photoshop editing, Lightroom editing, editing the code of an image to distort or modify
- portable lighting systems for internal and external use, LED panel lights to support high-quality image recording. Light modifiers including colour gel photography and wider use of polarisers and on-camera filters
- 360 cameras for recording for VR experiences, editing capabilities in Premiere and AfterEffects
- drone technology, for aerial moving and still image record. Small-scale lightweight drone technology with higher output quality, licences not needed, free to use
- camera stabilisers coinciding pocket technology for recording stabilised footage on a phone
- AR triggering, of still and moving image on location and location mapped content capabilities.

Textile Design (H604/01/02)

Responses to this specialism continue to split into two main pathways: Textile Design and Fashion. The former is shown in many forms, specifically, constructed, dyed, expressive and/or printed Textiles. Commonality it is found in the employment of processes and techniques which include free machine embroidery, screen and photo-transfer printing, to name but a few. Digital applications included:

- the use of Illustrator and Procreate for digital drawings.

Three-Dimensional Design (H605/01/02)

The increasing uptake in this specialism is, in part, due to the continuing merger and mutuality between Art, Design and Technology Departments. Once again moderators reported the growth in the use of:

- CAD modelling including Blender, Sketch-up, Fusion 360, Cinema 4d, Vector works and applications on tablet technology including Shapr 3d and the use of Lidar technology on mobile devices for 3D scanning objects and spaces resulting in rendered 2D images to 3D printed and 3D milled objects.

Critical/Contextual Studies (H606/01/02)

Critical and Contextual Studies continues to attract a dedicated following that is clearly aware of new digital approaches:

- handwriting recognition software such as Nebo, enables tablet handwriting to be transformed to type
- speech to text is more sophisticated and more widely used and Grammarly for high-quality grammar checking
- digitally printed documents, pamphlets, magazines and books.

The specialisms

Textile Design (H604/01/02)

In Art, Craft and Design – combined specialisms candidates must work in two or more specialisms from those listed in bold below. Candidates may work in an area or areas of study within and/or across specialisms.

H601: Fine Art

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Portraiture; Landscape; Still Life; Human Form; Abstraction; Experimental Imagery; Narrative; Installation or Working in a Genre.

H602: Graphic Communication

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Image and Typography; Illustration; Advertising; Layout Design; Packaging; Editorial Design; Experimental Imagery; Signage or Abstract approaches.

H603: Photography

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Portraiture; Landscape Photography; Commercial Photography; Still Life Photography; Documentary Photography; Experimental Imagery; Editorial Photography; Photographic Installation; The Photographic Process; Moving Image; Animation.

H604: Textile Design

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Garments/Fashion; Accessories; Soft Furnishings; Printed and/or Dyed Textiles; Constructed Textiles; Textile Installation; Expressive Textiles; Digital Textiles.

H605: Three-Dimensional Design

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Craft or commercial ceramics; Commercial sculptures or sculptural commissions; Commercial three-dimensional design, working for a client to create a three-dimensional item such as an item of jewellery; Design and/or construction for television, games or film; Stage, environmental or architectural design and/or construction; Experimental three-dimensional design (construction/montage/ assemblage); Body ornament (jewellery, fashion accessories, body painting and film or TV prosthetics); Product design and realisation; Construction in a range of materials.

H606: Critical and Contextual

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Fine art and sculpture; Design; Craft; Art theory; The human form; Landscape and natural forms; Still life and designed objects; Architecture and the built environment; Art movements, styles and genres; Curating exhibitions; Art management and art in the community; Cultural representations within art and design; Multimedia, emerging technologies and their use in art.

Common misconceptions

First-hand observational drawing is not a requirement for a high level of achievement. Recording should be appropriate for the specialism undertaken.

Moderators are not involved in marking work, rather they make a comparison to national standards to discern if centre assessment is accurate. The internal marking and moderation process is in place to ensure consistency of marking within the centre, whereas external moderation by the awarding body ensures that centre marking is in line with national standards.

Moderators are unable to amend the rank order of the work displayed and it is therefore the responsibility of the centre to ensure the order is correct. Centres are reminded that each component and specialism should be displayed separately for moderation.

The quality of work submitted is crucial rather than the quantity. The specification requires candidates to organise, select and present work for submission, thus a concise portfolio of high-quality studies is far more desirable. Moderators do not need to see the course, or indeed candidate improvement, but clear evidence of achievement.

Candidates are required to explore their theme or topic rather than 'experiment'; Assessment Objective 2.

The Related study should be separate and clearly identifiable from the contextual research embedded in the development of the practical portfolio. Candidates should also highlight their own work and clearly distinguish it from collected or transposed material.

Common misconceptions: The following as reported by moderators during the 2024 session

Moderators to be able to moderate work in corridors and open spaces, which often become populated or are prone to interruptions.

Teacher assessment can include giving weight to 'creative risk-taking' or the candidate's journey, neither of which are in the Assessment Objectives.

That it is appropriate for noisy activities to be taking place in nearby spaces/locations during the moderation being facilitated.

The Related study can be inter-connected with the candidates' practical work, consequently existing information contained and marked in Assessment Objective 1 'Develop'. It can, however, be an extension of topics previously explored.

Candidates' work can be presented on the floor or combined with teaching and learning exercises produced as part of the general GCE course.

Moderators can view candidate submissions in very tight, confined spaces with poor lighting.

Moderators do not need a desk with a power supply nearby. The moderator requires a suitable clear surface on which a laptop/paperwork will be used.

Avoiding potential malpractice

The integrity of candidate work must be always maintained, with no third-party involvement in either supporting pieces or final outcomes. For example, AI content creation tools such as Chat GTP may have been used to generate written analysis or part or the whole of the Related study. Evidence for this may include, incomplete referencing, where a candidate has not acknowledged the source of a piece of writing or varying quality of content or style of writing, dated expressions and references to past events as being current, use of American expressions and contexts, inconsistent use of font or format (if the document is typed).

It is also possible for candidates' own work to be plagiarised if made available, via online technology, on social media or online forums. Candidates posting their work online, in part or full, before an assessment session is complete, including the period for Review of Results, should be avoided.

Online platforms where work is stored must be secure.

In the Externally set task, preparatory work must be submitted before the 15-hour time period. Centres should not allow candidates to continue working on any preparatory materials either during, or after, the 15 hours has taken place.

Centres are reminded that candidates' submissions must not include inappropriate, offensive or disturbing material including obscenities, lewd comments or drawings, offensive comments aimed at others, and sexist or racist remarks.

Helpful resources

See OCR's [Teach Cambridge](#) website for a range of resources, guidance, and information on: teaching activities, schemes of work, teacher guides, sample assessment material, candidate exemplars, OCR Train, Switching to OCR, summary brochures.

OCR wishes to thank teachers for their encouragement and assistance during moderation visits. The support materials available for both candidates and teachers were greatly influenced by this and the suggestions made.

A small selection of GCE work displayed for moderation in 2024 is shown in the exemplar photographs in this report. OCR would like to express our gratitude to all the candidates, teachers, and moderators who made this possible.

For further information regarding professional development for this specification 2024-2025, visit the [professional development area of OCR's website](#) or contact OCR Professional development training on 02476 496398 or email professionaldevelopment@ocr.org.uk.

Supporting you

Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website **Teach Cambridge** to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

Don't have access? If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can forward them this link to help get you started.

Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the OCR website.

Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our website.

Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, sign up here.

OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

Signed up for ExamBuilder?

ExamBuilder is a free test-building platform, providing unlimited users exclusively for staff at OCR centres with an Interchange account.

Choose from a large bank of questions to build personalised tests and custom mark schemes, with the option to add custom cover pages to simulate real examinations. You can also edit and download complete past papers.

Find out more.

Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

Find out more.

You will need an Interchange account to access our digital products. If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.