



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Rewarding Learning

GCE AS and A level subject criteria for art and design

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Advanced subsidiary (AS) and advanced (A) level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding and skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject. They provide the framework within which the awarding body creates the detail of the specification.

Subject criteria are intended to:

- help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies
- define the relationship between the AS and A level specifications, with the AS as a subset of the A level
- ensure that the rigour of A level and standards are maintained over time
- help higher education institutions and employers know what has been studied and assessed.

Any specification that contains significant elements of the subject art, craft and design¹ must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

2. Aims

- 2.1 AS and A level specifications in art, craft and design should encourage students to develop:
- intellectual, imaginative, creative and intuitive powers
 - investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgement
 - independence of mind in relation to developing their own ideas, refining their own intentions and personal outcomes
 - an interest in, enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of art, craft and design
 - the experience of working with a broad range of media, including traditional and new media and technologies

¹ Art and design should be interpreted as art, craft, design and new media throughout.

- an understanding of the interrelationships between art, craft and design processes and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate
- experience of working within relevant and real frameworks and, where appropriate, make links to the creative industries
- knowledge, understanding and application of art, craft, design and media and technologies in contemporary and past societies and cultures
- an awareness of different roles, functions and audiences and consumers of art, craft and design practice.

3. Specification content

- 3.1 AS specifications in art, craft and design should specify that the candidate engage in integrated critical, practical and theoretical study in art, craft and design.
- 3.2 At A level, specifications should build on the AS, allowing for greater depth of study. This might be achieved by, for example:
- greater specialisation in a particular medium or process
 - extended development of particular themes, ideas or issues
 - further theoretical research and increased requirement to demonstrate understanding through integrated practical and written forms and other communication devices
 - more rigorous exploration of an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach.

Titles and endorsements

- 3.3 All art, craft and design specifications must offer an unendorsed course in:

Art, craft and design

A broad course exploring practical and critical/contextual work through a range of 2D and/or 3D processes and media.

- 3.4 All art, craft and design specifications may also offer one or more of the endorsed areas listed below.

Fine art

Including a range of approaches including painting, drawing, mixed-media sculpture, installation, printmaking, lens- and light-based media and new media.¹

Critical and contextual studies

Including areas of study across art, craft and design.¹

Textile design

Including fashion, printed and/or dyed fabrics, constructed textiles and, installed textiles.¹

Graphic communication

Including illustration, web design, advertising, packaging, design for print, multimedia and, animation.¹

Three-dimensional design

Including jewellery, body ornament, theatre design, exhibition design, film-set design, interior design, product and/or environmental design and, architectural design.¹

Photography – lens- and light-based media

Including portraiture, landscape photography, still life, documentary, photojournalism, experimental imagery, photographic installation, video and film.¹

Notes

All endorsements must allow candidates to work with both traditional and new media.

Candidates will be allowed to work solely with new media within any endorsement provided the aims and assessment objectives are met. Clear guidance needs to be provided to indicate how this might be achieved.

Within each endorsed area candidates' work should include practical and critical/contextual work in one or more of the specified areas.

Candidates may enter for more than one endorsed area of art, craft and design.

¹ The examples below for each of the above headings are neither compulsory nor exclusive.

Structure

3.5 **AS** must comprise two units as follows.

AS – Unit 1 Coursework portfolio

The unit will:

- be internally set, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated
- be based around themes and subject matter developed from personal starting points.

AS – Unit 2 Controlled assignment

The unit will:

- be externally set, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated
- comprise an externally set task or stimuli presented to the candidates at the start of the controlled test
- include a continuous period of focused study, the timing of which is outlined in section 6.4.

A2 must comprise two units as follows.

A2 – Unit 1 Personal investigation

The unit will:

- be internally set, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated
- be based around themes and subject matter developed from personal starting points
- require the candidate to communicate their understanding through integrated images and texts that include a written element of no less than 1000 words.

A2 – Unit 2 Controlled assignment

The unit will:

- be set by the awarding body, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated
- comprise an externally set task or stimuli presented to the candidates at the start of the controlled test
- include a continuous period of focused study, the timing of which is outlined in section 6.4.

Notes

All units must require work to be evaluated, selected and presented for assessment by the candidates.

Critical and contextual understanding may be demonstrated through visual, oral or other appropriate forms.

Knowledge, understanding and skills

3.6 AS and A level specifications should require students to develop practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of:

- relevant materials, processes, technologies and resources
- how ideas, feelings and meanings can be conveyed and interpreted in images and artefacts
- how images and artefacts relate to the time and place in which they were made and to their social and cultural contexts
- continuity and change in different genres, styles and traditions
- a working vocabulary and specialist terminology.

3.7 AS and A level specifications should require students to develop the skills to:

- record experiences and observations, mainly in visual form; undertake research and gather, select and organise visual and other appropriate information
- explore relevant resources; analyse, discuss and evaluate images, objects and artefacts; make and record independent judgements
- use knowledge and understanding of the work of others to develop and extend thinking and inform own work
- generate and explore potential lines of enquiry using appropriate media and techniques
- apply knowledge and understanding in making images and artefacts; review and modify work, and plan and develop ideas in the light of own and others' evaluations
- organise, select and communicate ideas, solutions and responses, and present them in a range of visual, tactile and/or sensory forms.

4. Key skills

4.1. AS and A level specifications in art and design should provide opportunities for developing and generating evidence for assessing relevant key skills from the list below. Where appropriate these opportunities should be directly cross-referenced, at specified level(s), to the key skills standards, which may be found on the QCA website (www.qca.org.uk).

- Application of number
- Communication
- Improving own learning and performance
- Information and communication technology
- Problem solving
- Working with others

5. Assessment objectives

5.1. The assessment objectives and the associated weightings for AS and A level are the same.

5.2. All candidates must be required to meet the following assessment objectives. The assessment objectives are to be weighted in all specifications within the indicated tolerances.

Assessment objectives		Weighting
AO1	Develop their ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.	20–30%
AO2	Experiment with and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining their ideas as their work develops.	20–30%
AO3	Record in visual and/or other forms ideas, observations and insights relevant to their intentions, demonstrating an ability to reflect on their work and progress.	20–30%
AO4	Present a personal, informed and meaningful response demonstrating critical understanding, realising intentions and, where appropriate, making connections between visual, written, oral or other elements.	20–30%

Progression between AS and A2 is to be recognised through either differentiated weighting of assessment objectives or performance descriptions.

6. Scheme of assessment

Assessment

- 6.1. All A level specifications in art, craft and design will be 100 per cent internally marked and externally moderated. Awarding bodies will offer support, guidance and training for teachers, on an annual basis, in their role as examiners.
- 6.2. Both the AS and A2 controlled assignment units will include assessment that is externally set, internally assessed and externally moderated.
- 6.3. For all internal assessment, specifications must make clear how reliability and fairness are secured, by setting out requirements that ensure the robustness of each stage of the assessment, ie:
- the specific skills to be assessed
 - setting of tasks
 - extent of supervision in carrying out of tasks
 - conditions under which assessment takes place
 - marking of the assessment and internal standardising procedures
 - any moderation process.

Synoptic assessment

- 6.4. All units of the A level are regarded as synoptic in their practice. The definition of synoptic assessment in the context of art, craft and design is as follows.
- Synoptic assessment involves the candidates in drawing together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different parts of the A level course.
 - Synoptic assessment will involve the candidates in selecting and presenting work for examination that demonstrates their strengths across the areas of knowledge and the range of skills described and shows their ability to sustain their own lines of enquiry.
 - Synoptic assessment will involve the candidates in bringing together and making connections between the areas of knowledge, the work of artists, craftspersons or designers and the range of skills described and learnt throughout the course and applying this by responding to one or more of the following:
 - o a stimulus or issue

- o a design brief or problem
- o a task that specifies an image, object or other outcome to be achieved.

Examining times

- 6.5. Schemes of assessment must comply with the maximum and minimum examination times set out below and should not exceed 20 hours overall.
- At AS, a period of 5–8 hours of sustained focused work.
 - At A2, a period of 12–15 hours of sustained focused work.

Papers should be given to candidates on the first day of February or as soon as possible after that date to provide a preparation period.

Quality of written communication

- 6.6. AS and A level specifications will be required to assess the candidates' quality of written communication in accordance with the guidance document produced by QCA.