

GCE



# Chief Examiner's Report Art and Design

Summer Series 2017





## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Education (GCE) in Art and Design for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk).



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# GCE ART AND DESIGN

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Assessment Unit AS 1 and AS 2

#### Overview

The Chief Examiner recognises that the introduction of the Revised Specification presented a challenge to all centres, but is pleased to note the very enthusiastic way in which most teachers and candidates responded to this new challenge. Approaches to the new specification were varied, but the majority of centres welcomed the opportunity to develop a more experimental and creative approach to their courses and there were many very positive achievements. It was a pleasure to visit centres where the displays were creative, personal and exciting, in a wider range of formats that had been the norm in previous years. Teachers reported that they had enjoyed the opportunity to approach the course in a less formulaic way and that, although candidates had struggled with this initially, that they had really enjoyed this freer way of working.

In general, most centres had clearly read the new specification thoroughly, and attended support events, devising a course that met the specification requirements but also suited the needs of the centre and its candidates. However, there were centres that had not done so, meaning that candidates had failed to address one or more of the assessment objectives adequately or, in some cases, at all. While the majority of candidates had explored a wide range of media, techniques and processes, it was questionable whether candidates in some centres had worked in two or more disciplines as required by the specification for the Art, Craft and Design (Combined Studies) option.

It was pleasing to note the greater variety of approaches to drawing, including evidence of much more drawing from first hand sources. Most centres had introduced a series of drawing workshops as part of AS1, resulting in a much greater understanding by their candidates. "There was a distinct positive increase in drawing from real life which led to maturity in observations and innovative approaches to drawing. Drawing work was less inhibited, more expressive and free, reflecting leaps in the students' learning". However, in some centres, transcription from photographs still dominated and there was little variety in approach. Centres are advised to read the advice given in the revised specification and at support events to ensure that AO3 of the Experimental Portfolio is being addressed correctly. However, it is recommended that centres balance the delivery of workshops with the need for candidates to 'reflect, review and refine their ideas and experiences'.

For the first time, the theme for AS2, 'Layers', was available at the beginning of the AS year. Centres introduced the theme at different stages of the course, with some working from this throughout the two units and others introducing it after a series of creative workshops. However, in some centres, there was little evidence of working from the theme and connections were tenuous, at best. Where the paper had been used as a stimulus, pupils had explored a wider range of contextual references, leading to more informed practical work. However, in some centres, candidates had clearly begun by considering what the theme meant to them, and then looked for contextual sources to fit their interpretation. Centres are reminded of the need to integrate contextual examples firmly within the development of the candidate's own work and ideas. "If investigations into context and the work of others were not relevant, then appropriate exploration of ideas, experiments with media and development of skills were all affected". Where this was done well, there was a greater diversity of work and outcomes.

There were some exciting, contemporary outcomes for AS2, with candidates in some centres producing substantial, personal outcomes that exemplified the high level of creativity and innovation needed to achieve marks in higher levels in this unit. However, it was disappointing to note that the majority of outcomes were still in the area of 2D fine art and that many candidates were still playing safe in AS2, despite the increased emphasis on AO4, the final outcome, in this unit. Responses based on aspects of portraiture, such as layers of emotion or aging, dominated. There was little 3D or design work and little work in digital media used as outcomes in AS2; “the many opportunities for computer-led design on offer are not being explored by a generation so familiar, immersed and practised in new technologies”.

It was pleasing to note an increasing confidence in the use of critical language and visual analysis by many candidates. However, in some centres, any annotation was largely anecdotal and analysis of the work of other practitioners superficial. “Too many historical facts were included as part of the evaluation on the artist. Often this was copied and pasted directly from the internet... These contextual sources were used as fillers and were not used as inspiration to be further developed by the candidate”. Centres are reminded of the introduction of a more rigorous approach to the Written Investigation in Unit A21, The Personal and Critical Investigation, together with the requirement to use credible and recognised artists/designers and craftspeople. It is recommended that centres make greater use of the paper as a starting point for this piece of work, refer closely to resources provided by CCEA, and attend any support events.

The Chief Examiner would like to commend teachers and their candidates for their very positive response to this new specification. However, teachers are reminded of the need to attend Agreement Trials to avoid over-marking of candidates. Teachers must ensure that marks in Level 4 are only awarded to work that represents the very best that can be expected from candidates at this level, as there are still far too many candidates being awarded full marks.

## Principal Moderator's Report

### Assessment Unit AS 1 and AS 2

#### Overview

I am pleased to report that the moderators agreed that the vast majority of centres were positive and enthusiastic about the revised specification. Many teachers found the marking challenging in respect of applying the new matrix and subsequently justifying the criteria but this was only to be expected with a new specification.

This year the theme was available from the outset of the course in September with a choice of when to introduce it to the candidates. Most centres opted to start with the theme from the beginning of the course.

Centres were generally well prepared for moderation with the relevant paperwork completed accurately enabling the moderation process to run smoothly. Any minor inconsistencies were quickly rectified without a great deal of difficulty.

Care had been taken by centres to create displays which would advantage all candidates and in nearly all centres the work of all the candidates was on display. The majority of work was displayed on boards, in sketchbooks or in folders. Some moderators had difficulty in assessing work which was displayed at a level too high to be read easily. Displays were for the most part in a quiet area of the school and moderation was carried out uninterrupted.

This year there were ten re-moderations and a total of forty three centres had their marks adjusted at post moderation. The adjustments were mainly due to over marking in centres especially in the top bands. It is vitally important that teachers adhere to the matrix rigorously when marking the work and not awarding marks at a higher level than warranted. Moderators noted that not all teachers involved in the marking had attended the support days and subsequently this was reflected in the standard of marking and application of the criteria across the assessment objectives.

This year there were still too many candidates being awarded full or very high marks in both units of work. It is to be hoped that when teachers review the marks given to their candidates' work, they will realise that it is creative leaps their candidates need to take and not tentative steps if they hope to achieve the top mark bands. Marking at the lower mark bands tended to be more realistic and as a result of this more accurate.

It was refreshing to see that centres had taken their students to visit galleries, museums and field trips. This was of great value to a number of candidates. Workshops had been undertaken to explore drawing skills, printmaking, ceramics and Photoshop. These were useful as the candidates learnt from the sessions and were able to incorporate their learning into their own work.

The use of specialist vocabulary was for many candidates descriptive rather than evaluative/ analytical recording. This applied even to candidates scoring at the higher levels in the practical work. One moderator noted that "schools struggled when it came to specialist knowledge and the art vocabulary associated with the critical evaluation of their own work and that of others." The moderator suggested that more time should be given to the study of Art and Artists in both contemporary and historical context to enable candidates to develop that knowledge and associated language skills.

As in previous years the majority of work presented for assessment was almost exclusively from the Fine Art area of practice. This was disappointing as the experimental work produced in Unit 1 offered many alternative and more exciting solutions to the Personal Response.

## Assessment Unit AS 1 Experimental Portfolio

The moderators reported that teachers had commented favourably on this unit of work. The majority of centres introduced the theme in September into their Experimental Portfolio. Candidates did not work rigidly to the theme but moved in and out of it depending on the activity taking place. This method appeared to work effectively in allowing the candidates time to consider how they would develop their work towards their Personal Response. Teachers remarked to moderators that their candidates were unsure at first of the freedom the experimentation gave them but confidence grew with more experience and courage.

Experimental work was done mainly through workshops and classroom based activities with visits to galleries, Seacourt and museums. There was a wide range of experimental work in both media and techniques. It was disappointing however to see a lack of 3D experimentation in many centres.

Recording from first hand sources is encouraged in the new specification but there was little evidence of it on display. Some centres had made attempts to work from life but these were abandoned in favour of the safety of the photograph. A moderator commented "I do hope that they will start to realise that it isn't the photographic realism and polished drawings that are worthy of top marks in the revised specification but it is the candidates who are willing to make mistakes, solve and refine problems and explore a variety of techniques that will excel."

The moderators were pleased to report on how fully engaged the large majority of candidates were with all aspects of the Unit's assessment objectives. The responses varied in quality and balance of involvement but there was no evidence of indifference or reluctance to try. In the first year of the specification this is a great success.

- A01** There was a marked increase in the number of visits to museums and galleries. Schools organised and provided opportunities for their students to work with practitioners. This had a positive effect on the students' learning and development. These experiences enriched the learning process for the candidates. There was in depth exploration and investigation into the work of artists and designers and some competent written communication was evident in most centres.
- A02** Teaching strategies differed from centre to centre. Most centres used a workshop based approach with each candidate experimenting with the same techniques and processes. This was found to be very successful. There was an increase in the use of sketchbooks and they were used very successfully by students to show the development and progression of their ideas. Candidates were less inhibited in the knowledge that making mistakes and learning from them was more important than producing a range of beautifully presented pieces.
- A03** Drawing was less inhibited, more expressive and free. There was some very good recording through lens based media in photography and film. Recording was mainly from secondary sources and tended to be photorealistic in style. Moderators found the marking of this unit to be lenient especially at the top mark bands. Teachers were marking in the correct levels but were not using the full mark range. Marking in Levels 1 and 2 was more accurate and realistic.

## Assessment Unit AS 2 Personal Response

Many moderators reported that moderation was delayed due to confusion between where Unit 1 ended and Unit 2 began. In many instances both units of work were displayed alongside one another and some of the work belonging to Unit 1 could quite easily have supported the Personal Response. In some cases candidates were disadvantaged by the wrong distribution of work. Teachers are reminded that the 'Statement of Intent' is the dividing line between the two units.

The theme 'Layers' was well received by all, but disappointingly instead of a varied and exciting range of outcomes most candidates opted for the 'safe option' i.e. 2D painting.

By far the most popular response was portraits. These were usually large scale pieces in paint or mixed media. The quality varied from excellent to pedestrian. Moderators had been hoping to see evidence of risk taking and creative leaps at this stage but were disappointed by the majority of candidates opting for what they perceived to be the safe option.

Design was sadly lacking again this year with only some centres opting for graphic design through IT. Textile/fashion was limited with some of the costumes being unfit for purpose. Ceramics was the most popular.

Teachers felt more confident marking this unit of work because it was similar to that of the old specification. Moderators found teachers' marking to be more realistic and accurate for this unit.

**AO4** The majority of outcomes were 2D paintings. The best pieces were personal and skilful but they were rarely innovative and highly creative. The weakest were unoriginal and basic. There were some very interesting connections with the research undertaken and the progress and learning shown in the top bands. The weaker candidates also showed this to some degree. All candidates demonstrated a level of understanding of contexts and formal elements. Evaluations varied from very thorough and insightful to superficial and descriptive.

Attendance at Agreement Trials is very important this year as the work on display will be live work from this year's series.

## Contact details

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