

GCE



**Chief Examiner's and
Principal Moderator's Report
Art and Design**

Summer Series 2018



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.

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GCE ART AND DESIGN

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit AS 1 and AS 2

Overview

As this was the second year of the revised AS specification, most centres felt more confident in the delivery of the course, and were more aware of what the expectations were. The Chief Examiner visited a variety of centres and was impressed by the engagement of the pupils, the greater understanding of different types of drawing and the range of outcomes. Teachers were overwhelmingly positive about the new specification and had made real efforts to embrace its requirements. They told moderators that candidates liked the diversity of the new specification as it allowed them the freedom to develop their own interests. However, a small number of centres had retained the formulaic approach often found in the legacy specification. There were some issues with centres not having Statements of Intent and Evaluations available for moderators. Teachers should note that these are a mandatory part of the specification.

Unit 1 – Experimental Portfolio

Most centres began with a series of experimental workshops to introduce candidates to a range of media and techniques. In some centres, the workshops related directly to the theme. In others, the theme was introduced later in the course. It was pleasing to note that most candidates presented at least some drawing from first hand sources, demonstrating an understanding of different types of drawing. However, in some centres, there was still an over-reliance on drawing from photographs.

It was disappointing to see that, in some centres, references to the work of other practitioners was more of a box-ticking exercise, with lack of analysis (candidates writing about the life of the artist rather than analysing the work and its relevance to the candidate's work) and little impact on the development of the candidates' own work and ideas. As one moderator noted, "weaker work demonstrated superficial understanding of contexts. This was to the detriment of the creative process and resulted in a lack of creative investigation". However, there were many examples where, "candidates' work was very well supported with thoughtful research and contextual referencing, without the over-reliance on magazine and internet sources". It was positive, that many candidates had the opportunity to view work at first hand through visits to the RUA and other exhibitions, in many cases using this experience to directly inform their work. One senior moderator noted that contextual understanding was more likely to be superficial when candidates had explored too many references, and that teacher guidance is needed in this respect.

Unit 2 – Personal Response

Moderators reported a generally positive response to this year's theme of 'Juxtaposition', though one senior moderator felt it was not as well understood by some candidates as in previous years and that weaker candidates often produced predictable responses. However, the overwhelming feeling was that interpretations were varied and personal with most centres encouraging candidates to explore the theme in ways that had meaning for them. It is still disappointing that, in some centres, references to the theme were a token at best and it is clear that candidates have not been encouraged to use the paper and the references contained as a starting point.

While there was much exciting practice in evidence, the excitement of Unit 1 did not always carry into Unit 2, with many seeing this as a time issue. There was continuing evidence of candidates producing too much preparatory work for this unit rather than focusing on refining ideas for the outcome itself which carries most marks for this section of the specification. Teachers are reminded that candidates can begin work on the outcome any time from the beginning of the unit and that the outcome(s) should reflect this. One moderator noted, “at times, preparatory work (for Unit 2) was more successful than the final outcome due to candidates finding a time limit. This appeared to be due to teachers’ direction, beginning the final piece too late”. However, it was a joy to see the engagement of some stronger candidates who had produced substantial, innovative and skilful responses that displayed a high level of personal understanding and commitment. It was also very positive to see an increase in design responses.

It is vital that teachers take the opportunity to attend Agreement Trials and other support events to see examples of good practice at all levels. This will be particularly useful for centres who have concerns over the division of work between Units 1 and 2 and also the balance of preparatory work and final outcome in the Personal Response.

Principal Moderator's Report

The Moderation Process/Administration

Moderators reported that most centres were well prepared for moderation with the relevant documentation completed correctly. The most common errors were numerical mistakes on the OMR forms and Candidate Record Sheets, although these were down from previous years. Some moderators experienced problems in centres where there was a consortium. It is extremely important that these centres pay careful attention to the instructions provided by CCEA regarding the administration of a consortium to ensure that the moderation process is able to be carried out correctly.

Work was generally well displayed and clearly labelled. The moderators reported that most centres displayed the whole centre’s work and not just the sample. No one had difficulty in assessing extra candidates’ work if requested. There were still some centres displaying work at a height too high to read. Some centres solved this problem by photocopying all the notes that were out of reach for the moderator to read. Centres are reminded that there should be only one Centre Representative throughout the duration of the moderation. Other teachers and senior management cannot be included in the process.

The Quality of Teachers’ Assessment

Application of the Assessment Objectives was accurate for most candidates’ work. However some teachers are still not using the full mark range for the various levels and many centres persisted with the practice of marking to the edge of the acceptable range. This practice penalises the consistently sound centres that adhere to the assessment matrix accurately and this can impact on the grade boundaries. Teachers are reminded that their marking should be accurate and that the acceptable range is solely for the moderators’ use. Marking outside the acceptable range was more frequently found in unit two. In unit two the top levels were awarded too easily for the slightest evidence of the level descriptors Objective factors. In Assessment Objective four teachers were too ready to award marks in the very top bands and sometimes failed to differentiate between levels three and four. This year level two was used much more effectively in some centres but the majority of marks still fell within levels three and four. One moderator noted “The necessity to make changes to the TAC1 was noted. Changes can be necessary for various reasons, such as errors in calculations or inaccurate Candidate numbers/names. Teachers should check TAC1 carefully before submitting. In all these instances CCEA must be contacted.” When centres have been

advised that their marking is either lenient or harsh, they are advised to reconsider their application of the assessment criteria and ensure that a representative of the centre attends the Agreement Trials.

Addressing the Assessment Criteria

Most moderators reported that the criteria were evenly addressed. All candidates engaged with all the criteria with different levels of success, reflecting their interest and engagement with the course. Some centres continue to encourage/permit candidates to produce an unnecessary amount of written work. Where written work is succinct and supports the study then it is appropriate. At times this is not the case and the written comments offer no critical evaluation or understanding and do not reflect candidates' learning. There is an increasing practice of covering sheets with writing, almost framing the work in words, for no real purpose. The handwriting can be small and difficult to read, or the sheets placed too high for the moderator to read comfortably. This is an irritation and teachers should advise candidates against this. Gallery visits, artists workshops, in-house workshops all featured in many centres helping to address a wide range of the assessment criteria.

Assessment Unit AS 1 Experimental Portfolio

Centres chose two ways of delivering the structure of the course. In some, the theme was explored from September forming the basis of all experimental work and in others, the initial approach was led by the use of media, materials and processes and the theme only introduced towards the end of unit one. Both approaches were equally valid and challenged the candidates.

Presentation varied from centre to centre but the most popular forms were by portfolio or sketchbooks. In one centre all candidates used A3 'contextual reference' sketchbooks to accompany and support their work. One moderator noted that these would be useful for candidates continuing Art at University.

Workshops were facilitated in many centres; these allowed candidates to develop skills and explore new media and techniques. It was also very encouraging to see that centres were actively encouraging candidates to attend life drawing classes and visit museums and galleries to enhance their learning.

Candidates used a wide range of media, materials, techniques and processes to explore and develop their work. Care must be taken when attempting to experiment with as wide a spread of media as possible. A moderator said "If nothing is investigated in sufficient depth to allow a high level of learning to take place, then the standard of the outcome will be jeopardised." In some centres the range of media and techniques was restricted to painting/drawing which limited their development into 3D and other areas of design in Unit 2.

There was strong evidence of students being encouraged to work from primary sources. Some produced quick, experimental sketches presented alongside very detailed analytical studies. The top candidates used exciting, contemporary connections, without the over-reliance of magazine and internet sources to inform and support their work. The weaker candidates demonstrated a very superficial understanding of contexts, sometimes assuming that copying the artist's original source would suffice.

Assessment Unit AS 2 Personal Response.

The theme “Juxtaposition” was interpreted in a wide variety of imaginative and personal ways. Most centres responded to the theme from the beginning of September and as a result of this, exploration was in some cases highly innovative. This sometimes led to very ambitious creative intentions with strong, exciting contemporary connections. One moderator reported that one centre had only allocated an exam period of ten hours for the full completion of the personal response. This time constraint seriously impacted on the quality of the work. Once again this year some centres had difficulty allocating work to each unit. Sometimes too much work was allocated to unit two when unit one would have benefited from it. Teachers are reminded that the Statement of Intent is the start of unit two.

The majority of work this year in relation to the theme was large in scale, with many students opting for exciting installation based sculpture outcomes. The display of these outcomes was carefully considered in some centres, reflecting sound guidance and support from teachers.

At times the preparatory work was more successful than the final outcome due to candidates finding that they did not have enough time to successfully complete the final outcome. It was disappointing to note that in some centres candidates had been permitted to undertake overly ambitious responses in terms of scale. These often resulted in poor quality outcomes.

There was strong emphasis on 2D Fine Art drawing and painting as the final outcome this year but moderators also commented that ceramic, fashion, animation and graphic design outcomes were increasingly evident and executed with success. There were very few candidates who chose alternative specialisms at AS this year.

Primary sources were actively used and contextual referencing was generally focused, meaningful and relevant to the candidates’ work. This was evident especially in the work of the top candidates. All Assessment Objectives were generally successfully met by all the candidates.

The Final Evaluations varied from centre to centre. The best were detailed, thorough and informative whereas the weaker candidates seemed to simply document the various processes and materials they had used. Some centres did not have any evaluations at all. Teachers are reminded that an evaluation is an integral part of the specification and must be included in the candidates’ displays.

Finally on behalf of the moderation team I would like to commend the dedicated students and teachers working together with energy and enthusiasm. Their personal efforts and hard work were clearly evident in the work on show this year.

Chief Examiner’s Report

Assessment Unit A2 1 and A2 2

General Observations

This was the first year of A2 Revised Specification. The Chief examiner visited a range of centres, some of whom had continued the exciting, experimental work developed at AS, particularly in their approach to drawing. Moderators reported that the new specification had been well received by both teachers and students and that there was less pressure to complete outcomes. However, there was evidence that some centres were still not fully meeting the assessment objectives of the revised specification. In particular, some candidates did not display the more focused, in-depth research and development expected

at this level. There were still some reported difficulties in knowing where to separate work for Unit 1 and Unit 2 and this is to be expected in the first year of the revised A2 specification. Teachers should take advantage of the Agreement Trials in the autumn term where good examples from this year's cohort will be available. However, there were still issues with teachers over-marking, especially in Unit 2 where outcomes were being awarded marks which were much too high for the standard of work seen.

Unit 1 Personal and Critical Investigation

In many centres, teachers had clearly used the theme of 'Networks' as the starting point for work from the beginning of the year, giving candidates the opportunity to produce in-depth, personal interpretations of the theme. Where this was the case, the breadth of work was much greater with candidates presenting much more original bodies of work. In one centre, there was only a token reference to the theme by candidates who, seemingly, had come up with their own focus for their A2 work, looking for a way to justify its connection to the theme afterwards. In most cases, this was tenuous at best and bore no real connection to the work. One pupil wrote "when the theme was given to us, I had to think of how I would relate this to portraiture, which I have chosen to carry on from last year". In this centre, all but one candidate produced work that was a variation on the same subject, leading to a lack of originality.

It was also disappointing to see some centres where candidates had not explored any of the practitioners listed on the paper. Please note that the practitioners have been selected to address the need for 'credible' references to be used, particularly in relation to the Written Investigation. In the work of the strongest candidates, the work of their chosen practitioners had been used to drive ideas and was strongly integrated within the candidate's own investigations. One APM reported, "in the very best centres, there was evidence of a real depth of contextual understanding resulting in very exciting experimentation which clearly influenced not only candidates' use of media and techniques but also their concepts and ideas". Many centres had given their candidates the opportunity to view work at first hand through the RUA and other exhibitions.

Unit 2 Thematic Outcome

Again, while the standard of outcomes varied between candidates, the best work resulted from a mature understanding of the work of others, and in-depth personal investigation in Unit 1 leading to exciting and original outcomes. Some candidates presented more supporting material than was needed. Where candidates had spent too long producing copious preparatory work, insufficient time was often left for the production of an outcome of sufficient skill and complexity. The outcome can be started any time after the beginning of Unit 2. Candidates who only produce their outcome in the 15-hour invigilated period, or start shortly before, will be disadvantaged. It was good to see centres where candidates had explored their personal interpretation of the theme in depth in Unit 1, had experimented with relevant media and techniques, informed by an excellent understanding of the work of others, leading to a skillful and substantial outcome. Careful planning and prior experimentation also enabled candidates to take creative risks with their work, leading to some really exciting and original work.

Some candidates made good use of digital technologies to explore ideas of colour or composition or, indeed to refine ideas for a digital outcome. Outcomes were as varied as digital painting, mixed media installation and animation, though in some centres, there was disappointingly little variety in the type of work and subject matter. Again, centres are reminded that students at A2 level are required to demonstrate an understanding of consumer, audience or purpose in their work. This was lacking in some centres whilst other candidates had presented thoughtful considerations of how their work would be viewed or displayed in a wider context, showing an awareness of contemporary practice.

Unit 1 Personal and Critical Investigation, Written Investigation

General Observations

This was the first year of the externally-assessed Written Investigation for the revised specification. Many centres had followed the criteria for this element closely. However, some centres did not seem to be aware of the changes in the new specification, and candidates were disadvantaged as a result. In addition, some centres had overlooked the fact that this component is externally assessed by CCEA and teachers had submitted work with marks already completed on the cover sheet. Centres should ensure that they follow the guidance closely and are reminded that instructions and support materials are found in both the specification and the subject microsite in the following locations:

Guidance in Specification:

- General guidance pp.28-31, p.42.
- Assessment matrix p.56-57 (please refer to amended version).
- Using references in written work pp. 71-72.

Other Support Materials:

- Factfile: GCE Art and Design, Guide to Written Investigation. This document gives clear guidance on how candidates should structure their work.

In particular, centres are reminded of the following requirements:

- The essay should be word-processed on A4 paper and contain no more than 2,000 words (as from September 2018). Some centres did not notice that a sketchbook approach, or hand-written work was not permissible. One candidate submitted their work as a series of Powerpoint slides with a black background, making the work difficult to read and annotate for the examiner. Some candidates greatly exceeded the word count producing documents up to three times longer than the maximum word count. However, this did not lead to stronger pieces of work. There will be a penalty for this in future.
- The work should focus on a credible and recognised practitioner(s), theme or movement, defined as “professional and publicly recognised by experts”. It is clear that some students needed more support and guidance from their teachers in choosing suitable subjects for their investigation. The weakest pieces of work focused on a large number of practitioners, amateur artists or work found on Pinterest, with little supporting factual information.
- It should be noted that candidates’ own work is not the focus of this work. Some centres approached the task as if it was the old specification, with candidates discussing the evolution of their own work through a series of workshops and listing all of the practitioners they had encountered through their research, with little or no critical analysis.
- Candidates should include a bibliography according to the guidelines in the specification.
- Transcripts of interviews should not be included in the main text. If candidates wish to present these, they should include an appendix.
- Quotations should be fully referenced according to the guidance in the specification.
- Candidates should try to use a range of sources in their research, including books or other printed materials where possible, to ensure that their own opinion is balanced or informed by the views of recognised experts.

- It is concerning to see a number of candidates who did not seem to have an understanding of plagiarism, with text directly copied and pasted from websites with no referencing or acknowledgement of source. This will be reported by examiners and investigated by CCEA and can have very serious consequences for candidates.

General Points

A01 Knowledge and Understanding

There was a very varied range of responses to this AO, with some candidates demonstrating excellent skills in critical appraisal, while weaker candidates adopted a descriptive approach. Candidates should take the approach of an academic study rather than a diary approach to the development of their own work and ideas. Having a narrow area of focus (no more than 2-3 practitioners or a focus on a movement, technique or issue) made it easier for candidates to explore their topic in sufficient depth to display critical analysis. Listing a large number of influences (over 30 in one case) made it impossible for candidates to examine their subject in any more than a superficial way. One candidate focused on their own practical work which did not meet the requirements of the specification. While there is a requirement for candidates to explain how their investigation arises from their own interpretation of the set theme, this should not form the main focus of the investigation. A strong choice of subject makes critical analysis much easier. The best candidates had clearly read a range of sources before they started to write, producing much more informed work.

A02 Creative Process

Candidates who set out a clear focus from the outset were most successful in this section. As one examiner said, “using the well established technique of framing the title of the study as a question can work here”. Some centres adopted a common approach to the work, with all candidates citing the same workshops and practitioners. The best work arose from the candidate’s own choice of focus, where they were more likely to sustain interest over the course of the essay. Often the study lacked direction. A clear structure of introduction, related content and a conclusion worked best or “say what you are going to say, say it and sum up what you have said”!

A03 Skills

Again, there was a very wide range of standard of response. Many candidates failed to follow the CCEA guidelines for referencing or did so in a limited way. Others relied on too narrow a range of sources, even when investigating practitioners about whom much has been written. It is recommended that candidates use both books and online sources, where available, and that chosen websites are reliable. It was very frustrating to repeatedly read the misuse of ‘mediums’, rather than ‘media’ as the plural of ‘medium’ in many of the investigations. As one examiner said, “the plural mediums applies only in the case of more than one psychic in communication with the spirit world”! The use of spellcheck is not consistent and plagiarism was often easily apparent through either the presence of US spelling or inconsistency between the quality of the candidate’s own writing and copying and pasting from online sources. It is vital that candidates proof-read drafts where possible, before they are submitted.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit A2 1 and A2 2

General Observations

It is clear that the new specification for Art and Design has been well received by both teachers and candidates. All agreed that the update was overdue and that the changes are for the better. Candidates have responded positively and have enjoyed what they experienced as greater freedom and less time pressure.

Administration and Assessment

Thanks to the hard work of teachers, the moderation process generally went smoothly. The majority of centres were well prepared for the moderation process, had displayed the work clearly, with easy access and the documentation was well organised and in order. Some centres presented Unit 1 and Unit 2 next to each other, labelling which work belonged to which unit. Other centres displayed the units in separate areas which was better for the moderation process as it was easier to identify the work in each unit. Teachers comments on the candidate record sheets were very helpful.

In a few centres, there was confusion over the point at which Unit 1 finished and Unit 2 began, as well as the exact requirements for the Personal and Critical Investigation. Some candidates created an Experimental Portfolio, similar to AS. As the specification continues these issues should be resolved.

As this was the first year of the new specification some teachers had concerns marking using the new assessment matrix and tended to mark to the top of the levels instead of considering the full mark range within each of the levels. In general, the marking of unit one was the more accurate of the two units. Centres tended to mark more leniently for their top candidates, often awarding marks in the top Level 4, when in fact the work would have been better placed in Level 3 or the bottom of Level 4, as the work lacked originality and innovation required for the top Level 4 marks. This was especially noticeable in AO4 in Unit 2, where the mark range was very wide. Marks were awarded more accurately at the lower levels.

Unit 1 Personal and Critical Investigations

The majority of centres started the course by introducing the theme 'Networks' to the candidates, in September.

The centres that displayed best practice, pushed boundaries and ensured that their candidates recorded from life in a variety of media and this aided their development. Those candidates who were awarded the higher marks, took risks and worked with a wide range of media in a variety of scales and materials, the practice of speed drawing and sketching; of animals, buildings, interiors, landscapes, people etc, brought a clear understanding of the formal elements and a real breath of fresh air to the candidates' work. However, recording from primary sources was misinterpreted by some centres, with a noticeable over-reliance on working or copying directly from photographs and incorrectly categorising this as first-hand drawing and recording from observation.

There was significantly more focused experimentation with various techniques and media. Centres also dealt with the experimental work in differing ways, from very free and expressive to more refined and controlled work. When executed well, candidates were encouraged to confidently try out new things and to work towards ideas that were creative and innovative.

Most candidates grasped the significance of undertaking contextual investigations into the work of artists appropriate to their intentions. Where there was limited evidence of contextual investigations understanding remained superficial. It was also clear that merely trawling Pinterest and collecting a sort of scrapbook of found images does not lead to meaningful engagement with contemporary practice in the visual arts. The stronger submissions tended to pursue connections of a number of artists, contemporary often juxtaposed with the Great Masters. They displayed a wealth of contextual knowledge and understanding, resulting in very exciting experimentation. This influenced not only candidates' use of media and techniques but also their concepts, ideas, intentions, knowledge and understanding.

This shift in approach to the practical investigation was also reflected by those who addressed the written element with enthusiasm, and appeared to be better informed in the language, principals, media and processes of art and design and artists which ultimately resulted in more involved learners and better informed, more exciting work and outcomes.

Workbooks proved very popular, as well as, a few larger A2 sheets, the best were highly creative, lively, purposeful, innovative and exciting. Candidates were encouraged to experience real art and design through organised school trips and personal visits to local galleries and those further afield. The Mac, Belfast Exposed, Void Derry and The Tate London were just some of the places enjoyed by candidates. In the best centres these experiences supported and enhanced the creative development of work. Some candidates had annotated their work using appropriate specialist language, expressing clear intentions and thought processes. Other candidates had written very descriptive copious comments, which did not enhance their work or help the viewer understand their intentions, perhaps their time could have been more successfully utilised in the practical aspect.

Unit 2 Thematic Outcome

The response to the theme "Networks" was positive and provided the opportunity for a great diversity of exciting, perceptive and highly creative examples of mature, carefully conceived outcomes and of course also the more predictable and pedestrian interpretations.

The majority of centres included the Statement of intent (or their version of) which marked the beginning of the personal response. This greatly assisted and gave a clear insight and understanding of the thoughts, ideas, intentions and thinking processes of the candidate. Occasionally, the statements of intent were not used appropriately as a starting point but written in hindsight.

There was bolder work with more risk taking evident in many centres, however, some centres had failed to fully address the requirements of the new specification and the candidates in these centres produced work which, although at times very skilful, did not fulfil the requirements of the new specification and therefore could not achieve marks in the top level band.

In a number of cases, insufficient thought was given to the purposes of outcome and how the work of candidates might be received by a potential audience. This was also reflected in the generally limited ability of candidates to evaluate their own work beyond documenting things which they might do differently, if they were they to repeat the exercise.

Although there was a good understanding of what was expected for Unit 2, some confusion existed over how much work was needed to support the outcome with some sheets being inappropriately placed in the incorrect unit or else over lapping work in Unit 1 with work in Unit 2 and therefore not showing that further development or progress had been made.

Unfortunately, there were only a few examples of design work and other disciplines as responses were mainly in the area of 2D fine art. However, when present, three-dimensional outcomes in mixed-media, ceramics, fashion design, textile design, architectural

pieces, graphics, video art and installations were often confident, exciting and creative. It was very exciting to see such confident, well executed and interesting work coming from candidates of this age. Some candidates may understand the concept of risk-taking but quite often, play it safe and make it achievable to try to ensure they get the marks. This may take more time to implement.

Final Comments

Some noteworthy aspects of this year's A2 course included the positive way in which nearly every pupil attempted to address the Assessment Objectives, the impressive evidence of much excellent and informed contextual referencing, the level of creative and intelligent thinking apparent in the very personal development of ideas which enabled some to move into more conceptual areas and outcomes; and the strong experimental work in a wide range of materials and media. Overall, the new specification appears to offer every candidate the opportunity to develop their creative ideas in an exciting thorough and structured programme, enabling all abilities to make progress and many candidates to excel.

In several centres the preconceptions associated with the legacy A2 specification had influenced the teaching of the new specification, this had a disappointing influence on the candidates' work. It was worrying to realise that some teachers had not been able to attend the new specification support days. Teachers need to be encouraged to attend all relevant training so that they can best support their candidates.

Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

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