

GCSE



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

Summer Series 2024





## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2024 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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# GCSE ART AND DESIGN

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Subject Overview

This report, compiled with the moderation team's observations and evidence from centres, acknowledges the efforts made by teachers and centres to return to pre-pandemic standards.

While some signs of previous excellence, energy, and enthusiasm among candidates were evident, returning to pre-pandemic standards remains a challenge due to persistent issues like skill and confidence deficits, and absenteeism. To prevent rising grade boundaries, CCEA instructed teachers to assess work objectively using the matrices, aligned with pre-pandemic standards. However, assessment in many centres was over generous, resulting in increased grade boundaries. Although disappointing for many candidates, this issue can only be resolved through improved teacher assessment.

This report details our moderation team's observations. To prevent further grade inflation, teachers are strongly advised to read this report and attend agreement trials in the Autumn term.

## Principal Moderator's Report

### Moderation

This series' Moderation Briefing Meeting took place at Integrated College Dungannon. We extend our thanks to the Head of Department, Principal, and staff for their cooperation, organisation, and warm hospitality.

We thank all teachers who prepared thoroughly for moderation using the most up to date 'Instructions to Teachers' booklet, which resulted in a smooth and error-free moderation process. However, some centres did not consult the latest guidance, leading to avoidable issues. We strongly encourage all centres to use the current guidelines to ensure a smooth and accurate moderation process.

### Preparation for Moderation Visits

- **E-Moderation:** This was the second year using E-Moderation, and its use significantly improved. Further refinements are expected.
- **Paperwork:** Paperwork preparation improved, but many centres missed the new requirement for Candidate Permission Forms for each candidate and component, as per GDPR rules. A clear map with candidate marks and numbers must be ready at the start of moderation.
- **Display:** Only the work of the sampled candidates should be displayed, with Components 1 and 2 shown separately and in rank order. All work should be clearly labelled and displayed in a quiet, appropriate space. No other work should be present during moderation.

## During Centre Visits

- **Communication:** CCEA moderators are only permitted to communicate with one centre representative. Brief conversations can occur upon arrival, but any disclosed factors affecting candidate progress cannot be considered. Moderators cannot provide feedback on moderation outcomes. Despite this, some moderators were pressed for more information or challenged on their decisions.
- **Presentation:** Moderation was sometimes hindered by poorly presented work, such as overlapping portfolios or work placed at height or on the floor.
- **Process Integrity:** Moderation is a secure process and must not be interrupted. Delays occurred due to unauthorised entry by pupils, teachers, or other staff. Once moderation begins, altering the display or adding work is malpractice. If a remark or remoderation is needed, no changes to the work should occur between the first moderation and the remoderation.

## Internal Assessment Overview

While some centres used the matrices correctly and marked accurately, many marked leniently and not in line with pre-pandemic standards. Candidates were often marked at least one level higher than deserved across all assessment objectives in both components. Marking frequently exceeded the acceptable range, with some centres awarding full marks to up to 60% of their cohort.

Teachers must attend agreement trials to fully understand the matrices, how to use them, and the required standard for each assessment objective. Many teachers factored in issues like absenteeism and health, which is biased marking. This practice affects all candidates and will continue to cause issues unless marking is consistent with CCEA standards. Extenuating circumstances can only be considered by the senior team post-moderation, following a special consideration request.



## Component 1

### Part A Exploratory Portfolio

Interpretation of Part A varied widely. More centres adopted a thematic approach, linking Parts A and B, or used Part A to develop skills for Part B. Many continue to deliver prescribed workshops or exercises to explore visual elements. While exercises on formal elements can boost skills, they are not required and often limit higher-ability candidates. In such cases, work was repetitive, with similar portfolios across cohorts, restricting creativity.

Candidates who thoroughly explored a select range of artists and practitioners use of the visual elements and used learning to develop ideas achieved higher marks. Learning was more evident, and the work was more personal, creative, and independent.

Practitioner-led workshops, though valuable, often resulted in similar work across centres with many candidates not using learning to inform their own ideas. Many centres used a small number of the same practitioners which led to very similar work seen across centres.

Streamlined approaches to exploring media and techniques allowed for more sophisticated skill development. Less successful approaches overwhelmed students with techniques without time for independent application.

Many centres overmarked, particularly at Levels 4 and 5, awarding high marks to work that lacked appropriate understanding, skill, and creativity.

### Part B Investigating the Creative and Cultural Industries

This year saw increased use of clear, accessible, engaging, and appropriate briefs. In many cases this supported candidates to respond confidently in creative and innovative ways. Many centres used past paper briefs, which was helpful for ESA preparation. Some centres successfully linked Parts A and B by themes or disciplines, with the best centres planning clear progression based on Part A learning. While most candidates worked in 2D Fine Art, there was a rise in effective Design projects, particularly in Graphic Design, Ceramics, and Textiles.

Assessment objective one remained the most challenging. Clear briefs allowed candidates to demonstrate purpose and intention through research and idea development. In contrast, candidates with retrospectively added, or unclear briefs struggled to show the necessary confidence, purpose, and understanding of the Creative Industries. This often led to overmarking of technical skill over critical understanding.

When candidates conducted independent research, their ideas were dynamic and meaningful. However, prescribed tasks and sources led to less personal and ambitious work, with more able candidates appearing less invested and not reaching higher levels.

A concern is the reliance on a single artist or practitioner, leading to similar outcomes for all candidates, with limited opportunity for idea development. Candidates cannot achieve higher marks without the chance to develop ideas independently.

The most successful portfolios featured independent research, ideas, and experimentation in direct response to a brief. However, many candidates presented excessive work not always linked to the brief, with whole cohorts beginning projects with exercises more suited to Part A.

In the best centres, candidates connected their preparatory work to produce personal outcomes across various disciplines. However, in several centres, outcomes were disappointing, lacking meaningful review and refinement. Generally, outcomes lack ambition, though this is improving.

Overmarking was evident across all assessment objectives, with a tendency to over-reward perceived technical skill (see general points on drawing below), when research, critical engagement, creativity, and idea development were not equally strong.

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Component 2 Externally Set Assignment

This year saw significant improvements in the use of the examination paper for the ESA, with many teachers implementing it effectively. More candidates used references, briefs, and starting points from the ESA rather than merely responding to the set theme. All candidates are entitled to a printed version of the paper to explore for themselves, and failure to provide this is malpractice.

The theme 'Waste' inspired exciting and thoughtful responses, spanning a wider range of disciplines such as 3D Design, Fashion, Illustration, and Moving Image Arts. Portfolios were more concise, with focused idea development, experimentation, and refinement. Purpose and intention were clearer than in Part B, and despite time constraints, outcomes were more ambitious. Teachers are advised to encourage candidates to plan outcomes achievable within the 10-hour time limit.

This was the strongest component, with assessment criteria appropriately addressed. Overmarking occurred, but less so than in Component 1.

### General Points

#### Drawing

- There remains a concerning pattern of over-reliance on tracing methods and over marking of this often low skill method of recording.
- Opportunities to develop drawing and observational skills were often sparse, absent, or disregarded in favour of tracing.
- Candidates frequently used secondary imagery, even when first-hand sources were readily available.

Recording from primary sources and using drawing to develop original imagery is a course requirement (see specification, page 8).

#### Contextual References

- Many candidates relied on online artworks and imagery that lacked credibility.
- Candidates often did not critically engage with artists' or designers' work, with references added retrospectively in an attempt to meet assessment criteria.
- Better practice involved researching and analysing references to support idea development throughout projects, with critical engagement being central to good practice.
- In some centres, all candidates used the same references, which limited opportunities for personal work and ideas for some.

### **Presentation of Work**

An increasing number of centres used sketchbooks very effectively to document the progression of work.

## Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

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