



**Pearson
Edexcel**

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel Advanced Level GCE
in Art and Design
(9AD0/9FA0/9GC0/9PY0/9TD0/9TE0)

Component 1 Personal Investigation

and

Component 2 Externally Set Assignment

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Publications Code 9AD0_01_1906_ER

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Introduction

This report is a comprehensive overview of the performance of candidates in the GCE Art and Design Advanced Level 2019 series and is compiled from observations made nationally and internationally by the whole assessment team.

It is important therefore, that the practitioners who are delivering this qualification receive copies of it, and examination officers in centres relay it immediately to the relevant personnel, as it may help to inform their procedures for the 2019 examination series.

The qualification has now fully bedded in and Centres are generally following the guidance provided to design their course structures and establish their assessment procedures. However, there are still a small collection of Centres that do not use the Performance Calculators to fine tune their marking prior to filling in the Assessment Grids. It is noticed that these Centres consistently have their marks adjusted by visiting moderators and they are advised to take advantage of the online support structures and assessment tools, such as the Performance Calculators, to synchronise their marking with the common standards.

There are also several centres who have recently changed examination boards and moved to our (Pearson's A Level Art and Design) specification. Some of these have not fully embraced the ethos of our qualification and appear to still be working from the guidance given by their previous exam boards. Obviously, these Centres have also found issues during moderation and so it is essential that they obtain and study the latest version of our specification and examine the large collection of marked exemplars published on our website. As these come from existing and well-established Pearson Centres, they demonstrate many of the specific expectations of our qualification. Whilst none of them are intended to be perfect models for course structures, as they are tailored to the individual Centres with their diverse cohorts. They do, however, give a very good overall sense of the characteristics and requirements of our excellent qualification.

The 2019 series has seen even more Centres drop the AS qualification, as a foundation for the A Level and also as a stand-alone qualification. This is obviously having an impact on the nature of the A Level submission, as for most Centres this now represents a full two years study. This change is presenting several issues which are investigated in this report.

An example of one of these comes from the moderator's feedback, which indicates that many centres are not being selective in the work they present for moderation. This is sometimes causing issues in terms of identifying the separate components and being able to track candidates' evidence of progression and idea development in individual assignments. This would indicate that better selection and organisation of two-year submissions, prior to presentation for moderation, would be a recommendation for the 2020 series.

The other pressing issue to arise from candidates taking a two-year course of study is the weighting of the Components and the allocated time for their delivery and completion.

Component 1 is worth 60% of the qualification, Component 2 is worth 40%. However due to the examination theme not being allowed to be released before the 1st February, the time allocation for this Component is now becoming an issue. If time pressures from other factors occurring in the Spring and Summer terms are taken in to account, such as academic mock examinations and academic examination leave, the problem becomes obvious. General reports from Centres nationwide, document this as a universal issue. Also, moderators are reporting nationally that they are seeing a truncation of the supporting studies for Component 2. Candidates are often embarking upon their final outcomes without having fully explored or refined their personal focus. This is clearly an effect of the inadequate length of the preparation period.

Here are the observations pertinent to each component, as reported by the Principal Moderators responsible for them.

As mentioned, many times in previous legacy reports, the observations are generic and must not be seen as lists of criticism or praise for individual centres. They have been taken directly from the moderator's reports and collated and edited to avoid duplication. Single issues are not commented on, so the points raised have been made by several individual moderators from different national and international locations. They therefore form important trends that need to be addressed if they are pertinent to your centre.

Component 1

9AD0/01 – 9TE0/02

Overview

Component 1 represents 60% of linear A level and is made up of 72 marks for the practical Personal Investigation (80% of Component 1) and 18 marks for the Personal Study element (20% of Component 1). 90 marks in total.

The new specification A level gives the opportunity to candidates to work for two years before submitting journals and outcomes for assessment. Work previously made for AS titles can also be submitted for the full A level in that title, although there is an implication in the mark-scheme /performance calculator that to reach the higher performance bands candidates needed only to select their best (and usually more recent) work which genuinely reached the higher A level standard.

The Personal Study is assessed separately from the practical coursework in the Personal Investigation, whilst still being marked across all four assessment objectives. Training and exemplar material have been produced to explain how the marking criteria relates specifically to the Personal Study.

The requirements of the Personal Study are, a 1000-3000 word written and illustrated essay which should demonstrate the student's depth of contextual understanding. The study should be a piece of continuous prose, not a collection of annotations. It should relate to the student's ideas but does not necessarily have to contain examples of their work and should avoid being simply a diary of what they did in their coursework. A full Bibliography should be provided, and spelling and grammar are important.

For the Personal Investigation centres may initially set themes for the cohort and structure both practical and contextual exercises, however, students are expected to develop their own, self-generated personal body of work and critical analysis. Practical work in this unit should begin to demonstrate the student working with independence and some degree of personal identity as a practitioner in their chosen title.

Many centres use the previous year's legacy specification title as a starting point for the current year's coursework. This can help less confident students get started but should not restrict the range or independence of more assured students' ideas.

Visits and field trips to gather source material are encouraged and help students to gain further contextual awareness of sources and crucially enable them to experience art at first hand.

There is no expectation of a single outcome; however, AO4 implies that the coursework arrives at one or more practical resolutions of a creative journey.

Observations:

This has been the second year where a two-year linear structure has been seen in most centres. Commonly much of the first year was treated as a 'foundation' year of skills building workshops, followed by a second year of more independent study.

In the best courses this was a very successful approach, in less successful centres a less coherent structure resulted in a series of overly structured but disjointed exercises which discouraged independent thinking and simply delayed students from getting started on their own independent body of work.

Life drawing is an example, to provide useful it needs purpose and integration, but moderators commented that in some centres it became a random exercise that students did not fully engage in thereby unable to produce the benefit it could potentially show.

The use of the darkroom in Photography is another example, it was noted that in some centre's students spent much time in the first-year processing and printing negatives: activities that were never capitalised on later in the course.

There was much comment about the delivery of AO1 – Critical analysis and the development of ideas was still seen as an area that needs development and understanding.

Successful Personal Studies showed these characteristics:

- Critical analysis skills were carried over from GCSE.
- Purpose and nature of 'in-depth analysis' taught from start of course.
- Personal Study started at end of Year 12 and developed/drafted over sustained period in Year 13.
- Students encouraged to investigate how work of particular artists related to broader cultural themes.
- The study includes visual analysis of specific images and artworks, rather than generalisations.
- Studies that had titles with focused questions often enabled students to develop ideas with rigour.
- Gallery visits give personal experience and insight – especially self-initiated visits to exhibitions relevant to individual student concerns.
- Separate contextual notebooks often encouraged continuous, individual and original analysis.
- Teachers prepared to challenge students to engage with more weighty ideas in Art and Design
- Extensive Bibliographies demonstrating that genuine individual research has been done.

Less successful Personal studies demonstrated:

- Predictable, brief and superficial artistic references of Artists that are the first to come up in searches in Pinterest/ Google etc.
- Bland descriptive passages, of both practitioners' and students' work.
- Candidates not being able to develop an argument or link ideas.

Photography continues to develop. The strongest courses enable students to sustain individual engagement with a specific theme over an extended period of time and also balance this with genuine depth of contextual analysis.

Weaker courses allow students to skate through numerous superficial practical exercises 'informed' by even more lightweight sources.

In both Photography and Graphic Communication there is more student demand to explore animation, installation and moving image, but this is not always matched by expertise from teachers.

The strongest textile courses give students the tools to individually develop an idea rather than simply explore processes alone.

Where greater weight is given to first hand observation and analysis of ideas with deeper cultural connections this leads to more original practical developments.

Three-dimensional design continues to decline as a proportion of the number of entries.

Component 2

9AD0/02 – 9TE0/02

Overview

The theme for Component 2 is set by Pearson Edexcel in the form of an examination paper. In 2019 this was available for students to respond to from the 1st February.

The theme this year was “Variation and Similarity”

They have an unrestricted amount of time after this date to prepare for a timed test of 15 hours.

Component 2 forms 40% of the total mark.

The start of this preparation time and the date of the concluding timed test are set by the Centre. Most Centres start in February or March and give the timed test in mid –May depending upon their academic calendars and the corresponding holiday dates such as Easter and the Half-Term’s either side. These vary from year to year. Easter is always a key opportunity to collect resources for this component; as with previous years, the more accomplished candidates used these breaks to create some fascinating and skilled outcomes.

Candidates are required to provide a set of supporting studies and a final timed test outcome/s for assessment.

Observations:

Many Centres have requested that the exam title is available to candidates from the 1st January rather than the 1st February, due to the time constraints in the Spring and Summer terms. Many have pointed out that now the AS is taken by so few centres most candidates are on a two-year course and the percentage of time allocated to exam preparation should reflect this as the exam unit represents 40% of the total mark.

The exam title ‘Variations and Similarities’ promoted a wide range of responses many of which were highly personal and demonstrated genuine creative journeys. As with previous years the timed test proved quite a challenge for a small percentage of candidates who still either embark on too ambitious outcomes that are beyond their skill levels or start pieces that are too large for them to complete in the examination time.

Here are some direct observations from the moderators:

- Component 2 continued to be characterised by a wide variation in staff involvement. At one extreme, the work is presented and taught like Component One while other

centres regard the entire component as a test in which students are to be left to work totally independently regardless of their abilities.

- Rather than starting an ESA cold, some centres like encouraged their students to develop ideas from course work and look at similar contextual sources in more depth. This was understandably more obvious in the higher bands, but the benefits of a two-year course did percolate down. As last year, weaker candidates at many centres scored lower for the ESA. This was often as a result of being supported by a well-structured component 1 and failing to develop through to the next stage. Component 1 inevitably was teacher led and often resource rich. This was not the case for some component 2 courses.
- Moderators got the impression that some centres seemed to have rushed Component 2s for some reason. Perhaps they gave out their papers later than usual or were required to carry out the work before the Easter Holidays? For whatever reason many seemed under-developed and a little thin. There seemed to be a wide divergence in quality of work between centres this year. There was some superb work at some centres and some very disappointing work at others.
- Candidates are still also spending a lot of time mimicking other artists and then running out of time and ideas to develop their own personal responses. In many cases they simply resort to yet another interpretation of one of the photographers or artists they have studied. Whilst these outcomes are not strictly pastiches, they are totally reliant on the artists' ideas and concepts rather than developing their own.
- Sympathy has to go out to centres, however, as they are trying to give students as wide an experience as possible prior to the candidates settling into a personal focus. If they try to cram in gallery visits and excursions into the preparation period, it becomes very difficult to find enough lesson time to fully develop the candidates own ideas.
- This again would support centres requests to be able to hand out the exam papers earlier. It has to be noted that the Spring Term is now also being used by many centres for their internal exams to replace the AS levels they used to sit in June. This and other demands on the candidate's time in this term is felt to be seriously impacting the depth of their supporting studies for the examination.

General Assessment Observations

- More centres are reported to be using the performance calculator and those that do consistently achieve a greater level of accuracy in their marking.
- Some centres, however, continue to ignore it and all the instructions that have been issued about the new mark scaling. These centres persistently award maximum marks on both components, under the simple premise that their top candidates have gone beyond expectations. Their criteria seem to be established from experiences with the old specification where the awarding of full marks was commonplace. This combined with guesswork as to where the notional boundaries are going to fall skews their marks considerably. In these cases, moderators have reported that they are still having to make substantial changes to the centre's marks. This has been true for all titles.
- Some moderators noticed that centres had applied discrimination in awarding marks across the AOs and had placed the AO in which level was applicable. Some centres however seemed to want to keep all of the AOs in one level regardless of the performance of the candidate in that AO.
- Moderators noted that often work was ascribed Competence level 4 for being purposeful and consistently skilled without that being mediated by the other descriptors either side of that Level. There was no sense of the centre looking at the Level above/ below, to decide on relative placement within the three-mark range of that Level.
- Moderators also reported that where centres had accessed the online exemplars and training and had rigorously referred to the performance calculator, they were usually accurate or only slightly lenient in their assessment decisions.
- Moderators often reported that they had returned to centres and were pleased to have seen an improvement in accuracy of assessment as well as the quality of the work.
- The improvement of both accuracy of assessment and of the quality of marking may be down to many factors, such as Centres becoming familiar with stable notional grade boundaries over the past three years.
- It has been reported that the E9 report, that is being refined each year, is proving more helpful to centres in reviewing their assessment decisions. As it is the only feedback that centres receive, it is essential that examination officers pass them on to the teachers delivering the course.
- Moderators also report that in a minority of cases they have returned several times to the same centres to find that the overmarking is still at the same high level of leniency and disappointingly doesn't improve.

Summary

Yet again it gives me great pleasure to report on the superb range and quality of work produced by the current cohort of candidates. The work sampled by our moderation team this year, generally, maintains its high standard and depth of enquiry. Centres that have established and well-trying course structures are consistently seen to be enabling their candidates to achieve optimum performances.

As expected inconsistencies are still seen, but these are becoming rarer as Centres find course structures that are best suited to the characteristics of their students and bed-in the changing patterns created by the demise of AS.

Issues are still arising regarding accuracy of marking, however, and further training is to be made available, to assist with this. Please watch the website for updates on our Inset programme.

We would implore Centres to use the website and follow the guidance provided there. It is incredible to us that some Centres are still unaware of the Performance Calculators and think that the Assessment Grids and the Performance Calculators are one and the same documents. The Performance Calculators are essential to accurate marking and a substantial guide to progressive monitoring of candidates performances throughout the courses. They have now been thoroughly tried and tested and are applauded by those Centres that use them regularly.

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