

Art and Design

Advanced GCE A2 H560-H566

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H160-H166

Examiners' Reports

June 2011

H160-6/H560-6/R/11

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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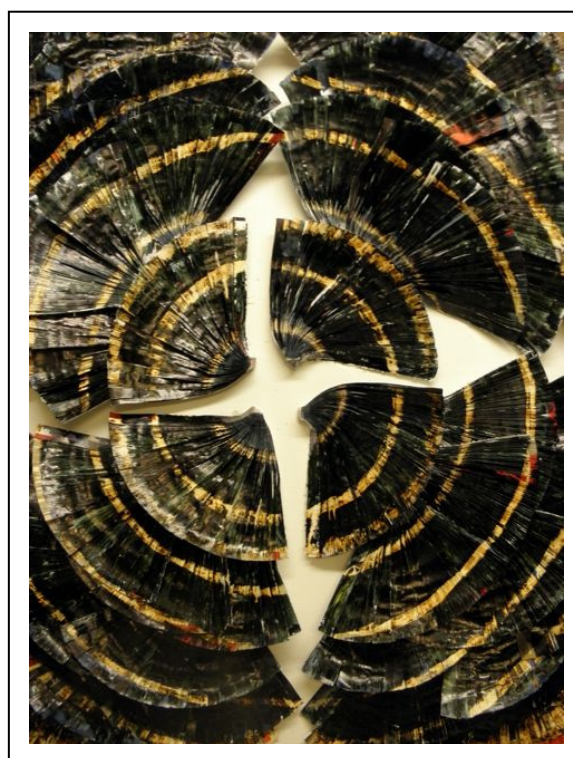
EXAMINERS' REPORTS

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Art and Design

General comments:

- Some excellent work was seen reflecting well planned courses and active engagement by candidates.
- Most schools have now adapted to the new specification. The courses have been refined and the quality of work in the mature band within centres is of a consistently strong standard.
- Work was usually enhanced by Gallery visits or artist workshops.
- Critical studies had underpinned the work of most students. The level of connection with personal artwork, however, varied considerably. This is a typical area of weakness for lower level attaining candidates.
- Most centres completed administrative procedures satisfactorily and met the May 31 deadline for the return of mark sheets. Indeed, the many centres that beat the deadline this year, by forwarding the documentation early, are to be thanked for their efficient administration.
- Displays for moderation were usually constructed as exhibitions for students and their parents and as long as maps and rank order are clear these worked well.
- Many centres displayed their work unit by unit and endorsement as requested and this made the moderation go more smoothly.
- This year many centres completed the paper work electronically by downloading PDFs of the various forms required from the OCR GCE website and this seemed to result in fewer arithmetical errors for those who completed it this way. Nevertheless some arithmetical and transcriptional errors still occurred during the marking process and this either inhibited or delayed the sample selection and the moderation process. Centres are therefore to be encouraged to use the electronic interactive assessment form for AS (GCW269i) and the A2 (GCW315i). Both of these are available on the OCR website.





- Most centres sent in their forms appropriately. The Centre Authentication Form is also a mandatory Code of Practice requirement and moderators must be in receipt of a completed form CCS160 before commencing their duties. The Centre Authentication Form should be despatched to the moderator with Form MS1 and the Assessment Summary Forms (GCW269i) for AS or the (GCW315i) for A2.
- Moderators found that centres who had been able to attend the OCR INSET felt more confident about the application of the assessment criteria during the marking process.
- Centres are to be encouraged to send one of their teachers to these INSET courses to help Art Departments with the marking procedures and criteria.



Marking

- Nearly all centres correctly identified the rank order. In some Centres there was over marking in bands 4, 5 and 6 in AO3 and AO4 in both AS and A2. This had more of an impact on A2, as the weighting of these objectives is greater in this qualification.
- When marking centres should be encouraged to be thinking of the very different demands of each of the Assessment Objectives (AOs) and to recognise that many candidates may appear in different bands for different AOs. This is quite normal and not problematic.

Coursework Portfolio Unit 1: AS Level

- Some excellent work was seen. It was vibrant, bold and exciting and sensitive in the use of techniques and methods.
- The work undertaken in the centres was often initiated by visits to galleries or artist workshops in which candidates had often learnt highly specific skills very effectively.



There appears to be three distinct approaches to this unit

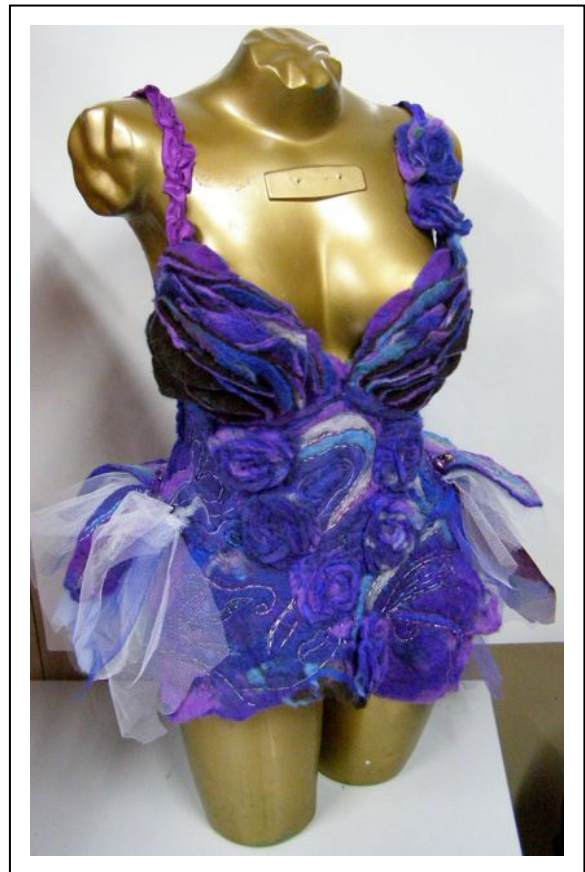
- 1 A small number of centres follow a tightly prescribed course. These candidates benefit from a clearly defined set of skills that they are taught. In this scenario students do need sufficient opportunities to develop their individual expression so that they can engage successfully with the controlled assignment unit. In addition a detailed personal response is appropriate for accessing the higher mark bands.
- 2 A larger number of centres approach this unit by operating a thematic approach with initial skill sessions or workshops which progress on to students following their own interests and directions. This has the potential to work well but does require careful planning and time management so that both of these strategies are achieved.
- 3 A third approach is where students are encouraged from the outset to follow an individual programme. This is often the approach used very successfully in the following year at A2. Using this approach at AS requires that students are taught specific skills as they proceed, which can be quite a challenge given the large group sizes and the diversity of interests that can develop in just one class.



- Most work, and nearly all the research work, was submitted in sketchbook format. These sketchbooks were visually impressive showing a mixture of imagery with sketches and drawings revealing a clear thought process.
- As students progressed they often produced work outside of the sketchbook which enables them to engage with ideas of scale and more ambitious use of materials.
- Successful candidates made excellent connections to the work of other artists either through subject matter or technique. The key aspect here is the appropriateness of the selected artist(s).
- Some candidates however tended to focus too much on the use of photographs and experimentation for its own sake. Work that was impressive combined successfully a range of experimentations in a coherent and progressive way.

Controlled Assignment Unit 2: AS Level

- The question paper was well received and questions enabled candidates to demonstrate their potential.
- There was good use of preparatory work which is a crucial element of this unit with some candidates producing in depth research and defining clearly where and what they were exploring.
- The very best preparatory research developed from a review of the candidate's portfolio work and focused on their areas of strength. For example, a candidate who had successfully learnt about the print process could focus on that for their controlled assignment.
- Many candidates were able to use the controlled assignment to demonstrate a cohesive personal response. However some students lacked the confidence to do this. For those students more opportunities to do so, as part of their portfolio, might overcome this issue.
- Those centres that fully utilised the preparatory time, and whose candidates fully developed, experimented and refined their ideas before the controlled assessment five hour period, achieved the higher levels and mark bands. Candidates who prepared carefully were able to utilise more effectively the five hour controlled assessment period.
- Candidates who produced only limited preparatory work did not achieve the level of attainment of which they were capable.
- Some candidates do require guidance about what would be an appropriate range of techniques for a five-hour assessment period.



Popular questions included

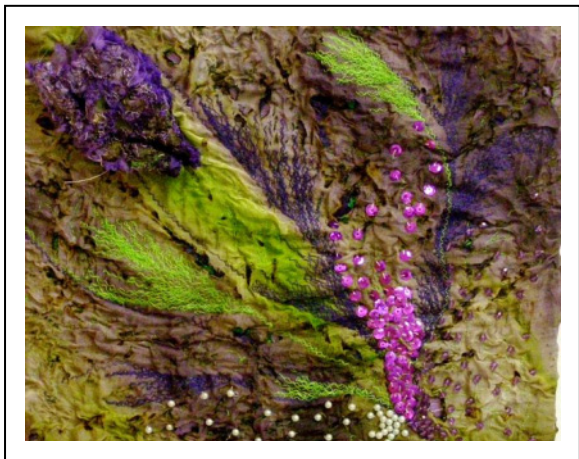
- *Splash* The qualities of liquids and their properties were explored and gave rise to dramatic visual imagery. This question gave rise to a significant range of outcomes but was very popular with textile candidates who explored the liquid qualities of colour on fabrics.
- *Strata* This gave rise to many painterly submissions developing the potential of bands of tactile colour although they tended to be explored through a geological perspective and the colours selected reflected this.
- *Small* This presented students with the opportunity to develop still life possibilities juxtaposing Lego men with larger objects for example.
- *Seashore* This was very popular with textiles candidates who explored the natural forms of shells, driftwood and netting.

Assessment Objectives within AS

AO1 (Develop)

- It was pleasing to note that AO1 was generally well demonstrated. Students were engaging actively in researching and combining ideas processes and media and this is a vital part of the experience of Advanced Study. With some candidates, too many approaches were explored and as a result there was insufficient development demonstrated by these candidates, which led to lower marks in the other two objectives. Careful timing within the course may help some students from falling into this category.
- There has been an expansion in the use and development of electronic media. In graphics in particular some candidates moved very quickly from some initial ideas to final presentation with limited development of an idea or significant experimentation especially when they had access to commercial quality printers. In this situation candidates need to ensure that they demonstrate that a range of alternatives have been researched.





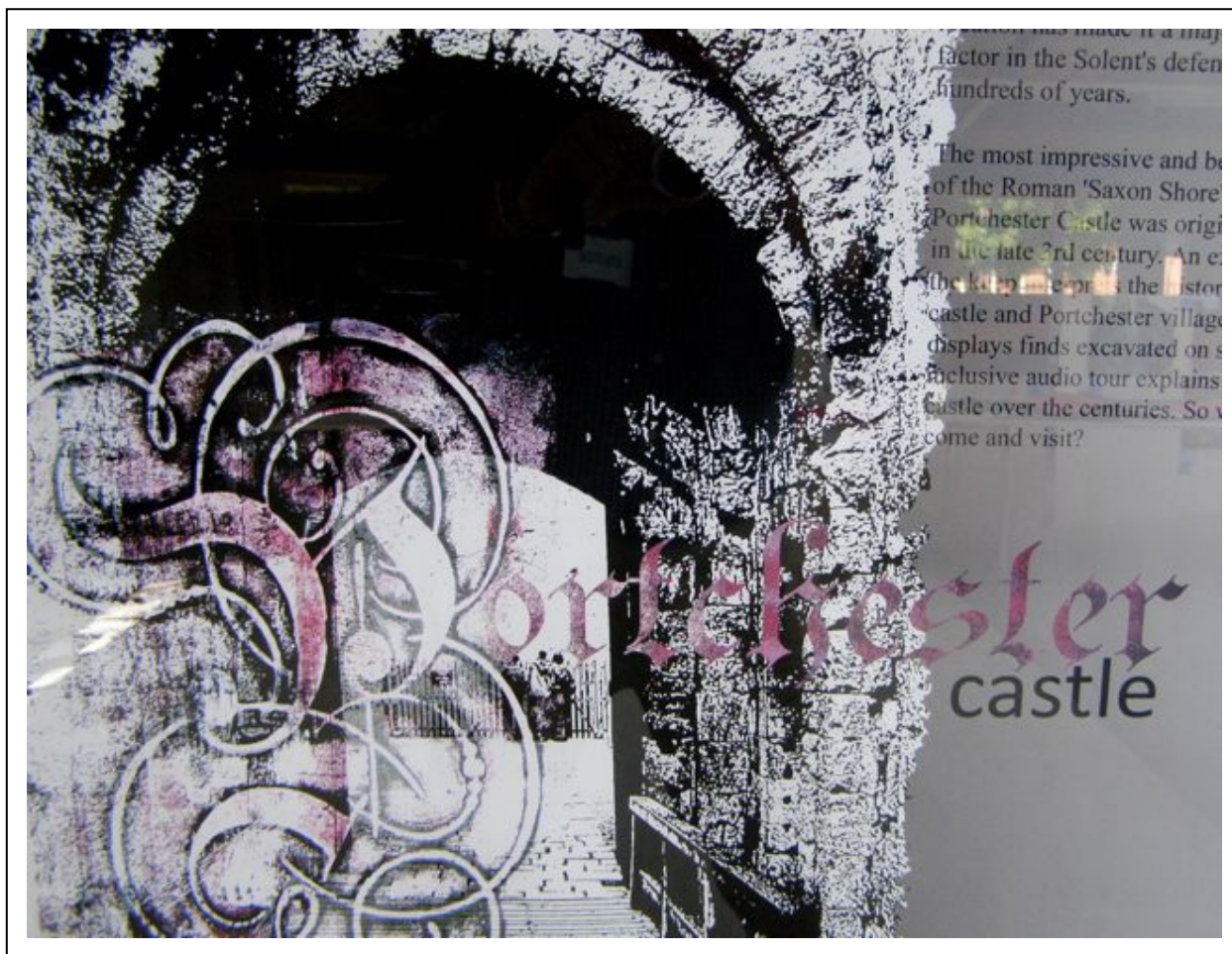
AO2 (Experiment)

- A wide range of experimentation was evident this year: it does need to be appropriate however and its focus related to the subject matter or theme of the candidate's work.
- Centres who explored a range of related processes enabled candidates to build a repertoire of skills that enabled them to experiment effectively with their ideas and different media.
- Many candidates are now using photography as a method of experimenting with their ideas and subject matter. In particular they are using digital photography and Photoshop. Although many candidates are using this effectively, some do need to show more in depth analysis, for example instead of repeating the same image with different filters, candidates could experiment with different media, images and scale. It is this combination that can demonstrate higher levels of experimentation.



AO3 (Record)

- In the past recording was mainly evidenced through drawing but now it appears to be through both drawing and the use of digital photography. Using more than one method is a good idea as an over-reliance on one particular method alone can be restrictive in terms of potential. Those candidates who combine recording in a multitude of ways almost always have a stronger outcome because they have gained recording experiences including drawing.
- This was an area that appeared to be underdeveloped for some candidates. For the higher bands candidates need to spend some time developing their observational skills and ensuring that these are clearly demonstrated through a wide range of media.



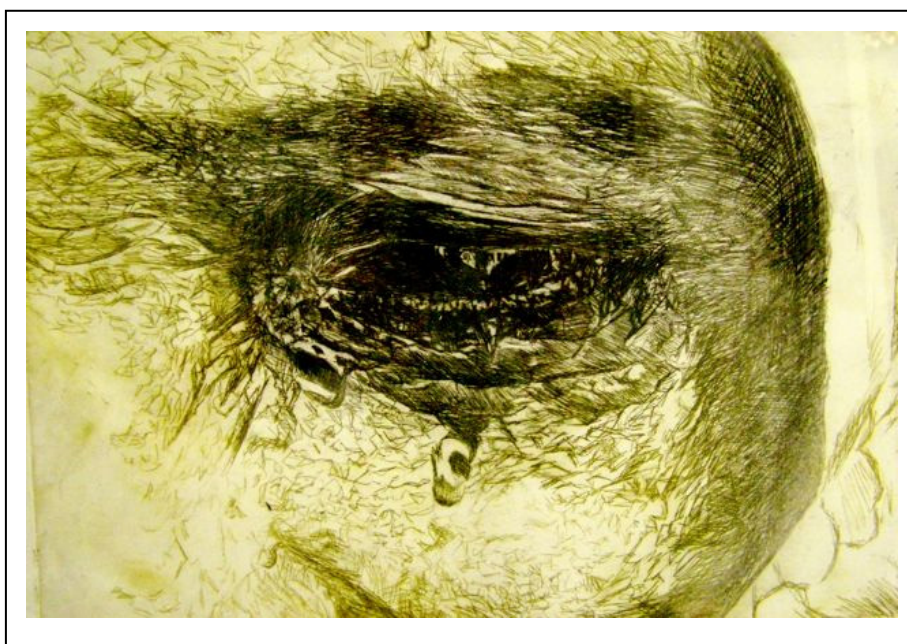
AO4 (Present)

- The strongest candidates produced exceptionally impressive outcomes with significant and mature use of detail, colour, scale and techniques. These works represented the culmination of a year's study and a thorough and mature understanding of all the previous three assessment objectives.
- Candidates need to ensure that they select carefully from their body of work to make clear the progress and development of their ideas. This body of work should be coherent and address the demands of the assessment objectives.

Personal Investigation Unit 3: A2 Level

- There was some excellent work seen with large expressive canvases based on portraits or figures with significant contemporary influences and connections made with the work of other artists. Some candidates attempted large installations combining suspended everyday objects creating fields of visual energy similar to Cornelia Parker. Rich vibrant colours and fabrics were used in dramatically designed garments in textiles.
- At this stage of their advanced study, candidates were able to demonstrate significant inventive abilities combined with an excellent grasp of observational skills and confident use of appropriate techniques.
- Successful candidates were generally moving from one media to another with confidence, a typical example being 2D into photography or computer manipulation. This was frequently well documented in sketchbooks and work sheets and demonstrated a range of mature and confident experimentation and development.

- Changing from one media into another was not automatically successful. Some candidates were simply transcribing a photograph into a painting without any development. In such situations candidates could consider composition, cropping, experimenting with colour and paint application or combining another set of images or context.
- At A2 individually negotiated programmes of study appears to be a successful model where candidates review and reflect on their AS work and identify their strengths. They then develop these as the main themes in their A2 course. Nevertheless many of these candidates require guidance and support in the teaching of relevant skills and techniques if they are to achieve their potential.
- Some students still need to document more carefully how their ideas have developed.
- The Related Personal Study is dealt with in a range of ways. In some Centres a dedicated separate sketchbook is produced. In this sketchbook there is usually a transcription allowing for easy reading. This method allows for a very focused approach where candidates explore a particular artist or approach in depth with the study having a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Many centres adopt a different approach in that they locate their study within the body of their visual research. This has a very strong developmental quality and candidates are able to develop a dialogue between their work and that of their selected subject. The potential area of weakness is that this approach can lead to a rather episodic style within their submission. To overcome this, candidates should try to link the various written elements of their work. For example, they could explore how two different artists have approached the same subject, which they are also exploring in their own work.
- The level of critical analysis within the related Personal Study varied considerably from the descriptive/biographical to those that were perceptively analysed and used to inform personal development as the work progressed. Biographical detail is important in placing the artist within a historical context. Centres need to be reminded that candidates still need to use an appropriate technical vocabulary if they are to attain the highest marks in the Mature Band.
- Candidates often find it easier to write in an analytical way when they are faced with comparing the approach of two different artists. Centres could use this and encourage candidates to look at more than one artist to encourage this analytical approach. For many candidates this is not a naturally developing skill and this analytical approach does need to be taught. Centres could ask candidates to give detailed descriptions of work and encourage candidates to identify areas of similarity and difference.

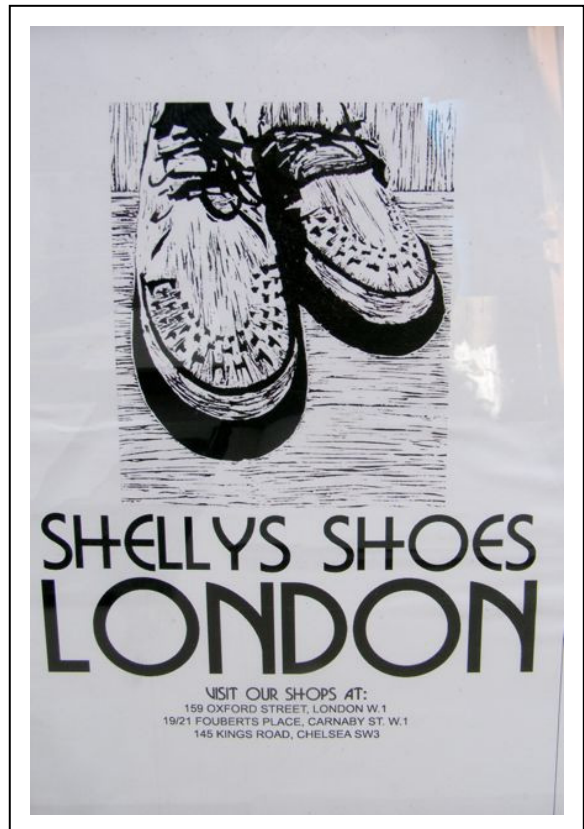


Controlled Assignment Unit 4: A2 Level

- The question paper was well received with candidates able to demonstrate their potential.
- The 15-hour examination does allow candidates to explore fully the potential of the selected starting point. This is the culmination of the A Level course and some exciting and vibrant work was seen. Candidates pushed the possibilities of scale, methods and techniques. Some students were incredibly ambitious and some of the work would not have looked out of place in a degree show.

Popular questions included

- *Figures and faces*, This starting point provided plenty of opportunity for candidates to explore both portraiture and life drawing in detail with some outstanding recording skills evident. Artists such as Tom Wood and Jenny Saville figured prominently.
- *Laces, Loops and Knots*, This starting point provided the opportunity for detailed and close observation of shoes, pumps and trainers. This was a popular question with those doing textiles. Some candidates also explored the maritime potential of rope.
- *Curves* This presented candidates with the opportunity to explore architectural subjects such as staircases, banisters and arches.
- *Snapshot* This starting point led to some very ambitious work, which tried to capture the moment. Many candidates saw this as an opportunity to explore street scenes.
- *Wave* Since the paper was written the Japanese Tsunami had taken place. Many candidates, excited by the contemporary nature of the starting point, utilised effectively the chaotic imagery that had resulted from the disaster. Much of the work had a really personal engagement and a powerful level of expression.



AO1 (Develop)

- This AO is well demonstrated at A2. During their AS and A2 course candidates have learnt a variety of techniques and developed their understanding of different methods of representation. As a result much of the work that is produced demonstrates a confident and creative combination of visual elements.

AO2 (Experiment)

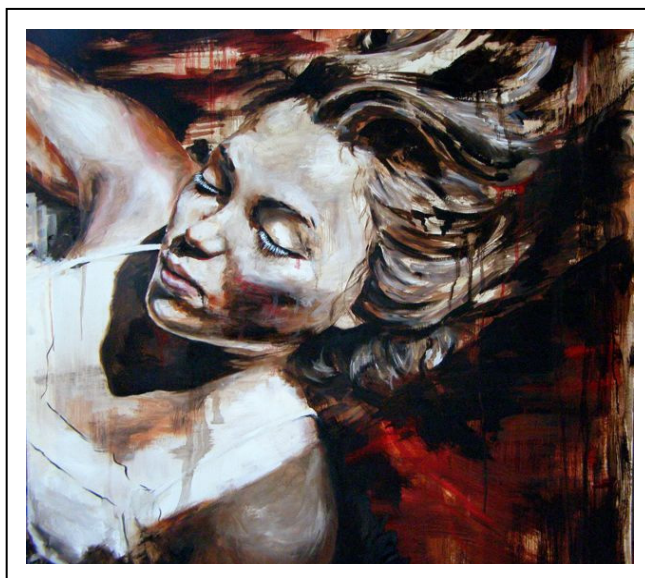
- This AO is again well demonstrated at A2. Candidates at this stage of their course are usually more than willing to take responsibility for the direction of their work and are engaged actively in exploring their chosen focus. Much original research was seen.

AO3 (Record)

- At the top level there were some truly outstanding and impressive observational work with sensitive attention to detail whilst combining an ambitious approach to scale.
- There were reports of some excellent life drawing classes which enhanced the submissions.
- This AO is weighted more heavily at A2 and some candidates needed to ensure that their submission reflected this greater emphasis.
- For the high levels within this AO there needed to be a range of successful observational methods. Candidates who restricted themselves to just one process limited their potential.

AO4 (Present)

- There were some outstanding examples of large-scale artwork that firmly embedded all the AO's creating artwork that was driven, perceptive, analytical and highly aesthetic. The formal visual elements were executed with flair and excellent technical control at a mature level.
- This AO has greater weighting at A2 than at AS and some candidates needed to reflect that in their submission.
- Candidates need to ensure that the work submitted does address all the AOs and that it has a clear, coherent line of research culminating in a well resolved, well executed final piece of work or series of works.
- There is no doubt that centres and candidates should be congratulated on the quality of the work that is produced. The scale and sheer inventiveness is a credit to all involved.



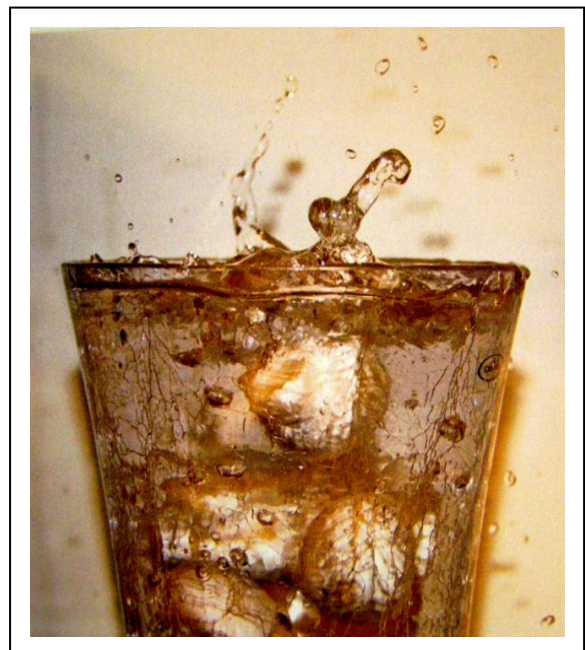
Art and Design – Photography Lens and light based media

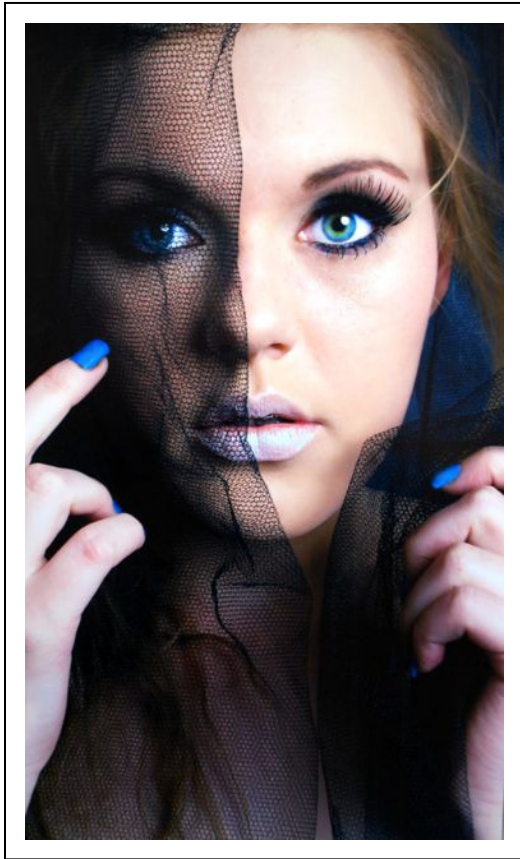
General comments:

- This has proved to be an increasingly popular endorsement with many candidates starting Photography for the first time.
- The submissions demonstrated candidates' knowledge, understanding and use of technologies are evolving rapidly.
- Developments in new media are supporting this evolution.
- Digital media is now becoming the dominant method of photography although many centres are still involved with chemical photography.
- There is an increasing number of candidates using film animation or gaming animation as part of their exploration of film.
- Presentational methods are also changing with many candidates working almost entirely electronically and presenting their work through PowerPoint and Prezi.

Coursework Portfolio Unit 1: AS Level (F413)

- Some excellent work seen with a wide range of subject matter and critical connections being made between their work and that of professional photographers.
- There were significant amounts of digital work seen and the standard of this, in the main, was extremely high. Candidates' ability to manipulate and improve images using a range of software packages is a key skill in this area.
- Animations and short films were seen in a few centres, where they clearly added to and enriched the students' body of work. They tended to fall into two categories. In the first a narrative or storyboard approach is followed and in the other, work is more abstract and mainly deals with the impact of visual elements and sound.





- Some Centres using both digital and chemical (black and white) photography.
- In Centres that are doing both some candidates seem to have a more in-depth understanding.
- Centres appear to be supporting of their candidates by purchasing some excellent quality equipment such as printers and software. However students when using such equipment need to make sure that they include in their submission sufficient preparation material which records their progress and development. In some cases candidates' submissions focused on the initial starting point and the finished conclusion but lacked the examples of the journey undertaken.
- Candidates are beginning to record the development of their ideas using 'Prezi' recording their research and journey in a virtual sketchbook.
- In the initial stages of the course most centres teach the basic skills needed as so many of the candidates are new to the subject area. However these skill workshops are usually combined with lessons on specific photographers and therefore these candidates develop both a skill base and a cultural understanding which proves invaluable for both the AS and A2 courses.

Controlled Assignment Unit 2: AS Level (F423)

- The question paper was well received by the centres and candidates were able to demonstrate their potential.
- Across all centres most candidates made good use of the five-hour examination period for the Controlled Assignment and produced a personal response to their chosen exam titles.
- The preparatory period provides an excellent time for research and nearly all candidates make effective use of this.

- The question paper was well received by the centres and candidates were able to demonstrate their potential.
- Across all centres candidates made good use of the five-hour controlled time period for the Controlled Assignment and produced a personal response to their chosen starting points.
- The preparation period provides an excellent time for research and nearly all candidates make excellent use of this time.
- There was some excellent work produced which was inventive in its interpretation of the question and which successfully combined a range of different methods and techniques.

Popular starting points were

- *Coloured Light* This question provided candidates with the opportunity to set up a still life type setting and illuminate it with a range of different colours.
- *Strata* This led to quite inventive solutions such as selecting stacked objects or multiples of mundane subjects and then building them up in layers as strata.
- *Splash* This gave candidates the opportunity for high-speed photography with hosepipes spraying water. Other candidates focused on dropping items into glasses of fizzy drinks and the resulting dramatic splash effects of the liquid were the subject of the submission.
- *Handstands* Many candidates took the opportunity to explore the possibilities of movement with reference to photographers such as Eadweard Muybridge.
- *Art Nouveau* Those candidates who selected this question often focused on the work of Mucha and were involved in developing portraiture with decorative digital additions.



Assessment Objectives within AS

AO1 (Develop)

- The teaching of skills, ideas and techniques is usually linked with the work and practices of specific photographers and therefore candidates build up both a skill base and a cultural understanding.
- Many candidates are using Photoshop and there was some excellent understanding of this software. Some candidates should develop their understanding further so that they could realise their potential. Some candidates use the same image and only change the filter whereas they could develop the image by using filters in combination with other applications/adjustments within Photoshop.

AO2 (Experiment)

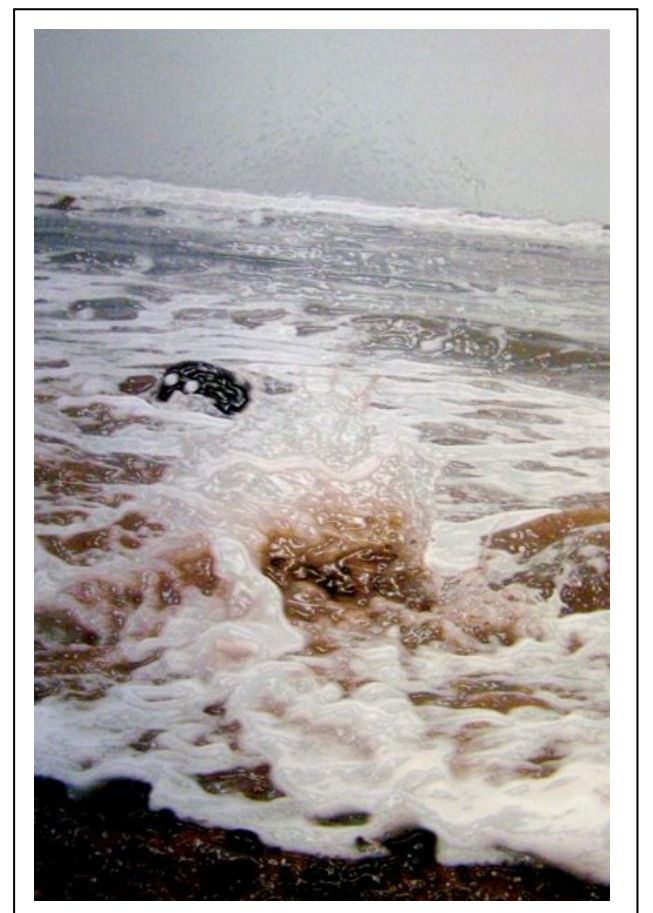
- Many centres teach this AO exceptionally well in the first few months of the course providing candidates with a thorough grounding in the skills and techniques. They can use this as part of their own journey of exploration.

AO3 (Record)

- Record appears to be very well evidenced in photography.
- This AO is usually well demonstrated in a lens based medium and requires significant observational skills.

AO4 (Present)

- The quality of presentation especially with the use of professional quality equipment and software was in the main very impressive.
- Candidates had spent time selecting, considering and presenting their submission with attention to detail before displaying.



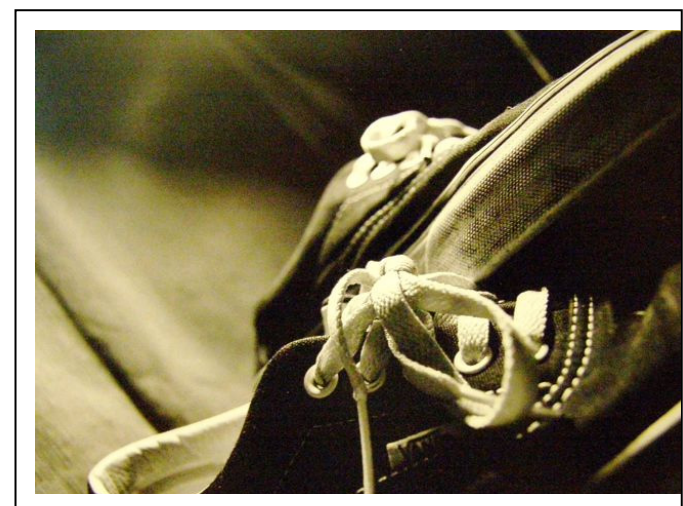
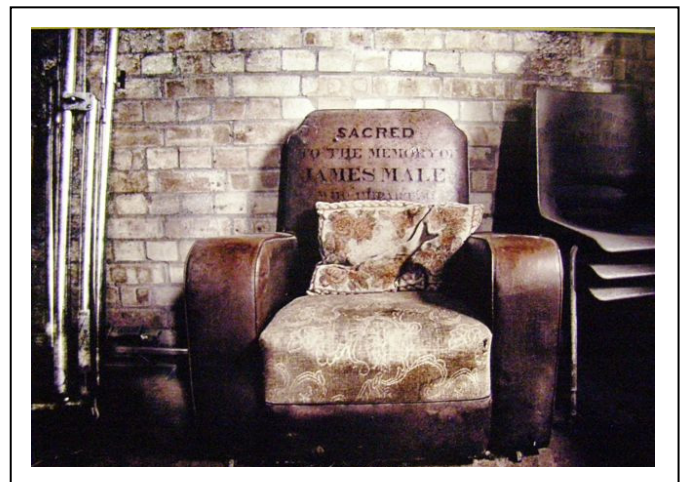
Personal Investigation Unit 3: A2 Level (F433)

- Some excellent work was seen at this level and much of this work demonstrated a very personal response by the candidate and it often had a significant intellectual or critical content. The level of technical skill combined with this critical understanding was impressive.
- Many centres negotiated A2 work on a one to one basis with the individual. One centre spoke of their approach to this unit as a joint effort where their candidates had selected a theme and through regular tutorials had developed the stages of practical work into some highly original and personal interpretations.
- There was a lot of skilful use of SLR cameras with contact strips evidencing a consistent thoughtful approach recording a variety of options taken on a shoot. Candidates who adopted such practices provided clear evidence of their thought processes and understanding of the visual language.
- This year seemed to show an increase in the use of innovative approaches. Candidates used mixed media with digital techniques such as layering and overlapping imagery. Some candidates also projected moving images on to static three-dimensional objects. There was no doubt that candidates at the top end created stimulating and thoughtful work.
- The size, scale and display of the finished work varied considerably with successful candidates sourcing interesting subject matter and their final pieces were also very professionally executed.
- Work was seen often as large-scale images in series. Several candidates had linked photographic techniques with installations and/or fine art based displays, which was very effective.

- Theatrical photo shoots appear to be an expanding area and the care and attention resulted in a professional outcome.
- Filmmakers featured as inspiration to some with Shane Meadows and Danny Boyle being referenced.
- The use of Photographic and Fine Art based critical connections was secure at the upper end of the mark range.
- There appears to be a good connection between the critical and contextual work that is carried out at AS and the Related Personal Study at A2. Candidates often selected a method or subject that was covered early on at the AS level.
- The Related Personal Study also gave some candidates the opportunity to produce photographs which attempted to reproduce the style or subject matter of well-known figurative paintings. This presented the candidates with technical challenges as well as engaging them in an understanding of the painter's genre.
- Some candidates do need support in selecting appropriate subject matter which would enhance their potential.

Controlled Assignment Unit 4: A2 Level (F443)

- The controlled assessment paper was well received and provided candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their potential.
- Candidates made good use of the 15 hours for the Controlled Assignment and produced a personal response to their chosen starting point. The preparation period provides an excellent time for research and photography candidates in particular make effective use of this preparatory time.



- Some exceptional work was displayed and the candidates should be congratulated on the powerful and significant work in evidence. The work at the mature band varied from detailed documentary to carefully posed and illuminated figures and surreal use of imagery.
- There is no doubt that for many of the candidates the work submitted for this unit represented the culmination of the techniques that they had learnt and demonstrated an excellent intellectual engagement with the subject.

Popular starting points included

- *Detail* This provided candidates with plenty of opportunity for colour photography of flaking paint and the rich array of orange tones associated with rusting metal.
- *Figures and faces* This was a very popular starting point with this endorsement and allowed for a fashion shoot approach to be explored.
- *Laces and Loops and Knots* Candidates who selected this starting point tended to explore close-cropped images of shoes and laces. Whilst others focused on the marine aspects of rope.
- *Snapshot* This starting point was used by candidates who wanted to focus on capturing contemporary events.
- *Journey* Candidates who selected this starting point tended to adopt a narrative approach and many of the submissions were a series of photographs.
- *Curves* Candidates who selected this starting point often focused on the curves of the body and used the work of Robert Mapplethorpe to inform their submissions.



AO1 (Develop)

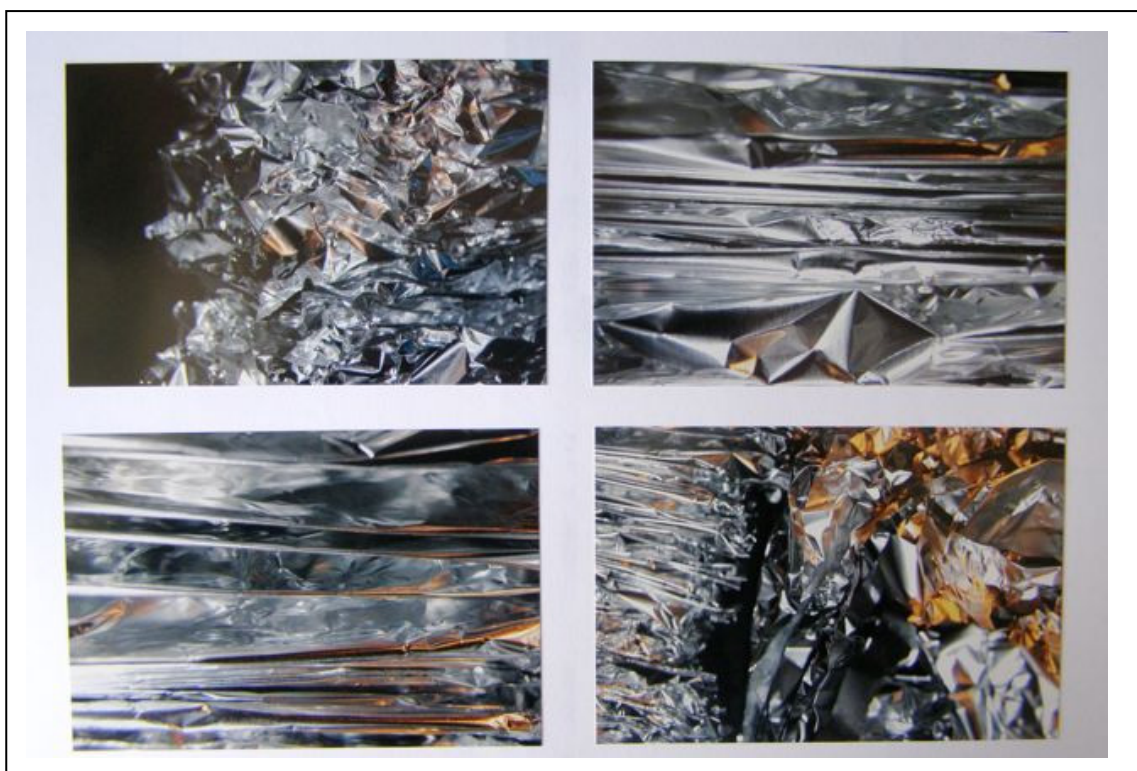
- At this level and in this endorsement the development of ideas was in the main very impressive. Candidates had clearly combined sophisticated technical processes with a high level of critical understanding.

AO2 (Experiment)

- Most Centres had established an excellent understanding of the processes of chemical or digital photography. Candidates were able to explore more experimental techniques such as scratching, painting and collaging onto prints, photo grams, cyanotypes, monotypes by splashing or painting developer onto paper, transfer emulsions and printing onto canvas.
- Many candidates used the full potential of Photoshop to manipulate, develop and explore images to great effect.

AO3 (Record)

- The act of seeing, selecting and then photographing make the Record Objective a key element in Photography and at this level most candidates are able to demonstrate a high level of visual acuity.



AO4 (Present)

- Level of presentation AO4 was also of a very high order – Crucial to success in this AO is the ability to select from the large body of work undertaken throughout the year. Candidates in the main selected work that showed a clear progression and development meeting the demands of all the assessment objectives.

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