

CCEA GCE - Art and Design  
Summer Series 2016

# Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Report

art and  
design



## Foreword

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

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

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



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# GCE ART AND DESIGN

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Assessment Unit AS 1 and AS 2

#### Overview

The Chief Examiner noted that in the 2016 exam series, candidate numbers decreased in Art and Design with fewer entered at the lower levels. AS candidate performance overall was weaker than in 2015. Adjustments to centre marks were less than last year possibly due to more accurate teacher marking, although there is still overly generous application of criteria in the top level. In this, the last year of the 'AS Legacy Specification,' there were many positive achievements including slightly more widespread evidence of a design choice for final outcomes, the increasing use of sketchbooks to accompany preparatory pages and real learning and understanding of contextual sources. The Chief Examiner was delighted to visit centres where the displays for both units were stunningly colourful, vibrant and exciting.

In the AS Portfolio unit, as is the norm, the content, quality and general standard of artwork presented in the unit portfolios varied considerably from centre to centre. Moderators noted a revival of interest in textiles, 3D design and photography.

The quality of the Externally Set Assignment in 2016 was broadly similar to the Portfolio unit. Post moderation research indicated that Unit 2 was more realistically marked than in previous years.

Candidates liked the diversity of the ESA topic as it allowed them to *"demonstrate effective practical project planning."* For some students, the stimulus paper of **'Beauty'** led to obvious and very large human images although with 'higher ability candidates, *'exhilarating imagery was informed by extensive research.'*

Moderators also noted that while most centres addressed Assessment Objective equally;

AO1, development, was still the weakest element,

AO2, experimentation and use of media, was strongest with some exciting and well understood examples,

AO3, recording, was well understood but with less emphasis on analytical drawing from primary sources,

AO4, presentation and personal response, was most over marked especially in unit 2.

The Chief Examiner suggests that teachers pay particular attention to the exam rubric for the 'Revised Specification' in 2017. It is vitally important that centres undertaking the 'Revised' AS attend all CCEA Training days. The timetable, content and mark allocations of the 'Revised Specification' are significantly different from the previous 'Legacy Specification' which finishes in 2016. However, regulations require that an AS 'Legacy Resit' exam paper will also be issued in 2017 so it is important to double check exam entries.

The Education Manager for Art and Design at CCEA will be available to confirm details of the exam rubric for both Specifications in 2017.

**To avoid embarrassment and/or disappointment, the Chief Examiner requests centres to refrain from publishing information about 'selections' for the True Colours Exhibition until this is confirmed by CCEA.**

## Principal Moderator's Report

### Assessment Unit AS 1 and AS 2

The final moderation of the specification was probably the least problematic of the series. There were just two re-moderations requested by centres and there were fewer adjustments to centre marks. The marks were mainly in the Level 3 to Level 5 bands. This trend was similar to that of last year. It was good to see a greater range of work exhibited in both units. Design was more in evidence and there was a greater variety of 2D and 3D work.

The moderators reported that the exhibition of work was generally very good with most centres exhibiting all the candidates' work. Displays were mainly in the form of A2 sheets on boards or, by what is increasingly popular with centres, a final outcome displayed with the preparatory work in a folder or workbook. There were very few centres where the work was displayed close to the ceiling or in inappropriate areas, such as in corridors or canteens.

The standard of work this year was found to be similar to that of 2015 with the Unit 1 being the stronger of the two units. Design was more prevalent this year especially in Unit 1 with textiles and ceramics being the most popular areas of study. It was also pleasing to see much more use of digital media and technology in both units of work.

Marking in centres was found to be mainly in agreement with that of the moderators with the vast majority of work being marked within the acceptable range as set by CCEA. Moderators remarked that some centres marked to the edge of tolerance to ensure that their candidates gained their desired grade. This is not acceptable as it disadvantages candidates in the centres who mark accurately.

There is still a trend for centres to mark their top candidates leniently whereas the lower candidates tended to be marked severely.

One worrying trend this year was the falling numbers of candidates taking AS level Art and Design. Many centres said that classes were now mostly composite i.e. AS and A2 Art and Design being taught together because of the drop in numbers.

On behalf of the moderation team I would like to compliment teachers and students on the standard and presentation of the work this year. Hard work and enthusiasm for the subject was clearly evident in both units of work.

This year it is vitally important that all teachers get the opportunity to attend the various events dealing with the new specification in Art and Design at AS level. Please be aware of notifications on the CCEA website regarding up coming events in your area. It was pleasing to note that most teachers had attended the previous round of Agreement Trials and this showed in their teaching, marking and understanding of the moderation process.

### Assessment Unit AS 1 Coursework Portfolio

This year Unit 1 was the stronger of the two units of work. In many centres students explored a wide range of personal themes and ideas which challenged their critical thinking and practical skills. Moderators noted that once again the majority of work seen was 2D Fine Art but some moderators commented on seeing a broader range of thoroughly informed work in both 2D and 3D Fine Art and Design.

There were few issues with coursework/portfolio this year and most centres displayed evidence and work that was less prescribed than in previous years. Moderators were pleased to report that the vast majority of centres had addressed all the four Assessment Objective and this reflected positively on the teaching in each centre.



In some centres it is still common practise for students to rely on second hand imagery as their main source of inspiration rather than recording from first hand. “First-hand study of objects is a valuable exercise when trying to understand the basic elements in Art.” It is sad to see that these benefits are being forgotten.

More centres than ever are realising the importance of attending exhibitions and workshops and the benefits of these are being seen in the coursework/portfolios through a wide range of techniques and processes and by the enhancement of the final outcomes.

I am pleased to report that there was much more evidence of technology being used, not just as a development tool with Photoshop, but in a more sophisticated manner for final outcomes eg. Graphic design. There was more evidence of design on display this year especially in Textiles, Ceramics and Graphics. At last technology and digital imagery has been taken aboard by Art and Design departments and the results in many cases have been highly creative and professional.

- AO1** Again this year this continues to be the most problematic of the objectives. Some moderators commented that it was uneven in some centres whereas others found this area to be a strength where photography and digital imagery were used to support development and planning towards the final piece. “well written and annotated preparatory work aided this assessment objective.”
- AO2** Experimentation is one of the strongest objectives. This year it was much more wide ranging and focused and several centres had attended print workshops and visits to craftspeople etc. These helped the students develop their ideas and the visits positively informed their work and progress.
- AO3** Recording was mainly from second hand sources and drawing from life was often token, in many cases absent and lacking in a variety of approaches. There were some highly skilled techniques and sensitivity on display but sometimes the candidates lacked the confidence, initiative or direction to develop a highly personal style to their work.
- AO4** The majority of outcomes were Fine Art 2D pieces. There was however some excellent exploration and realisation using digital media and design based outcomes were more evident than in previous years.

## Assessment Unit AS 2 Externally Set Assignment

The response to this year’s Externally Set Assignment was in general, good. Candidates seemed to like the theme, “Beauty,” and their responses in some centres were wonderfully diverse. The physical beauty of women featured often, with some exceptionally mature and exciting outcomes. Portraiture of female beauty in our society was well addressed using both traditional and digital media. On the downside many candidates opted for the more obvious translation of the theme. There were portraits, self-portraits, faces and recording faces etc. In the lower mark band secondary images of models and celebrities meant any chance of an individualistic response was unlikely to happen.

Where the less obvious contexts were considered the work was much more interesting and creative. There were batik panels representing flowers and foliage, photographic journeys through the Sperrins and the topic of “the beach” inspired body jewellery.

Marking in this unit was found to be slightly more lenient than Unit 1. Centres tended to mark at the same level for both units even though the quality of the work in both units was not equal. In many ways the ESA was a repeat of the coursework with the same approaches, same experimentation techniques and similar outcomes to the CWP.

In the majority of centres all the four Assessment Objectives were addressed fairly equally and several moderators noted that strong contextual links were clearly evident this year helping the candidates' work and development.

The scale of the final outcomes was reduced this year by many candidates and this meant that the quality of the work was not compromised as in past years. Once again the popular choice for the final outcome was 2D painting with slightly more candidates opting for design in the form of textiles, ceramics or graphic design.

Finally a few observations from moderators regarding the specification.

Centres have found a formula that enables candidates to achieve their required grade to the detriment of creativity and individuality.

The need to produce two units of work has resulted in candidates taking what they thought to be the 'easy' option.

Many centres are treating the Assessment Objectives as a tick box exercise.

Contextual references are having a greater influence on the work of candidates.

There is more creative use of technology in Art and Design.

A quote from one moderator "I think the new format in the forthcoming specification will enable students to fulfil their potential because of the division of application being spread over the entire year."

"It is as though the present specification has become a very tick box exercise and is running dry of original and imaginative ideas. I am very much looking forward to the new specification."

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Assessment Unit A2 1 and A2 2

#### Overview

The Chief Examiner noted that in the 2016 exam series, candidate entry numbers were significantly lower than in previous years. The A2 moderation again resulted in more adjustments to centre marks than last year but with fewer remoderations. Overall, marks reflected a stronger candidature with a more consistent response among 'A' grade students. It was interesting to see where and how centres had capitalized on the strengths from AS level in 2015. But, sometimes ideas were overworked or manipulated from the Personal Investigation to the ESA leading to very similar units with weaker final outcomes in the exam response. Application of criteria was still generous particularly in Unit 1, the Personal Investigation, which on Tac 4's revealed a clear disparity between higher marks for the Personal Investigation and lower marks for the ESA. Moderators noted *"greater consistency and accuracy in the marking of the ESA."* Teachers' marking, was however much harsher this year in the lower levels.

In 2016, grade boundaries were more easily established, partly due to the availability of requested exemplars for post moderation procedures.

The Chief Examiner wishes to thank Art departments who rapidly package this work when the exams are over.

A2 moderation this year “*confirmed the considerable imbalance between Fine Art and Design, and between two and three dimensional work.*” It was also noted that areas of practice on offer were much narrower than in previous years although painting and drawing were often “*purposeful and competent.*” Where there was a greater breadth of study there was also risk taking especially in photography, film and animation. Sadly, the written element of the Personal Investigation was “*rarely in depth or authoritative.*”

**‘Proximity,’** this year’s theme, was well received in centres and was described by moderators as “*inspirational and open-ended*”. Preparatory work in the ESA was generally stronger than final outcomes. As in previous years, there was a huge variety of responses, mainly interpreted in 2D Fine Art. Candidates rose to the challenge in this Externally Set Assignment and the most outstanding units were described as “*creative, well executed and thought provoking.*”

AO1 is still the weakest section of the candidates’ work, especially in the development towards the final outcome. But moderators noted work which was developed from more interesting contemporary artists with an ‘edgy style.’

AO2, experimentation and use of media, is fairly similar to the previous year, with most centres using media to good purpose. Digital media in particular has been used more creatively.

AO3 continues to be the strongest of the AOs but there is not as much evidence of primary research.

AO4, the link between the written response and the candidates’ practical work was sometimes weaker and less informative in centres but was generally relevant.

The Chief Examiner suggests that teachers are particularly vigilant regarding existing exam rubric for the Legacy A2 in 2017. The introduction of a new specification at AS level in 2017 with different mark allocations, time factors and content may lead to confusion for some centres. All information for the current Legacy A2 is available online and is also clearly written on the front of the exam paper. An A2 ‘Legacy Resit’ exam paper will be offered in 2018.

The Education Manager for Art and Design at CCEA will be available to confirm details of the exam rubric for both specifications in 2017.

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## Principal Moderator’s Report

### Assessment Unit A2 1 and A2 2

#### Overview

The A2 moderation was conducted with relatively few problems. Due to the continuing hard work of teachers, centres were very well prepared, candidates’ work was clearly displayed and easily accessible and the administration documentation had been completed in accordance with CCEA requirements. There are still some inaccuracies occurring in relation to calculation errors, transferral of marks, and following of procedures, however, these were easily rectified. In general, moderators noted that the experience was very positive and rewarding.

As with previous years, there was a considerable variation in the quality of work presented, ranging from the creatively complex, skillfully executed, visually exciting personal responses to those, which fulfilled the specification requirements, but were less imaginative, more descriptive and on occasion ‘uninspiring and poorly executed’. Drawing from life is still generally being interpreted as “life drawing” and while this is a very valuable exercise, candidates could and should be recording from their own surroundings.

This is reflective not only of the broad range of candidature, but also with the particular centres teaching methodologies, expertise and availability of resources. The majority of work moderated fell within Levels 4 and 5 of the assessment matrix, however, some centres did not sufficiently differentiate between the marks within each level and therefore the awarding of marks was inaccurate, lenient and outside the acceptable range. This in turn led to the adjustment of many centres marks at post moderation.

Once again, Fine Art 2D painting was still the preferred outcome, frequently in a large-scale format. This seemed to be a less successful approach for many candidates, with the excitement, skill and sensitivity found in their initial work being lost or diluted due in the execution of the larger scale outcome. It was encouraging that moderators reported that although still limited, other disciplines, such as, lens based media, ceramics, fashion design, graphics and digital media were evident, enabling candidates to be more adventurous and broaden their experiences and knowledge.

Websites have definitely taken over from books as sources of reference and thankfully more interesting and exciting work is now being used. However, candidates would still benefit from a greater understanding of the chronology of Art History, the links to world events and the concepts behind the works which they choose. Many centres are to be congratulated, that although difficult, they had incorporated trips to galleries, museums and workshops as an integral part of the course. This clearly helped inform and develop their candidates’ work, as well as extending their understanding of the subject.

## Assessment Unit A2 1 Personal Investigation

This unit was generally the more successful of the two units of work. Centres approached this unit, either by offering a choice of themes or by allowing the candidates to decide on an appropriate theme for themselves. Moderators noted that often the work was purposeful and competent, if somewhat narrow in scope.

AO1 still seems to cause the candidates the most difficulty; the development, review and refinement of the final outcome can be scant and lacking in perception and creative thinking.

Candidates, in nearly all centres, experimented with a wide range of media, processes and techniques and it was heartening to see the variety of opportunities open to many candidates to be creative and take risks across a range of disciplines.

Most candidates addressed AO3 effectively, with many centres preferring more ‘traditional’ media. There continues to be a reliance in some centres on the use of Internet images or photographs as a replacement for primary sources, while other centres value the importance of primary observations and recording, some producing excellent, highly creative and superb recordings in a variety innovative media.

A wide range of topics were explored. The most successful had very relevant contextual references that informed, engaged and enhanced their work. Interesting contemporary artists also inspired many candidates work with their edgy styles.

## Assessment Unit A2 2 Externally Set Assignment

The open ended nature of the theme 'Proximity' proved to be very well received this year and provided candidates across the ability range with great scope for interpretation, investigation and exploration of various topics, for example, the human body, portraiture of family and pets, lifestyles and attachment to objects. Again the outcomes were almost exclusively fine art painting, with varying degrees of success. Some candidates interpreted the theme in a highly creative, exciting, original, personal, and thought-provoking way, producing well-executed responses and it was pleasing to see evidence of more risk taking. There was also more construction/installation work and a more successful use of photography, film and animation, including digital, hand drawn and stop motion.

The written element of the personal response was often little more than a retrospective descriptive narrative of the individual's practical processes and development. However, occasionally centres that displayed best practice produced written responses that were in-depth, authoritative, truly exciting and personal and showed real insight into the work of others and how this impacted on the development of their work.

As one might expect, given the time restrictions and demands from other subjects the quality of work produced for the ESA was of a slightly lower standard than that of the Personal Investigation.

The creativity, imagination and sophistication displayed in many candidates' work is a privilege to view and they are to be congratulated on their achievements. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the hard work, commitment and continuing enthusiasm of Art and Design teachers throughout Northern Ireland, who despite losing many of their candidates to other subjects, and on going budget restrictions, continue to encourage, inspire and guide their students with great success.

## Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

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