

# GCE AS and A Level Subject Criteria for Art and Design

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## **The criteria**

### **Introduction**

AS and A level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding body creates the detail of the specification.

### **Aims and objectives**

1. AS and A level specifications in Art, and Design should encourage students to develop:
  - intellectual, imaginative, creative and intuitive powers;
  - investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgement;
  - independence of mind in relation to developing their own ideas, refining their own intentions and personal outcomes;
  - an interest in, enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of art, craft and design;
  - the experience of working with a broad range of media, including traditional and new media and technologies;
  - an understanding of the interrelationships between art, craft and design processes and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate;
  - experience of working within relevant and real frameworks and, where appropriate, make links to the creative industries;
  - knowledge, understanding and application of art, craft, design and media and technologies in contemporary and past societies and cultures;
  - an awareness of different roles, functions and audiences and consumers of art, craft and design practice.

## **Specification content**

2. AS specifications in Art and Design should specify that the learner engages in integrated critical, practical and theoretical study in Art and Design.
3. At A level, specifications should build on the AS, allowing for greater depth of study. This might be achieved by, for example:
  - greater specialisation in a particular medium or process;
  - extended development of particular themes, ideas or issues;
  - further theoretical research and increased requirement to demonstrate understanding through integrated practical and written forms and other communication devices;
  - more rigorous exploration of an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach.

## **Titles and endorsements**

4. All Art and Design specifications must offer an unendorsed course in:
  - **Art, craft and design:**  
  
A broad course exploring practical and critical/contextual work through a range of 2D and/or 3D processes and media.
5. All Art and Design specifications may also offer one or more of the endorsed areas listed below.
  - **Fine art:**  
Including a range of approaches including painting, drawing, mixed-media sculpture, installation, printmaking, lens- and light-based media and new media.
  - **Critical and contextual studies:**  
Including areas of study across art, craft and design.
  - **Textile design:**  
Including fashion, printed and/or dyed fabrics, constructed textiles and installed textiles.
  - **Graphic communication:**  
Including illustration, web design, advertising, packaging, design for print, multimedia and animation.

- **Three-dimensional design:**  
Including jewellery, body ornament, theatre design, exhibition design, film-set design, interior design, product and/or environmental design and architectural design.
  - **Photography – lens- and light-based media**  
Including portraiture, landscape photography, still life, documentary, photojournalism, experimental imagery, photographic installation, video and film.
6. All endorsements must allow learners to work with both traditional and new media.
  7. Learners will be allowed to work solely with new media within any endorsement provided the aims and assessment objectives are met. Clear guidance needs to be provided to indicate how this might be achieved.
  8. Within each endorsed area learners' work should include practical and critical/contextual work in one or more of the specified areas.
  9. Learners may enter for more than one endorsed area of Art and Design.
  10. The examples below for each of the above headings are neither compulsory nor exclusive.

### **Structure**

11. AS level must comprise two units as follows.
  - **AS – Unit 1 Coursework portfolio**  
The unit will:
    - be internally set, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated;
    - be based around themes and subject matter developed from personal starting points.
  - **AS – Unit 2 Controlled assignment**  
The unit will:
    - be externally set, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated;
    - comprise an externally set task or stimuli presented to the learners at the start of the controlled test;

- include a continuous period of focused study.
12. **A2** must comprise two units as follows.
- **A2 – Unit 1 Personal investigation**  
The unit will:
    - be internally set, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated;
    - be based around themes and subject matter developed from personal starting points;
    - require the learner to communicate their understanding through integrated images and texts that include a written element of no less than 1,000 words.
  - **A2 – Unit 2 Controlled assignment**  
The unit will:
    - be set by the awarding organisation, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated;
    - comprise an externally set task or stimuli presented to the learners at the start of the controlled test;
    - include a continuous period of focused study
13. All units must require work to be evaluated, selected and presented for assessment by the learners.
14. Critical and contextual understanding may be demonstrated through visual, oral or other appropriate forms.

### **Knowledge, understanding and skills**

15. AS and A level specifications should require students to develop practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of:
- relevant materials, processes, technologies and resources;
  - how ideas, feelings and meanings can be conveyed and interpreted in images and artefacts;
  - how images and artefacts relate to the time and place in which they were made and to their social and cultural contexts;

- continuity and change in different genres, styles and traditions;
  - a working vocabulary and specialist terminology.
16. AS and A level specifications should require students to develop the skills to:
- record experiences and observations, mainly in visual form; undertake research; and gather, select and organise visual and other appropriate information;
  - explore relevant resources; analyse, discuss and evaluate images, objects and artefacts; and make and record independent judgements;
  - use knowledge and understanding of the work of others to develop and extend thinking and inform own work;
  - generate and explore potential lines of enquiry using appropriate media and techniques;
  - apply knowledge and understanding in making images and artefacts; review and modify work; and plan and develop ideas in the light of their own and others' evaluations;
  - organise, select and communicate ideas, solutions and responses, and present them in a range of visual, tactile and/or sensory forms.

### **Assessment objectives**

17. The assessment objectives and the associated weightings for AS and A level are the same.
18. All learners must be required to meet the following assessment objectives. The assessment objectives are to be weighted in all specifications within the indicated tolerances.

	<b>Assessment objectives</b>	<b>Weighting %</b>
<b>AO1</b>	Develop their ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding	20–30%
<b>AO2</b>	Experiment with and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining their ideas as	20–30%

	their work develops	
<b>AO3</b>	Record in visual and/or other forms ideas, observations and insights relevant to their intentions, demonstrating an ability to reflect on their work and progress	20–30%
<b>AO4</b>	Present a personal, informed and meaningful response demonstrating critical understanding, realising intentions and, where appropriate, making connections between visual, written, oral or other elements	20–30%

19. Progression between AS and A2 is to be recognised through either differentiated weighting of assessment objectives or performance descriptions.

## **Scheme of assessment**

### **Assessment**

20. All A level specifications in Art and Design will be 100 per cent internally marked and externally moderated. Awarding organisations will offer support, guidance and training for teachers, on an annual basis, in their role as examiners.
21. Both the AS and A2 controlled assignment units will include assessment that is externally set, internally assessed and externally moderated.
22. For all internal assessment, specifications must make clear how reliability and fairness are secured, by setting out requirements that ensure the robustness of each stage of the assessment, i.e.:
- the specific skills to be assessed;
  - setting of tasks;
  - extent of supervision in carrying out of tasks;
  - conditions under which assessment takes place;
  - marking of the assessment and internal standardising procedures;
  - any moderation process.



### **Synoptic assessment**

23. All units of the A level are regarded as synoptic in their practice. The definition of synoptic assessment in the context of Art and Design is as follows:

- Synoptic assessment involves the learners in drawing together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different parts of the A level course.
- Synoptic assessment will involve the learners in selecting and presenting work for examination that demonstrates their strengths across the areas of knowledge and the range of skills described and shows their ability to sustain their own lines of enquiry.
- Synoptic assessment will involve the learners in bringing together and making connections between:
  - the areas of knowledge;
  - the work of artists, craftspersons or designers;
  - the range of skills described and learnt throughout the course;

and applying this by responding to one or more of the following:

- a stimulus or issue;
- a design brief or problem;
- a task that specifies an image, object or other outcome to be achieved.

### **Examining times**

24. Schemes of assessment must comply with the maximum and minimum examination times set out below and should not exceed 20 hours overall.

- At AS, a period of 5–8 hours of sustained focused work.
- At A2, a period of 12–15 hours of sustained focused work.

25. Papers should be given to learners on the first day of February or as soon as possible after that date to provide a preparation period.

### AS performance descriptions for art and design

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>	<b>Assessment objective 4</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Develop their ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.	Experiment with and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining their ideas as their work develops.	Record in visual and/or other forms, ideas, observations and insights relevant to their intentions, demonstrating an ability to reflect on their work and progress.	Present a personal, informed and meaningful response demonstrating critical understanding, realising intentions and, where appropriate, making connections between visual, written, oral or other elements.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptors</b>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) develop their ideas thoughtfully by investigating a range of relevant sources;</p> <p>b) demonstrate the ability to analyse sources thoroughly and confidently.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) experiment with a wide range of appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, by recognising and exploiting emerging possibilities;</p> <p>b) develop skills proficiently, by recognising, reviewing</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) record ideas, observations and insights thoroughly and purposefully, focusing on aspects relevant to their intentions;</p> <p>b) demonstrate an ability to reflect on and evaluate their work and progress, showing independent</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) communicate personal responses creatively in the light of intentions;</p> <p>b) make appropriate connections between visual and, where appropriate, written, oral and other elements to enhance meaning in the response.</p>

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>	<b>Assessment objective 4</b>
		and refining potential ideas as work progresses.	judgement.	
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptors</b>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) develop their ideas from a range of sources;</p> <p>b) demonstrate some ability to analyse sources.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) experiment with resources, media, materials, techniques and processes;</p> <p>b) review and refine their ideas as work progresses.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) record ideas and observations relevant to their intentions;</p> <p>b) demonstrate some ability to reflect on their work and progress.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) present a personal response and realise intentions in part;</p> <p>b) show evidence of some connections between visual and, where appropriate, written, oral and other elements in the response.</p>

## A2 performance descriptions for art and design

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>	<b>Assessment objective 4</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Develop their ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.	Experiment with and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining their ideas as their work develops.	Record in visual and/or other forms, ideas, observations and insights relevant to their intentions, demonstrating an ability to reflect on their work and progress.	Present a personal, informed and meaningful response demonstrating critical understanding, realising intentions and, where appropriate, making connections between visual, written, oral or other elements
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptors</b>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) develop and expand their ideas confidently by focused and in-depth investigation of a range of relevant sources;</p> <p>b) demonstrate clear critical understanding by perceptively analysing sources.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) experiment with a wide range of appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes by recognising and exploiting emerging possibilities to successfully develop creative solutions;</p> <p>b) demonstrate skills and competencies</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) record ideas, observations and insights confidently and with focus, to inform personal interests and concerns;</p> <p>b) demonstrate reflective, evaluative and independent judgements regarding their ideas, intentions and progress.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) present personal intentions in an imaginative, coherent and independent manner;</p> <p>b) make significant connections between visual and, where appropriate, written, oral and other elements and show these convincingly in their</p>

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>	<b>Assessment objective 4</b>
		effectively, perceptively and with focus, by recognising, reviewing and refining potential solutions as work develops.		responses.
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptors</b>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) develop and expand their ideas from a range of relevant sources;</p> <p>b) demonstrate critical understanding by analysing sources.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) experiment with a range of appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes to extend their work;</p> <p>b) demonstrate an ability to control and organise their ideas, by reviewing and refining them as work develops.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) record ideas, observations and insights, showing some sense of purpose and relevance to their intentions;</p> <p>b) demonstrate an ability to reflect on and evaluate their work and progress.</p>	<p>Learners characteristically:</p> <p>a) present evidence of personal interests, concerns and qualities in their response;</p> <p>b) show evidence of some connections between visual and, where appropriate, written, oral and other elements.</p>

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