

GCE Subject Criteria for Applied Art and Design

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The criteria

Introduction

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

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

Aims and objectives

1. Subject criteria define the relationship between the AS (3-unit), the AS double award (6-unit), the A level (6-unit) and the A level double award (12-unit).
2. Any GCE specification that contains significant elements of applied art and design must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria. Awarding organisations must ensure that GCE specifications and external assessment approaches are clearly differentiated from other qualifications they offer in this and similar subject(s) at this level. 'Art and design' should be interpreted throughout to refer broadly to art, craft and design.
3. The titles of the qualifications are:
 - Advanced Subsidiary General Certificate of Education in Applied Art and Design;
 - Advanced Subsidiary General Certificate of Education in Applied Art and Design (double award);
 - Advanced General Certificate of Education in Applied Art and Design;
 - Advanced General Certificate of Education in Applied Art and Design (double award).
4. All specifications in Applied Art and Design should encourage learners to develop broad skills, knowledge and understanding used in the art and design sector. The term 'vocational' is used to characterise learning approaches and activities that are work related – in other words reflecting the current working practices, constraints and preoccupations of professionals in the art and design sector. The personal work and materials presented in a learner's portfolio need to demonstrate this

vocationality. In addition, the portfolio is the basis for progression to higher education. All qualifications should prepare learners for further study or training in art and design related occupations.

5. AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications should encourage learners to:
 - acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding as well as language needed to create, develop and present high-quality work;
 - understand art and design methods and principles;
 - use primary and secondary sources;
 - understand how creative focuses are interrelated and influence each other;
 - explore working methods linked to industry practice.
6. In addition, the A level (6-unit) and A level double award (12-unit) specifications should encourage learners to:
 - develop practical skills, techniques and processes to a standard that allows progression to further study or training;
 - apply working methods used by sector professionals as individuals and in teams, as well as with clients, commissioners and audiences;
 - independently explore how meaning is communicated through creative and reflective experimentation with media and materials;
 - develop ways of working that emphasise practical independence, self-directed learning and how to improve practice over time.
7. All specifications should support progression to courses that are:
 - either general or multidisciplinary throughout
 - start general and become more specialist
 - or maintain a single focus throughout.

Specification content

8. All specifications should build on the knowledge, skills and understanding that may be acquired through level 2 qualifications in related subjects or through equivalent experience.
9. Core content, which is common to awarding organisation specifications, is grouped into three main areas of study:
 - historical and contemporary professional practice;
 - creative processes;
 - skills and techniques within specified focuses.
10. For these interlinked areas of study see 'Areas of study' below.
11. All specifications should draw in full upon the areas of study set out in 'Areas of study' below. A2 content must be based on deeper understanding and application of the areas of study than AS content, and double award content must draw on a wider range of knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of study.
12. There are six focuses of vocational practice in art and design:
 - Graphic design involves the design of text and images to communicate identified messages or information, increasingly through the use of digital technology. It includes branding, corporate identity, packaging, design for print and design for advertising (for example new media and multimedia, web, the internet and intranets).
 - Fashion and textile design involves the manipulation of materials, visual and structural elements, and the resolution of functional and aesthetic factors in line with market trends. It includes clothing, footwear and accessories, design for printed and constructed textiles (for example knitting, weave and carpets).
 - Product design involves the design of products to meet consumer need or enhance appeal through modifying, for example appearance, performance, reliability, quality and cost-effectiveness, or developing new products. Essential capabilities are to be able to manipulate materials and to communicate 3D structures through 2D drafting media, increasingly using computer-aided design (CAD) systems. It includes domestic products (for example

ceramics, furniture, lighting, consumer and electrical goods), crafts and industrial design.

- Spatial design involves the manipulation of space, visual and structural elements for domestic, public and contract purposes. An essential capability is to be able to communicate 3D structures through 2D drafting media, increasingly using CAD systems. It includes design for interiors, environments, retail, exhibition and performing arts contexts.
 - Craft involves taking responsibility for the whole creative process from initial idea through to the production of a final outcome, which is sold to clients or customers; craft briefs may be about one-off pieces, commissions or small production runs. It includes working with particular materials or production processes (for example studio ceramics, felt-making, wood carving, paper-making or multimedia).
 - Fine art involves creative expression, which may often be intensely personal. The outcome that is produced is likely to reflect the experience of the artist and may be intended to evoke a response in the viewer or audience. Fine art work will often result from exploring ideas of a personal nature. It includes painting, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics, textiles installation, performance, photography, video, digital, and mixed media and site-specific work; however, such work must retain a distinctive vocational context.
13. All specifications might emphasise one or more of these focuses of art and design. Area of study titles do not necessarily constitute assessment unit titles.
14. There are a number of approaches to progression from AS to A2 standard; for example this may be reflected in a greater degree of specialism within a single focus, or breadth across an increased range of focuses, at the higher level. However the following requirements must be met:
- AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must offer a broad and balanced experience (where fine art is studied alone, it must be differentiated from GCE Art and Design).
 - A level (six-unit) specifications should build on the AS (three-unit), allowing for greater depth of study.

- A level double award (12-unit) specifications should include considerable emphasis on practical skills and techniques.

Areas of study

15. In all specifications:

- Drawing must be appropriately encouraged.
- Use of ICT must be appropriately encouraged.
- Health and safety must be addressed, informed by appropriate legislation and/or accepted best practice.

Historical and contemporary professional practice

16. AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must:

- require research skills to be used in exploring an appropriate but representative range of examples of others' work from the past and present day (including others' cultures), linked to exploration of professional working practices;
- encourage outcomes that are informed by such source materials;
- introduce research techniques and methods of recording and exploring, organising and presenting information.

17. A level (six-unit) specifications must:

- include a representative cross-section of historical and contemporary work and professional practices in terms of the focuses they cover;
- encourage in-depth research into professional practice, including the implications of professional considerations to the learner's own work and future progression aspirations;
- encourage awareness of the implications of professional practice in response to diverse and complex contexts, constraints and needs;
- emphasise producing practical work informed by findings;
- encourage learners to apply the implications of professional practice to their own work and aspirations for progression.

18. A level double award (12-unit) specifications must additionally:
- emphasise the use of learners own independent ideas in carrying out research into a broad and diverse range of others' work as well as producing and analysing own work.

Creative processes

19. The creative process should be taken to cover:
- analysing and researching a brief;
 - developing ideas;
 - realising and presenting outcomes and evaluating these.
20. Within different focuses of art and design, the term 'brief' can be interpreted in different ways. For example, craftspeople may use the term to refer to a written or verbal set of requirements that they have agreed with a customer for producing something; artists may use the term to refer to the intentions behind a work; and designers may use the term to apply to a brief negotiated with a client. Specifications must make clear to learners and teachers how the term is applied.
21. AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must:
- emphasise the introduction of techniques involved in the creative process for the origination and development of ideas that meet work-related briefs;
 - encourage some awareness of detailed requirements of a brief and the extent to which the work produced meets these requirements.
22. A level (six-unit) specifications must:
- emphasise using ongoing review to develop ideas and creative skills;
 - encourage the application of creative processes and technical skills when responding to work-related briefs through clarifying requirements, finding out about client needs, as well as accessing and collating visual source materials;
 - promote the development of the personal skills needed to push ideas forward and overcome the unexpected, as well as the ability to apply creative processes to meeting the requirements of briefs.

23. A level double award (12-unit) specifications must:
- emphasise combining creative and technical abilities with ongoing analysis and evaluation skills to achieve quality outcomes;
 - develop an understanding of the limits and potential of work-related briefs, as well as effective and appropriate creative responses;
 - encourage learners to undertake work linked to a range of different contexts, situations or needs in order to develop transferable skills.

Skills and techniques within specified focuses

24. For all specifications, if there is an emphasis on particular focuses, this must be reflected in the way this area of study is specified. For example, if the specification is 'general' or 'diagnostic' in focus, then an appropriate breadth of media, techniques and processes should be specified. However, if a specification were to focus on introducing an area such as fashion and textiles, then the relevant materials, techniques and processes should be specified.
25. For all specifications, the appropriate specialist making skills, techniques and processes and specialist realisation methods must be covered. 2D/3D visual language must be covered as appropriate to the focus(es) within the specification.
26. AS (three-unit) and AS double award (six-unit) specifications must:
- emphasise how fundamental skills and understanding of visual language enable the communication of ideas and meaning;
 - require developmental and final work that typically demonstrates some developing technical skill within the areas or focuses specified, commensurate with the amount of time available.
27. A level (six-unit) specifications must:
- emphasise more in-depth exploration and experimentation with visual language and the ability to communicate ideas and meanings in appropriate forms within the focus(es) specified;
 - require technical skills of sufficient quality that effectively communicate intentions with some awareness of how to develop personal skills and competencies.

28. A level double award (12-unit) specifications must:
- place considerable emphasis on the development of technical skills and personal competencies within specified focus(es);
 - require developmental and final work that typically demonstrates a maturing and broad range of skills, applied to communicating intentions effectively in response to a range of contexts, situations or needs.
29. Specifications must present content in a coherent and appropriate manner, fit for teaching, learning and assessment purposes.
30. All specifications must:
- include guidance for teachers on the provision of the vocational context;
 - set out for learners the purpose and vocational relevance of the content (knowledge, skills and understanding);
 - set out for learners the skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need to demonstrate to achieve the assessment units;
 - set out for learners the evidence that they will need to produce for the internally assessed units;
 - set out for learners the marking criteria for the internally assessed units against which they will be assessed.

Assessment objectives

31. All specifications must require learners to demonstrate the following objectives in work-related contexts.
32. The weightings for the assessment objectives for all specifications must be within the ranges set out below. The same weighting ranges apply to all qualifications.

Assessment objectives		Weighting (%)
AO1	<p>Applying knowledge and understanding of others' practice</p> <p>Learners show an understanding of the working methods used by historical and contemporary art and design professionals and their work.</p>	20–30

AO2	Applying skills, techniques and understanding Learners develop ideas by applying and reflecting on knowledge, skills and understanding of media, materials, techniques and processes, realising and presenting work appropriate to its context.	40–60
AO3	Analysis, synthesis and evaluation Learners gather, record and analyse relevant information and evidence, make reasoned judgements, present solutions and evaluate their own practice.	20–30

33. It should be noted that the weightings of each assessment objective can be varied, for example to differentiate between AS and A2 level, or between A level (6-unit) and A level double award (12-unit).

Scheme of assessment

34. Assessment units must be assessed either internally or externally.
35. AS content and A2 content must be separately assessed.
36. In each AS (three-unit), at least one assessment unit must be assessed externally.
37. In each AS double award (six-unit), at least two assessment units must be assessed externally.
38. In each A level (six-unit), at least two assessment units must be assessed externally, one of which must be in A2.
39. In each A level double award (12-unit) qualification, at least 3 assessment units must be assessed externally, one of which must be in A2.
40. All specifications must include external assessment that is set externally, timed and includes some part completed under 'controlled' conditions. The assessed outcome(s) should be marked by the awarding organisation or marked by the centre and moderated by the awarding organisation.

41. Practical work must constitute the significant element of all external assessments.
42. All A level and A level (double award) specifications must include the assessment of some form of appropriate written communication.¹
43. All A level and A level (double award) specifications must include synoptic assessment in A2. Synoptic assessment will involve the learner bringing together and making connections between the areas of knowledge, skills and understanding learned throughout the programme and applying this when responding to the set requirements.
44. External assessment approaches must allow learners to produce work that reflects vocational practice.

¹ Forms of written communication should be those that arise naturally from learners' work in this subject, and are relevant to this sector and for progression. Any reference to 'writing' or 'written communication' should be interpreted as the production of text by any means, for example pen, word processor and so on.

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