![AQA Questions matter]

Notes and guidance: Practical Guidance for non-exam assessment

Contents

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Introduction

Non-exam assessment (NEA) is work that is marked by teachers and moderated by an external moderator. Teachers assess their students' work for each component and submit their marks by 31st May. An AQA moderator will contact the school or college in April/May to arrange a visit in June to view a sample of the work across components. The moderator will either verify the centre's proposed marks or recommend adjustments to bring the marks in line with the AQA standard.

Component 1

Personal investigation is a practical investigation supported by written material. In the majority of schools and colleges, students start their investigation in either the Spring or Summer terms of Year 12 and finish it in January of Year 13. The majority of teachers provide students with a choice of stimulating starting points for their investigation.

In the earlier part of the course, students are usually provided with introductory tasks and assignments which often include short projects that focus on developing skills using appropriate processes, materials and techniques, drawing and observation skills, and understanding of formal elements. In some schools and colleges, courses include specialist workshops, field trips and gallery visits.

The majority of students produce the Component 1 required written material of 1000 – 3000 words in the form of an essay which provides a rationale for the practical work, explaining choices and decisions and the way appropriate contextual sources have informed the development of ideas. Some students use creative methods and formats to present their written work.

Component 2

In the externally set assignment (ESA), starting points are provided by AQA. A separate question paper is available for each of the six titles in Art and Design. Students receive their question papers from 1st February in the year of the examination. Externally set assignments will be sent to centres if estimate of entries have been made and available on Centre Services on 01 February.

Each paper includes eight open-ended starting points which provide opportunities for students to respond in all the areas of study detailed in the specification. Papers from previous years' examinations are available online at AQA centre services. At the end of the unlimited preparatory period, usually in April/May, students will produce a finished outcome or related outcomes in a 15-hour period of supervised time under exam conditions.

NEA Adviser service

A feature much valued by teachers is that every school and college is allocated an NEA Subject Adviser who can be contacted by e-mail and is always available to answer your questions. Your examinations officer will be able to provide you with contact details.

NEA Advisers are experienced teachers and moderators who can provide guidance and support throughout the course on. NEA advisers can:

- explain specification requirements
- share teaching ideas
- discuss general processes and planning and approaches to NEA tasks.

Teacher Standardisation

Teacher Standardisation meetings are free and run through from November to March are a highly regarded opportunity to see live work in all six titles, to gain insight into the AQA standard and to practise your assessment skills. Guidance on interpreting the assessment objectives and applying the assessment criteria is provided at these meetings. They also give you an opportunity to network with other local teachers and have individual conversations with presenters. Booking can be made on our Professional Development page.

We have also photographed all of the work for you to refer back to and share with colleagues and these is available on AQA centre services.

To help you find the examples you need we have created an index to enable you identify which title, component, set and mark is available in each of the standardisation books.

Assessment objectives

Marking guidance spidergrams are available and you may find these spidergrams helpful in matching students work to the correct mark band for A-level Art and Design (7201 – 7206). The language can be used in conversations with students about what they need to do and evidence, in order to progress to a higher mark band.

Moderation

The moderation sample will be automatically generated when you enter your marks on e-subs. In May, your moderator will contact you to arrange a date for the visit. The majority of schools and colleges display or present the sample in folders, in rank order. Where the work is not in rank order, teachers provide maps or diagrams to aid the moderator.

Digital and electronic media

Students use digital and electronic media, most often alongside traditional media, for a variety of purposes and with a variety of intentions. Procreate, SketchUp and Vector Q are used successfully by students.

Fine art

Students use digital media to create still and moving images, to combine images, or to record source material from which they can develop their ideas in other media. Some students use i-

pads to create drawings, digital images and paintings. Video is used to record performance and photography is used to document environment-based and time-based work. Projectors are used in installations and to enlarge images. Digital scanners and photocopiers are occasionally used to explore possibilities.

Graphic communication

Students use computer software alongside traditional media to create, edit and manipulate images and ideas. Adobe Photoshop, Animate and Illustrator are commonly used. Students use digital photography to produce images for posters, designs for print and publishing, and for advertising material, branding and packaging design. A variety of software programs are used to create digital illustration, motion graphics, animation, and character development. QR codes occasionally provide links to short animations. Photoshop is used extensively to develop and refine ideas and produce finished outcomes by manipulating images, type and space, into designs and layouts. Many students create visuals of advertising design, environmental graphics, logo designs and wayfinding signage on adshells, hoardings and in public spaces. Livery designs are applied to photo-images of vehicles. Designs for labels are printed and visualised on bottles, containers or fashion items. Digital printing is used to produce posters, brochures, style-guides, album sleeves, book covers and samples of illustrated pages, labels and packaging designs.

Textiles

Some students use digital and electronic media to create pattern, to explore colourways and to produce fashion illustrations. On occasion, digital patterns and designs are printed, carefully cut out, then applied to fashion drawings in traditional media. Printing onto acetate enables students to create overlays of fabric designs onto pen and ink line drawings. Some fashion students use digital and electronic media to develop and refine their ideas, for example, by photographing a pinned mock-up of a design for a garment used as a template for digitally produced fabric designs. Digital photography is used to record models wearing garments and fashion accessories, and to show textiles hangings and installations in situ. Digital printing is seen alongside traditional print media in examples of printed textiles and designs for wallpaper and domestic fabrics.

Three-dimensional design

Some ceramics students upload drawings of surface designs to develop and manipulate using computer software to interpret initial freehand sketches and to develop and refine ideas for ceramic vessels or sculpture. From initial sketches, drawings and plans, ideas for architectural design, product design, site-specific sculpture, furniture, and constructions such as bridges, are developed and refined using appropriate software which leads to maquettes and finished models or other outcomes. Visuals of architectural design, sculpture, or constructions in a setting, can provide additional evidence of contextual understanding.

Photography

A variety of computer software is used to edit, crop and manipulate images. Carefully produced sketches and diagrams using computer software, can record planning for photoshoots and studio lighting. Digital recording in contact sheets documents photoshoots and the selection and rejection of images. Photoshop is used extensively to edit, manipulate, and refine images. It is important that students provide evidence of their understanding of

aperture, exposure, and ISO, and at least in some of their work demonstrate their ability to manage manual camera settings.

Digital sketchbooks

It is important that students' work is accessible, easy to navigate, and secure. Live work must not be in the public domain until after the publication of results.

A digital sketchbook can be edited, improved and updated as the course progresses, providing a flexible digital document to accompany hardcopy sketchbooks. Digital sketchbooks can include audio and video clips, animation and GIFs alongside still images, screengrabs and annotation. In graphics and photography, some students produce entirely digital sketchbooks, printing only the finished outcomes which can significantly reduce printing costs.

A variety of methods and storage systems, including PowerPoint, One Drive and Google Drive, are used effectively to present work.   Many students present their work in clearly labelled files which are most effective when organised logically and there is clear evidence of selection when managing file content.

Moving to Art and Design from Design Technology

It is important that students provide evidence of their understanding of aesthetics and function when producing designs that are fit for purpose. Investigating successful examples of graphics, fashion, millinery, architecture, furniture and product design, should help students to develop their understanding of how well-designed outcomes fulfil their purpose in a manner that is attractive to see and, in certain examples, to handle. The investigation of contextual sources that are appropriate to students' intentions is pivotal in helping students to develop their understanding of visual language that includes line, shape, form, structure and space, alongside tone, colour and surface texture.

Drawing skills are important when developing, refining and communicating ideas in both traditional and electronic media. Drawing methods, materials and techniques including sketches, drawings, diagrams and plans, should be appropriate to students' intentions.

In graphics, students record ideas and observations using a variety of materials and techniques which include drawing, photography and computer software. When developing ideas for animation and motion graphics, including animated logo designs, students record their planning in a storyboard or record the process in a set of images. It is important that emerging ideas for layouts, labels, packaging designs and promotional material, are successfully documented in carefully organised work.

In textiles design, samplers, drawings, collage and software are used to refine ideas for textile hangings, fashion designs, and designs for wallpaper and furnishing fabrics. Many students use drawing and photography to record their observations of natural forms which provide material for the development of ideas. Students produce confident fashion drawings which clearly record their ideas and how they are developed and refined.

In three-dimensional design, students record ideas and observations in sketches and diagrams using traditional drawing materials and when managing computer software.

Maquettes, models, test-pieces, prototypes and samples, provide evidence of recording, developing and refining ideas leading to finished outcomes. CAD is used extensively to develop and refine ideas from initial sketches and drawings. It is important that students carefully consider design context and visual language when presenting a personal response which realises intentions.

Advice on switching from DT to Art and Design

Teachers who are preparing to teach the Art and Design specification for the first time should familiarise themselves with the specification and must attend a Teacher Standardisation meeting. Teacher support materials are available on Centre Services. These include examples of schemes of work, and examples of student work with commentaries. AQA also offers a range of popular and successful CPD courses.

It should be pointed out that if both Art and DT departments are entering students for A-level Art and Design: Textile Design, Graphic Communication or Three-dimensional Design, internal standardisation must take place. The moderation sample will be selected from **all students entered** for that title. So, if both departments enter students, a single sample will be selected.

Blogs

A Blog is normally just a web log, ie a webpage or website. The format of a blog is usually one that is designed to enable the blogger to communicate information in small chunks. It is not normally used as a means of displaying a folder of work because of limitations dictated by the web page. We would be very concerned if students were encouraged to use an approach that limits outcomes and dictates methodology which could disadvantage students.

Internet sharing sites are not an appropriate medium as work presented for assessment should not be in the public domain. Comments and feedback provided by followers may influence students' choices and decisions when investigating and developing their ideas.

Many centres use storage systems that are Internet based. An Internet sharing site such as a blog is different from an online storage site. It is fine for centres to store work online on a secure site. It is not acceptable for centres to store students' work on sites that are concerned with sharing.

Displaying students work

As long as the work is adequately supervised and not in a position where it might be damaged, it is fine to display students work around the school or at the end of year exhibition. AQA would not wish to prevent a school or college from celebrating the work produced by students.

To protect the integrity of students' work, it is important that live work produced for assessment is not made available in the public domain until after the publication of results.

Informing students of their marks

JCQ regulations require that students must now be informed of their centre assessed marks so that they may request a review of the centre's marking before marks are submitted to the awarding body.

It is the centre's responsibility to decide how they interpret and apply this JCQ ruling.

The deadline for the submission of marks to AQA is 31st May.

Students must be informed of their mark(s) but they cannot be informed of a grade.

Grade thresholds are established by the Awarding process in July.

Where a student has requested a review prior to the submission of marks to AQA, the Reviewer is required to make an academic judgement whether the same standard has been applied to the work when compared to others in the cohort, cf. JCQ Informing students of their centre assessed marks.

Component 1 guidance

Can students include work produced in earlier in Year 12 in their A-level Personal investigation?

Where it is directly relevant to the investigation, work produced earlier in the course, for example a drawing, a painting, a print, a maquette, or a sampler, may provide a starting point for the A-level Personal investigation.

The A-level Personal investigation is not a portfolio and should not include for assessment additional work which is not directly related to the investigation.

Wholesale re-use of earlier work is not recommended as it can inhibit the development of skills in the second year of study and is likely to under-represent students' true ability and achievement at the end of the second year of the course. Students and teachers must consider that all work submitted will be assessed at the higher level expected of A-level students.

Contextual sources

Students are not required to copy contextual sources. To provide evidence of learning from contextual sources, it is not necessary to produce copies of them.

In some schools and colleges, students develop their understanding of composition and image making and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills when handling materials, processes and techniques, by making copies of contextual sources. However, to produce numerous 'artist research pages' which include biographies and elaborate copies, can prevent students from having time to produce sufficient evidence of developing and refining their own ideas.

Investigating appropriate sources can inform student responses in different ways. The majority of students respond to contextual sources by applying to their own source material, the knowledge and understanding gained from looking at different approaches to an idea or composition or particular aspects of image making or the handling of materials and techniques.

 It is important that contextual sources inform the investigation and development of ideas and help students to develop their own personal language. Evidence of learning is important.

How to mark the essay in the Personal investigation

Component 1 Personal investigation is a practical project which is supported by written material. The written work should not be assessed separately. It should be marked alongside the practical work to produce a single mark that reflects a student's achievement in the investigation as a whole.

All of the assessment objectives apply to both the practical and written elements. Details and guidance about the required written work can be found on page 11 of the specification. Additional guidance is provided in Applying the Assessment Criteria to Written Materials which is included in delegate packs at Teacher standardisation and available in the Subject area of AQA Centre Services.

Written requirements

In this specification, the only written requirement is in A-level Unit 1 Personal investigation. However, many students include annotation in their work. This can be most helpful when they provide additional insight into a student's thinking and the choices and decisions they have made when investigating, developing and refining their ideas. Annotation can provide additional evidence of one or more of the AOs and are of greatest benefit when they are analytical rather than descriptive.

Written work timeline

Although there is no requirement for the written work to continue alongside the practical work until May, it is reasonable to expect that a critical journal will take account of the student's intentions as work progresses.

Component 2 guidance

Externally set assignment questions

The questions in the A-level externally set assignment papers, provide students with a range of possible starting points for their work. They provide a focus and stimulus for students when resourcing their work and when investigating and developing their ideas. It is a requirement that students respond to one of the starting points but they should not feel that they are required to rigidly 'answer a question'. We always aim to produce questions that are 'open' in nature which provide opportunities for a range of interpretations and responses.

Internet use

JCQ rules with regard to the use of mobile phones during the period of supervised time are unequivocal, they must not be used. It would, however, be possible for students to remove and store images from their phones prior to the start of the supervised period.

Where students require the Internet to access software only available online, the teacher must make sure that security is in place to ensure that Internet activity is confined to this use, and that they are confidently able to sign the student record form authenticating that the work presented for assessment is entirely the student's own work.

The teacher must also be in the position to confidently authenticate that the student has not had access to this work between periods of supervised time or after the end of the supervised period. This could be organised by the school/teacher setting up the account for the student and logging them on and off at the start and finish of the supervised period, ensuring that the student does not have access to the account details/password.

Technical assistance (within the context of the JCQ Instructions for invigilating examinations)

The externally set assignment timed sessions (15 hours) must be carried out under formal supervision, following the JCQ regulations.

Technical assistance means that the teacher is available in the room to deal with any problems that might arise; to ensure that health and safety considerations are in place for the safeguarding of all concerned; to ensure that any equipment breakdown or software malfunction can be rectified or replaced and to ensure that equipment, tools and materials are available as required for students to use.

Technical assistance does not mean that the teacher can offer advice, comment, opinion, support or guidance that might lead to the enhancement or improvement of a student's work or give them an unfair advantage over other students.

Access arrangements

Whether students are allowed extra time in the 15 hour supervised period will depend on the medical or other needs of the individual student. You would need to talk to our access arrangements and/or special considerations departments. Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be made through Centre Services where each student's needs will be considered case-by-case.

Formal supervised time

The 15 hours of supervised time is timetabled at the discretion of the school but must be under supervised conditions.

The first three hours of the supervised time must be consecutive. After the first 3hr session, the sessions which follow do not have to run consecutively. Time for drying, firing, and cleaning/preparing screens or printing plates, for example, is not included in the 15hrs.

Schools must allow sufficient time to assess the work and submit marks to AQA by the deadline of 31 May.

Invigilation

There is no requirement to have invigilators present as well as the teacher. The art teacher can be the invigilator. For more information about supervision during the 15 hours of supervised time, see the Instructions for conducting examinations by JCQ.

Security of work between supervised time sessions

All work produced for Component 2 must be stored under secure conditions between and following the supervised sessions.

What to produce in the period of supervised time

In the period of supervised time students must produce a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes informed by their preparatory work, cf. Specification pp 10/12. Work produced in the 15hrs must be identified. A coloured dot is usually sufficient.

Use of contextual sources in the question

Contextual sources are included in the questions to provide appropriate examples which can trigger a student's own investigation. The sources referred to provide examples of different ways artists, craftspeople or designers have interpreted a particular idea, theme or issue. Often, they include contrasting approaches or different materials; a Fine Art question might include examples of painting, printmaking, sculpture and installation.   Students do not have to use the contextual sources in the question but the examples can provide an initial impulse for their own investigations.

Regulations for preparatory work for the xternally set assignment

Before the period of supervised time, students are permitted to prepare materials, supports, surfaces and grounds which enable them to start their finished outcome at the beginning of the 15 hours.

Preparatory work must be completed by the start of the first period of supervised time and kept secure at the centre between sessions. Students may refer to their preparatory work during the supervised time, but it must not be added to or amended.

At A-level, students must not begin work on their final outcome(s) before the start of the period of supervised time. In fairness to all students entered for this qualification it is important that all students are given the same opportunity to produce finished work under the same time constraints.

When planning their final outcome(s), students must consider what they can realistically produce within the supervised period.

Preparation that can be undertaken before supervised time starts.

Preparing screens, blocks, plates and printing inks; priming and/or laying a ground for painting on canvas, paper or other supports; making an armature for sculpture; preparing wood, plastics, metal or modelling materials; dyeing or printing fabric or other materials to be used to produce a garment, fashion accessory or textiles installation; preparing a pattern ready for cutting and garment making in the 15hrs; shooting raw photographic images for a collage, montage or installation; shooting raw material for a film/video to be edited, manipulated and compiled; producing photographic images/contacts to be selected, processed and manipulated.

Question paper access

Teachers may have access to question papers before 01 February to prepare resources but papers must not be distributed to students until 01 February. Question papers normally arrive in centres in December/January. On receipt, question paper packets may be opened by the person responsible for the examination (usually the Head of Art) in order to review questions and prepare appropriate resources. This is not the same for GCSE, where teachers cannot view the papers before 1st Jan.

What to include in the externally set assignment

The externally set assignment should include only work produced from 01 February as students are required to create a personal response to the question paper. Using work produced earlier does not fulfil this requirement.

When to work on supporting/preparatory work

Students must stop work on preparatory material at the start of the 15hrs and the work kept secure between sessions. Work in sketchbooks/workbooks produced during the 15hrs, in photography for example, must be clearly identified.