

Notes and guidance: Practical Guidance for non-exam assessment

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Introduction

There are six Art and Design titles, each comprising of two non-examination assessment (NEA) components:

- Art, craft and design
- Fine art
- Graphic communication
- Textile design
- Three-dimensional design
- Photography

Non-examination assessments measure subject-specific knowledge and skills that cannot be tested by timed written papers.

There are three stages:

- task setting
- task taking
- task marking.

Task setting

This stage involves planning, resourcing and implementing art and design tasks, projects and activities (relevant to each title) which will allow students of all abilities to meet the requirements of the specification and address the assessment objectives.

The guided learning hours for this course are 120 to 140 hours and how these are organised will vary dependent on the needs, constraints, facilities and resources of individual centres and students, however, the majority of centres run component 1 from the September in Year 10 until the end of December in Year 11.

Component 1

Portfolio, requires students to submit evidence of a sustained project and further work.

‘Sustained’ does not infer a project of any particular length, it simply has to evidence a creative journey from the starting point to the realisation of intentions.

‘Further work’ ideally needs to be distinct from the sustained project or projects. It could be as little as an additional drawing or photograph, it might be the result of workshop activities or a response to a gallery visit, but it could be much more than this, for example, another project.

If evidence shows that planning and implementation of an Art and Design GCSE course does not provide opportunity for students to produce and submit further work, then, in the first instance a warning letter will be issued. If this is not rectified by the following year, a malpractice report may be instigated.

Work submitted must show evidence of both drawing activity and written annotation.

Drawing can take many forms. The following list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive but drawing might include:

- highly rendered studies using appropriate media
- charcoal sketches
- continuous line recordings
- hand or machine stitched line work
- shaped wire forms
- thumbnail sketches
- marks etched into various surfaces
- digitally produced storyboards
- digitally produced designs
- temporary images captured photographically, for example drawing with light
- face painting.

The purpose of written annotation is for students to record their ideas, observations and insights beyond what is visually evident. There is no word limit requirement or expected amount; it is about the quality of the written notes in communicating ideas, understanding and meaning, rather than the quantity of work produced.

Written annotation can be presented digitally or handwritten and might take the form of:

- full prose
- a mind map or spider gram
- brief notes
- key words.

Component 2

Externally set assignment (ESA), starting points are provided by AQA in a separate paper for each of the six art and design titles. Schools who have made [estimated entries](#) will receive physical copies and digital copies are available on Centre Services on 02 January. Teachers and Students receive their papers from 02 January in the year of the examination and select one starting point. The ESA provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate, through an extended creative response, their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and/or understanding in response to their selected starting point.

It comprises a preparatory period (or period of informal supervision), during which students select and respond to their chosen starting point followed by 10 hours of supervised, unaided work in which students are required to realise their intentions.

The preparatory period does not mean preparing to create a final piece, it simply means preparing to work independently under formal supervision.

Only the preparatory work (the evidence produced during the informal supervision period) and the work produced within the 10 hours of supervised time, can be submitted as assessment evidence for this component.

As for component 1, students must ensure that the total submission for component 2 explicitly evidences coverage of all four assessment objectives and evidences drawing activity and written annotation.

To be awarded marks for this component, students must (in addition to producing work in the preparatory period of informal supervision) complete at least 2 hours of the formally supervised 10-hour period.

In both components students must identify and acknowledge sources which are not their own.

Task taking

This stage is about students working through tasks, projects and activities in school and independently. They do not need to be directly supervised at all times but there must be sufficient supervision to ensure that work can be authenticated.

Students must be made aware of and supported to understand the assessment objectives, so that they know what they need to do to gain credit. It is perfectly acceptable for teachers to create or provide a student-friendly version of the marking criteria.

When completing work for both components there is no restriction on the scale of work, media or material used, it can be submitted in any format including digital or non-digital presentations.

In whatever way they are presented, creative journeys should be clearly documented with students identifying and acknowledging any sources which are not their own.

A candidate record form for each component must be completed and signed by the student at the end of the course to confirm that the work submitted is their own.

Teachers must sign a declaration of authentication upon completion of work stating; that the work is that of the student, it was completed under the required conditions and that it will be kept on file until the deadline for reviews has passed. If no student in the cohort is requesting a review the work can be returned at this point.

Digital submission requirements and processes

Students should have access to materials, media and equipment appropriate to the specification and relevant title, this may include digital and electronic media, tools and processes.

Students use digital and electronic media, usually alongside other materials, for a variety of purposes and with different intentions. Within NEA courses, if available, students have unrestricted access to the internet, software and systems and unlimited access to appropriate electronic and printed resources. Digital development of ideas, manipulation of images, preparation/creation of resources and presentation of outcomes are all frequently seen. Should students wish to use the internet during the 10 hours of formally supervised time, please refer to the task taking guidance relating to Component 2.

Thorough recording and documenting of processes is advised, to clarify ownership and how work was produced, especially if there is likely to be any doubt about the origin of images or how work has evolved.

In some courses, for example Graphic communication or Photography, it is more likely that students will produce and present their work entirely using digital media. Illustrator and Photoshop are the most commonly used software but students are now frequently accessing similar, free, online programmes. In Three-dimensional design, students may use digital software such as SketchUp, Fusion 360 or Tinkercad, to enhance and render their designs and use digital tools and processes such as laser cutters or 3D printers to realise them. Within Textiles, students might use various software programmes to; explore colourways, create repeat patterns, cut stencils and to show garments on models and soft furnishings in situ, to demonstrate contextual understanding. Further examples of the use of digital media might be seen in films, projections and installations submitted as part of both Fine Art and Art, Craft and Design portfolios.

Students may store and present their work on websites, in online folders or as digital presentations within a school extranet. It is important that this is secure but also navigable and accessible for students, teachers and moderators. It should be organised and clearly labelled. JCQ rules are clear that live work must not be in the public domain until after the publication of results.

Component 2 Task taking guidance

- Students may discuss their chosen starting points with their teacher.
- There is no restriction on the scale of work, media or material used.
- Preparatory work (evidence produced during the informal supervision period) may be presented in any suitable two- or three-dimensional format such as mounted sheets, sketchbooks, journals, design proposals, models and maquettes, digital or non-digital presentations.
- Students must stop work and not undertake any further preparatory studies once the first period of supervised time starts.
- Technical needs, such as drying or firing time for ceramic pieces, 3D printing or preparing component parts, should be considered and built into planning.
- Teachers should plan the supervised time to ensure students have sufficient breaks between sessions.
- Students may leave the room (to take additional photographs for example) but must be accompanied by a member of staff.
- The work produced during the 10 hours may be in the form of a 'final piece or pieces' but it is also permissible for it to be of a developmental or experimental nature.
- Work produced during the 10 hours must be identified, usually this is with a label or coloured sticker.
- Internet access is not allowed during the 10 hour period of formal supervision but students should not be disadvantaged during this time so, if they would normally access an online platform to create or present work this is permissible, but, all other online areas must be disabled. Teachers must ensure that security is in place to limit internet activity to this purpose.
- Where work is produced over a period of time it must be stored securely between sessions. It must also be securely stored once it has been handed in for formal assessment. For Art and Design secure storage is defined as a supervised or locked space such as classroom, studio or workshop.

Task marking

Component 1 and Component 2 are marked by teachers and moderated by an external visiting moderator. Teachers assess their students' work and submit their marks, using the electronic submissions system, for each component, by 31 May. Your exams officer will be able to assist you with this. A moderation sample is immediately generated. An AQA moderator will contact the school or college to arrange a visit in June to view this sample of work across both components. The work can be made available in folders, digital presentations or displayed as an exhibition. It is helpful if it is set out in rank order and clearly labelled. The candidate record form for each student in the sample must be available. The moderator will either verify the centre's proposed marks or recommend adjustments to bring the marks in line with the AQA standard.

The following steps are helpful towards ensuring accurate assessment of students work so we strongly advise you to:

- Become familiar with the assessment objectives and mark band descriptors.
- Attend teacher standardisation meetings. This is a live exhibition of work with training tasks and a marking exercise. Places can be booked online on the professional development page of the AQA Art and Design website. There are two free places per centre. These meetings take place at venues around the country from December until March and are also a good opportunity to network with other teachers and ask questions.
- Have in place a process of internal standardisation across groups and titles within your centre to ensure fairness, consistency and accurate application of AQA standards.
- Make use of the support documents available on centre services which include; unpicking and interpreting the assessment objectives, ability band spider grams (which exemplify the qualities of the different mark bands) and the mark band descriptors.

When awarding marks remember that if there is no evidence of drawing or no evidence of written annotation or no evidence of both, then the marks awarded for AO3 must be reduced by 4. This should be done prior to submitting marks to AQA and noted on the Candidate Record Form. It is also worth noting that even though it may be at a basic level, a simple line would provide evidence of drawing and a label or title on a sketchbook page would be evidence of written annotation, therefore marks should not be deducted from whatever mark the student was originally awarded for AO3.

Further information

NEA Subject Adviser

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.

Exhibiting current Year 10 and year 11 GCSE Art and Design work

All work must be kept securely till results day and then until after the deadline for requesting a post-result review if applicable. Any exhibition before this time must take place in a space that is secure and invigilated when open to invited guests. You will also need to consider how to avoid the potential for photographs of the exhibition to appear online and therefore we recommend notices are placed in the room to advise of this. Please note if you are holding a live exhibition before any student has had the opportunity to appeal grades, it is advisable that all work is photographed in case of any damage in order not to affect the outcome of any Quality Assurance or Appeal.

Social media

JCQ rules are very clear about this and state that: Teachers must not share live non-examination assessments with candidates or post candidates' work on social media. There is also a [student guidance document](#) referring to this. If you wish to post artwork on an open website then as long as it is a montage of work that does not identify the student in anyway or reflect the whole portfolio of evidence, this is permissible. If you wish to share work virtually via a school network or closed/private group as an exhibition this is also permissible.

GCSE Art and Design and GCSE Design and Technology

There is a helpful table comparing the differences between the two GCSE courses on the [AQA Art and Design website](#).

Teachers should familiarise themselves with the Art and Design GCSE specification document, particularly the assessment objectives. If it is the first year of delivering the course, we strongly advise attendance at a teacher standardisation meeting. Useful support materials are available on the centre services area of the website showing; examples of student work, past ESA papers and sample schemes of work. There are also some specific CPD courses available.

Design and Technology projects commonly start with a brief and end with a product, a conversation if you like between designer and user. This is often not the case for Art and Design outcomes, their function may be to stimulate interest or communicate a message, the creative activity may be an expressive meaning in itself. It could be argued that Design and Technology is more focused on technical skills whilst Art and Design is about developing and applying creative knowledge, critical understanding and practical skills.

It would be logical to move from a Design and Technology course to one of the design-based titles; Graphic communication, Textile design, 3-dimensional design or Art, Craft and Design.

For all titles, courses and projects must be planned to enable students to:

AO1 Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.

The investigation of inspiring examples of design related sources, that are appropriate to students' intentions, should support them in developing their own ideas. Students should interrogate and use sources, not simply collect and present them.

AO2 Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.

As students explore and experiment with a range of materials, techniques and processes, relevant to each of the different titles, they should be supported to show evidence of understanding, intent and purpose behind selections and decisions made. Ideas may change over time as a result of trials with materials or experiments with particular techniques. They should be guided to reflect on their work and make changes in order to improve it.

AO3 Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.

Design ideas, for 3D, Graphics or Textiles, might be recorded initially in the form of simple sketches. These may be developed or enhanced through digital tools, processes or software. Progress can be more readily understood if it is documented. Drawing can take many forms but should be fit for purpose and evidence students' intentions. Visual or annotated practice can provide evidence of the depth of students' understanding. Written notes can provide further evidence of insights.

AO4 Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

Regardless of the title studied, a personal response should include a collection of evidence that brings together intention, meaning and understanding that has been inspired by sources and developed with the students' own skills, imagination and knowledge. It should show evidence of an independent, creative journey.

Copying Artists' work

It is not a course requirement to copy the work of artists they are studying, but it is perfectly acceptable as long as the student acknowledges their sources. It is also important to consider how useful this task is in terms of driving the students' creative journey forward, progressing their ideas and in giving them opportunity to address the assessment objectives. Copying might be useful if they develop critical and technical understanding through this activity and become more confident about applying these findings to their own work. Further information relating to using sources within AO1, can be found on Centre Services in the document *Unpicking the assessment objectives*.

Referencing Artists

Students do not have to reference the sources and artists mentioned on the ESA paper. These have been included to inspire responses to the starting points but students are free to look beyond these examples and find their own references. It is important to remember that

sources for inspiration are broad and can also be found in themes, techniques, writing, experiments with media and so on.

Please ask students not to make direct contact with ESA named artists.

Extra time and extension to deadlines

If you think a student is eligible for extra time in the first instance you or your exams officer should contact the AQA special consideration department to discuss. Applications for access arrangements and special consideration can be made through centre services where each student's needs are considered on a case-by-case basis. A [guide to the special considerations process](#) is available.

Technical assistance

Within the context of the JCQ instructions for invigilating examinations the externally set assignment timed sessions (10 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 health and safety considerations are in place, to ensure any equipment malfunction or breakdown can be rectified and to ensure that equipment, tools and materials are available 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 of a student's work or give them an unfair advantage over other students.

The preparatory period/informal supervision time

This is before the start of the 10 hours of formal supervision for students to prepare to work unaided, under formal supervision. Students can use this time to research, explore and respond to their chosen starting point.

They could:

- plan and collect resources
- interrogate and use sources
- make notes, record insights, ideas and observations
- experiment with appropriate materials and techniques
- refine ideas
- document and present ideas as they are developed
- plan a schedule of work (eg wet work that needs to dry to be done at the start).

They may wish to begin early stages of a final piece such as:

- prepare a canvas
- colour a background
- draw out a composition
- make component parts
- dye fabric.

This must be documented so it is clear what the student has done during the preparatory period of informal supervision and what has been done independently during the supervised time.

Acceptable examples of work produced in the preparatory/informal supervision period, with the specific intention to develop it further during the supervised time might include:

- A bodice made during the preparatory time with the intention of embellishing it during the 10 hour supervised period.
- A plaster mould from which to make ceramic bowls during the formally supervised time.
- A wire armature for a sculptural piece to be created in the supervised time.
- A printed length of fabric to be used to create a garment in the supervised time.
- Filmed scenes for an animation to be edited during the period of formal supervision.

Photographing/documenting the state of the work at the end of the preparatory/informal supervision period and comparing it to the final realisation of intentions provides clear evidence of what the student is capable of under different types of supervision (formal and informal). It also makes clear what was completed during each of these periods.

During the period of informal supervision, where students are responding to their chosen starting point and preparing to work independently during the period of formal supervision, they may wish to consider and plan extension tasks to allow them to make full use of the 10 hours.

Additional information can be found in the specification, on the Art and Design website, on centre services and in the delegate booklet provided at teacher standardisation meetings.