

Level 3 Examiners' Report

Subject Foundation Art and Design

Level 3

Summer 2024

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Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.[1]

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

[1] ***Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.***

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Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner | WJEC

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Executive Summary

The WJEC Foundation Art and Design (FAD) courses in Wales and England have continued to produce outstanding work, with the diversity of the courses being a key strength. The support, advice, communication, and visiting moderation have ensured parity throughout, leading to high approval of WJEC FAD candidates.

Several courses have offered non-traditional FAD experiences such as choreography, creative writing, and business/finance. Candidates have benefited from contact with professionals in various fields, illustrating the many opportunities in the creative industries. Drawing has been a fundamental part of most FAD courses, with an increased emphasis on ‘drawing books’ as opposed to all-encompassing ‘sketchbooks’. The use of life drawing has also increased, proving to be a valuable tool for student discipline.

Assessment standards have improved, with criteria-based assessment involving peer, group, and individual assessment in early units. This has led to an increase in the accuracy of predicted grades for Unit 6 Curating and Presenting a Major Project in Art and Design.

Preparatory work for successful final expositions, with clear thought processes and development, research recognition, and good analysis was evident in centres. The recording of each centre’s assessment process and decision-making was clear and unambiguous, with increasing confidence in the submission of proposed grades by the 18th of June 2024 deadline.

We have seen a slight increase in entries this year to the Foundation Diploma Art and Design. There has been good progression into a variety of Higher Education institutions. Progression options are now more varied for candidates wishing to pursue the creative industries, such as apprenticeships and employment, in addition to the wide range of degree options available.

Courses are increasingly providing real-life work situations involving the arts, with course teams inviting practicing artists and designers to tutor candidates. Trips, including excursions and visits to galleries and museums, have provided valuable experiences, which can positively impact on the candidates work.

In summary, the WJEC FAD courses have continued to excel, with improvements in assessment standards, diverse learning experiences, and successful candidate progression. The courses have adapted to changes in Higher Education enrolment and have continued to provide candidates with valuable skills and experiences for their future careers in the creative industries.

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FOUNDATION ART AND DESIGN

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UNIT 5 & 6 MAJOR PROJECT

Overview of the Unit

This year has, again, seen some outstanding work produced by students in Wales and England who have completed WJEC FAD. It is important to take note of the difference in FAD courses throughout the scheme. This is a fundamental strength with environment, facilities and cultural considerations giving a differing approach and delivery to the same qualification. Support, advice, communication and, essentially, visiting moderation are important factors in ensuring parity throughout the qualification.
The assessment throughout the course is criteria based with the criteria being clear from the start. Students are involved through peer, group and individual assessment in the early units giving them an awareness and understanding of the purpose of assessment. The student review of their performance is confirmatory and shows how well the assessment process is working.

The enrolments on individual FAD courses this year range from single digits to around 60. It is pleasing to see the WJEC FAD students this year achieving placement not only at CSM but many other top-rated faculties of art and design. There was good progression to a wide variety of HE institutions and this was complemented by a number of students taking up work opportunities. It was interesting to see the geographical spread of progression from Scotland to Falmouth, and, of course, many HE centres in between. There were a number of students who, through their own choice and circumstances, continued with their art and design degree education closer to home. In some cases, they were able to continue their progression in the same centre as they studied FAD.

Most centres have shown great diligence in improving each students' performance regardless of their starting point. FAD consistently delivers 'good news stories' with national prize-winners, outstanding progression and the ever-increasing list of WJEC FAD alumni who have achieved international recognition in the fields of fashion, fine art, and design.
It was laudable that several courses offered aspects of art and design that were not a part of the normal FAD experience. Choreography, creative writing and business/finance were some of the sessions offered. There was excellent work carried out with local galleries and other commercial organisations. Students benefitted from contact with professionals in several fields illustrating the many opportunities available in the creative industries.

It was extremely pleasing to see drawing forming the bedrock of most FAD courses. Along with colour it is inherent in the early stages of the courses but this year the emphasis on drawing is creeping towards the introduction of true 'sketchbooks' or, as one centre identified it 'drawing books'. These are very different to the all- encompassing 'sketchbooks' that include some drawing, photographs, notes and jottings and experimental and development work. These books are to be applauded and are often highly creative and exciting to look at and handle. An actual drawing book containing environmental drawing, images captured on journeys, and assorted mark making elevates the experience gained by the activity of drawing. There is obviously room for two or more varieties of 'sketchbooks'.

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Continuing with the drawing aspect of FAD, this year saw a substantial increase in life drawing. Without doubt it is the single most valuable tool for encouraging students to become disciplined and to “look and learn”. There were several instances where students had produced a final major project (unit 6) that used, and emphasised, outstanding drawing skills based on, or garnered from, earlier life drawing sessions. The preparatory work necessary for the production of a successful final exposition was much in evidence this year with many examples of clear thought processes, recognition of research and evidence of good analysis and development. Such evidence was presented in workbooks, individual sheets and, in the better examples, with multimedia experiments to the fore.

The actual visit by each WJEC Moderator has been most appreciated by course teams. Contact is seen by course leaders as a vital component of the WJEC FAD course and gives credence that their delivery of the specification is veracious in its teaching and assessment. There have been in-depth discussions related to the predicted grades with grading samples chosen by the moderator often highlighting borderline decisions. The records of assessment were examined in detail with regard to the centre decisions. This is rigorous with the benefit brought by the moderator of the national perspective, and standardised benchmarks.

With acknowledgement of the attention to detail that course leaders have instilled in their teams it is also noteworthy to mention student involvement in the assessment process. As previously stated, the students are involved in the process through individual and peer group assessment. There are no “surprises” on assessment decisions although there will inevitably be borderline decisions on the final two unit grades. Students have expressed comprehension of the criteria for assessment at vivas with moderators and signed hard copies of progression tutorials. An increasing number of course teams are keeping their informal “aide memoire” notes when assessing. This is proving to be most beneficial when discussing, at moderation, particular assessments of an individual criterion.

One extremely pleasing aspect was the quality of the Excellence Award winners at the smaller cohort courses. It can be said without hesitation that they were equivalent to the winners in the larger courses. This is a tremendous achievement by the individual students but also reflects wonderfully on the course leaders and their teams.

Despite continued pressure on teaching commitments the staff involved with FAD delivery make exceptional efforts to ensure their students take advantage of the undoubted benefits the FAD experience offers. The difference between the larger cohorts and the small is accentuated by the fact that on bigger courses there may be one or more lecturers solely dedicated to FAD. It is not unusual to find a small cohort FAD member of staff involved with two, three or even four other art and design courses. That they can equip their students to achieve excellent results is to be highly commended.

It is becoming a more usual occurrence for FAD students to be involved with real-life work situations involving the arts. Various course teams involve practicing artists and designers to visit and tutor students in their own work practises. In addition to this there are several examples of students taking part in work projects with businesses involved in the creative arts. This on-site work although not designated “work experience” allows students to experience a different type of environment and the pressures therein.

The general heading ‘Trips’ covers a multitude of excursions and visits to galleries and museums, all of which are extremely useful and mind-expanding for the students. Additionally, courses are making journeys that result in one-day or even week-long study sessions. This is a wonderful learning experience and course leaders, and their teams are to be congratulated on ‘going the extra mile’ to provide such opportunities with all the health and safety and other regulatory conditions to be adhered to.

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Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.
Tel: 029 2240 4304
Email: artanddesign@wjec.co.uk
Qualification webpage: Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Art and Design (wjec.co.uk)

See other useful contacts here: Useful Contacts | WJEC

CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/

WJEC Qualifications

As Wales' largest awarding body, WJEC supports its education community by providing trusted bilingual qualifications, specialist support, and reliable assessment to schools and colleges across the country. This allows our learners to reach their full potential.

With more than 70 years' experience, we are also amongst the leading providers in both England and Northern Ireland.

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