



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE
ART & DESIGN
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2022

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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ART & DESIGN

General Certificate of Education

Summer 2022

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

General Comments

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

It has been pleasing this summer to return to almost normal arrangements for assessing GCE Art and Design. It seems that our moderating team, and most teachers they met during moderation visits, have welcomed the opportunity to re-connect with professional life beyond the boundaries within which we have worked during the last couple of years.

The slightly earlier date for completion and marking of the AS *Personal Creative Enquiry* seemed to cause few problems and moderators saw little evidence of submissions being unusually rushed in bringing them to conclusion. Similarly, for the A Level *Personal Investigation*, the earlier deadline for completion and marking appeared to have little obvious impact, given that candidates had been allowed about ten additional weeks to bring their work to conclusion.

At A Level, the adaptation of removing the Externally Set Assignment (ESA) from this summer assessment has worked successfully. It enabled candidates to focus on bringing their Personal Investigation (PI) to a fully developed conclusion and reduced the assessment load on teachers. However, moderators confirmed that the momentum and renewed focus produced by the ESA, which is a different kind of assessment from the PI, was missed and we look forward to its return in summer 2023. The ESA paper will be released in Centres on 1st February 2023 and will follow the usual format.

Extending the window for Visiting Moderation was also necessary this summer to take account of any possible disruption that might have been caused by the pandemic. Fortunately, there were only a few incidents that necessitated changing planned visits; the normal timetable will be back in place next summer.

CENTRE MARKING AND MODERATION

Assessment arrangements, put in place for the previous two summers, certainly raised the profile of Centre assessment. It may also have caused Senior Management Teams and other colleagues to consider more carefully how assessment is dealt with in art and design departments. We have long experience of art and design teachers being centrally involved in assessing the work of students, albeit supported by a robust external moderation process.

To support Centre-based assessments, additional resource materials were published by WJEC Eduqas. These were designed to explain, in some detail, how art and design staff might go about assessing the work of their students to ensure the continuing validity, reliability and manageability of their marking. The need for standardisation within and across school and college departments was emphasised in an attempt to produce centre assessed grades that were fair and consistent.

The resources developed to support centre assessment might have helped art and design departments review previous processes and produce even more effective and efficient approaches. It was intended that, alongside new resources, greater attention should be given to online marked exemplars to provide an external reference framework for teacher assessment.

Other support materials, namely *Knowledge Organisers*, published in the form of eight A4-size resource sheets, provide students and their teachers with a concise explanation of what each AO is about, together with additional resource sheets dealing with *Producing written responses*, *Learner Statements*, *Drawing* and *Raising achievement*.

A series of four *NEA GCE AS/AL Art & Design Walk Through* audio *PowerPoints*, recently produced by WJEC Eduqas primarily for students, is another major resource. It provides comprehensive explanations and exemplars that have the potential to promote understanding of assessment in art and design both for students and teachers

In general, centre marking was reasonably accurate and mainly within tolerances. However, there was a minority of centres where extravagant assessment was encountered with near full marks being awarded for submissions that were clearly not of exceptional standard. This indicates a lack of awareness of what very able students are capable of achieving. Reference to high achieving exemplars available on the lightbox website might help reduce the incidence of inflated marking.

The overall standard of submissions for the AS *Personal Creative Enquiry* was considered by the majority of the moderating team to be similar to that of 2019, when external moderation was last in place. Just a quarter of them judged the general standard to be lower in relation to the samples they assessed in the different centres visited. *Personal Investigation* submissions, in general, were also considered similar in standard to 2019 by the majority of the team, with only 15% of moderators reporting that standards were lower. These are commendable outcomes, when account is taken of the severe challenges that teachers and students have faced during the two intervening years.



It is disappointing to report that, in a very small minority of centres, moderators, occasionally accompanied by a team leader, had to conduct their assessments under conditions that were not conducive to accurate marking. They were frequently disturbed by staff and students passing through the area in which they were working and were not afforded privacy to discuss assessment issues. In stark contrast, the vast majority of centres provided a suitably private environment in which moderation could be conducted calmly and quietly. This was

sincerely appreciated and enabled the moderator to form carefully considered judgements.

DRAWING

The specifications require candidates to develop skills to 'record experiences and observations, in a variety of ways using drawing or other appropriate visual forms. They should be encouraged to appreciate the significance of drawing in the widest sense by recognising and reviewing how it feeds the creative process across disciplines. Drawing skills should be an integral part of all courses and across each title to ensure students are able to confidently use this fundamental aspect of the creative process. This should also strengthen their practice, support progression and prepare them to meet the demands of higher education and/or the creative industries.

We draw for many different purposes, just as we write for different reasons. One important purpose for drawing is to record from first-hand observation or experience. This is not the same as drawing from photographs or from images produced by other people. Drawing from direct experience is not simply an act of recording what is seen with technical accuracy. It requires, from the person drawing, a personal response and an element of interpretation of the subject being studied. It is important to recognise that the central purpose of this kind of drawing is concerned with observing, investigating, reflecting and seeing. It is essentially a process rather than a product. We draw to explore, research and visualise ideas, develop possibilities such as in problem solving, designing or composing, and to explore and express emotions and feelings.

Within certain submissions, drawing was used as a visual tool for exploring primary sources and developing ideas towards the realisation of creative outcomes. It was initiated through mark-making activities and further developed and refined through careful observation and increasing recording skill, promoting visual research and understanding.

Some centres had a particularly rigorous approach across different aspects of the subject area and drawing was very much part of this. For example, students spent most of the first term just focusing on observational studies of primary sources using a range of wet and dry media, with plenty of opportunity for exploration and discovery. There were certain candidates who showed a mature understanding of the purpose of drawing and established an effective balance between recording from primary and secondary sources



Example of drawing used in a Photography submission

AS COURSE STRUCTURES

Outlines of course structures seen this year

- Many students experienced an introduction project before continuing with their main project. This allowed them to gain valuable technical and material knowledge. Centres often began the year with 'workshop' lessons, introducing new media and techniques and focusing on skill building. This was followed by an individual enquiry, where candidates branched out to develop their personal responses and selected their own topic to explore. Where students self-selected their subject matter, there was often a higher level of engagement, maturity and focus. This year, the emphasis upon skill building tended to be stronger due to the nature of the last two years of lockdowns.
- In some centres, after a foundation phase of skill-building workshops, candidates were offered the choice of four or five broad themes, and they based their work upon their selection from these.
- Some centres made use of virtual gallery visits to initiate and stimulate ideas and to investigate potential working processes. Personal engagement with these sources was encouraged and candidates then developed individual projects and starting points for their projects; digital methods such as *Google Meet*, *Zoom* or *Teams Meets* were also utilised to bring an experienced artist or designer into the classroom to demonstrate a particular process or talk about their work. Digital platforms were often used of to ensure that, even in Covid conditions, candidates could still access resources and creative influences.
- In some centres the use of physical and digital sketchbook-making was encouraged in equal measure, with candidates using their physical sketchbooks to draw from life, test a process and make quick annotations. Digital sketchbooks were used to undertake research and reflect on the development of their own work.
- In a small number of centres, after the foundational phase, a live project was set and candidates worked within the parameters of this given brief, but this tended to limit the range of creative outcomes.

Unit 1: Personal Creative Enquiry

Comments and issues

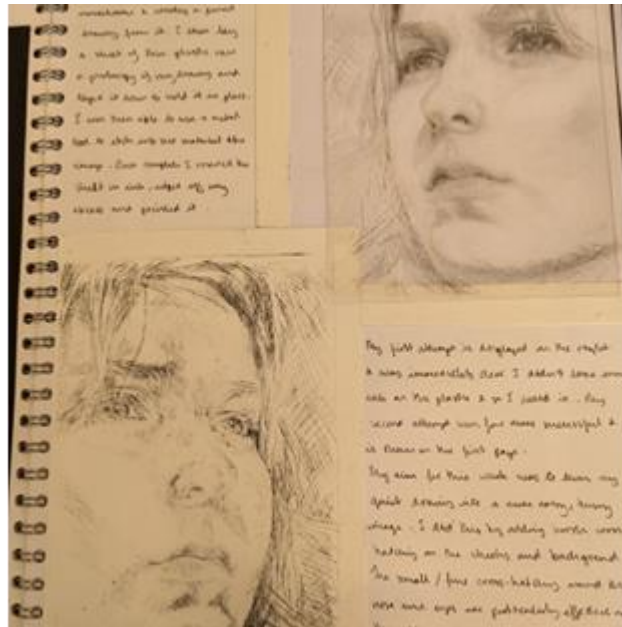
Moderators reported that Centres showed ingenuity in introducing processes and techniques to ensure their candidates were still working with a variety of materials and approaches. In many cases, centres managed distance learning and tracked progress by having candidates create their own website or digital slides to showcase their work. Teaching staff were then able to access the content of this work and feedback to candidates individually, ensuring they were up to date and demonstrating development throughout their journey of discovery. In many centres this year a greater variety of digital work was submitted with online portfolios, QR codes and websites in wider evidence. Centres had, through blended learning, clearly developed ways to keep students engaged and motivated. Work on Google Slides proved popular and work on Procreate (or similar apps) was also encouraged. Blended learning with use of *Google classroom* has been effective in many centres.

Candidates still undertook gallery visits but in a more independent manner and the digital platforms that many galleries developed in the lockdown period enabled some centres to explore these contextual references in a more enhanced way. Primary sources were reliant on a more local environment but, in many instances, the candidates were able to better celebrate their localities and delve into issues pertaining to their own communities. In some cases, exploration of particular artists, designers and makers was extremely well developed and related positively to the candidates' own studies. A number of moderators reported that the pandemic seems to have encouraged many candidates to look inward when selecting a project theme. Most candidates had also often managed to create as much work as in a normal year, despite the disruption to their studies.

Where students were encouraged in the various disciplines to draw from direct observation, this was a real benefit to the range and standard of the work represented and gave students better quality starting points from which to begin their studies and explorations. Observational studies and drawing for purpose were noted across the titles with some exceptional practice in evidence within Photography, 3D Design, Graphic Communication and Textiles as well as Fine Art and Art, Craft and Design. Encouraging candidates across the ability levels to draw from life clearly had a direct impact upon the confidence levels of their working practice.

Many candidates had explored the full potential of working digitally, discovering and implementing new Tablet software such as *ProCreate* and making use of QR codes to show development in video form. Digital outcomes were often of a professional standard. Responses were individual and centres tended not to have a 'house style'. Some centres encouraged a wide variety of interesting final pieces that included own designed and commercially printed story books and zines, photography-based interactive light trails, QR code final pieces, installation work, digital sketchbooks and websites.

Issues raised by moderators included the observation that in some cases, review and reflection periods were very limited and were not utilised adequately. This resulted in less successful creative work being developed and opportunities missed to engage in more interesting areas of exploration. Lack of engagement with the penultimate stage of working also tended to result in less refined and confident outcomes being produced at the close of the year. In some cases, observational drawing explorations were thin or entirely absent and this led to less confident handling of media later on in projects. Some moderators also reported that, while digital means of working suited many candidates, some seem to have been disadvantaged by having less face-to-face engagement with their teachers. This tended to have a detrimental effect on their access to practical workshops and the quantity and quality of outcomes being produced. It was also noted that, due to the loss of time and access to facilities over the last two years, the foundational introduction to courses and the emphasis upon workshops, upskilling and filling educational gaps, has received more emphasis in the work presented this year.



Examples of drawing in a FA unit

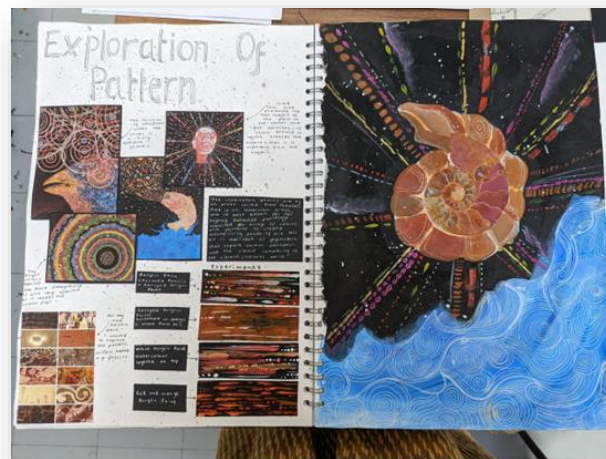


Examples of drawing in an ACD unit

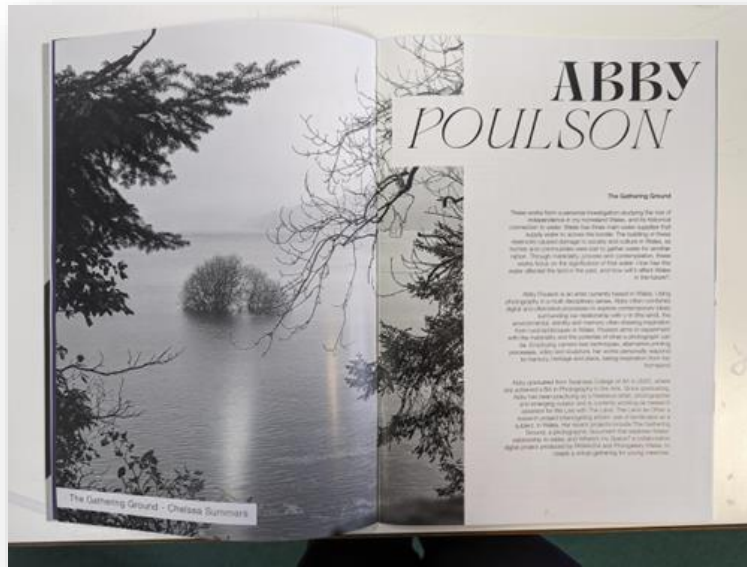
Strengths

- Many candidates critically analysed and evaluated a range of artists' work and were confident to explore a wide range of influences. In some cases, exploration of particular artists, designers and makers was extremely well developed and related exceptionally well to the candidates' own studies.
- Educational visits to galleries and museums provided first-hand stimuli for drawing, creative making and the development of ideas. These were an effective means of instigating personal involvement and generating original responses.
- Candidates explored their local environs and communities, finding inspiration from them for their work and producing mature and engaging outcome work as a result.

- Across all titles, where candidates had the opportunity to draw from direct observation, this was a real benefit to the range and quality of the work represented and gave them better quality starting points from which to begin their studies and explorations.
- Digital skill development was enhanced across all specifications and many candidates showed confident handling of these processes in order to showcase their working practices.
- In some centres, live project working methods or setting of live briefs, enabled candidates to focus their work more successfully and resulted in more confident and purposeful outcome work being produced.
- Learner Statements generally offered good insight to intentions and gave clear purpose to investigations.
- Reflective recording was often meaningful, insightful and detailed in nature.
- Candidates were often confident in taking risks with their work and experimented widely.



Purposeful testing and experimentation of media in an ACD unit



Refined outcome set out in a magazine format in a Graphic Communication submission



Tactile outcome & embellishment work in a Textile Design unit

Shortcomings

- In some instances, there was not enough development of ideas, often with candidates using the first idea they had developed.
- Often contextual understanding frameworks were limited to context, biography, shape or form and did not consider how the source actually informed the candidates' own work.
- Lack of refinement in development of personal response and in some cases, not using the most suitable materials or techniques.

- In some cases, Photography and 3D Design samples did not contain any observational drawing or drawing for purpose.
- Where there was a dominant house style, with all candidates following the same themes, making the same contextual connections, researching the same artists, candidates produced almost identical outcomes. This impacted significantly on standards achieved, particularly in Contextual understanding and Creative making.
- In some cases, Learner Statements were used very thinly and did not help the candidate to reflect upon their practice
- Very limited range of outcome work was produced and connections between research and outcome work were poorly demonstrated.

Suggestions for improving achievement

- Provide opportunities for all candidates across ability levels to engage in drawing for a range of purposes, including opportunities to observe, test, record and plan.
- Ensure that foundation activities do not restrict candidates' needs to develop their own personal lines of exploration.
- Provide opportunities and time for candidates to explore and consider their ideas at the mid-way point before embarking on final outcome stages.
- Embed opportunities for the selection and refinement of ideas and planning time helping to assist with more successfully resolved lines of enquiry.
- Promote experimentation with a broader range of processes and materials, providing opportunities for candidates to employ greater skilful control in using these.
- Encourage and support candidates across ability levels to reflect upon their own work and the work of others in a sustained manner, whether that be by written means, voice recording, blog or video.
- Provide opportunities for candidates to connect their contextual sources more deeply to their own ideas and creative making work, demonstrating why they are engaged with these particular sources.
- Provide opportunities for candidates to construct and work on live briefs or meet makers, designers and artists remotely.

A LEVEL COURSE STRUCTURES

Outlines of course structures seen this year

Despite the challenging conditions experienced over the last year, moderators considered that standards at A level had generally been maintained, and that candidates selectively built upon the foundations established during the AS course, showing increased intellectual confidence and practical competency as they progressed through their Personal Investigations. Across most centres and titles, work was of a good standard, with a wide selection of creative, personal outcomes. Regarding the structure of courses, there is no ideal scheme to be followed for the A2 course, because different, and equally successful, methodologies have been devised and continue to be developed. For this year, moderators found that the A Level course had been delivered as follows:

- The majority of centres started their Personal Investigations (PI) in the summer of year 12. Despite many centres having to deliver the course on-line during this period, many made effective use of digital portfolios and remote classrooms as a means of maintaining contact and tracking progress. As the course progressed, it was evident that centres made full use of the extended opportunity to develop candidates' creative making in the absence of the externally set assignment (ESA). Similarly, some centres used the extra time for extension activities designed to further their investigation, often realising a range of outcomes in different media.
- In some centres there was a strong element of teacher-led activity, especially when teaching returned to face-to-face learning, which was not always appropriate for the development of the Personal Investigation. Although such an approach provided an opportunity to reacquaint with both visual and analytical skills, greater candidate personal choice would have been more beneficial. Other centres divided the course to include timed periods for the completion of an interim investigation, which was then built upon and reinvented.
- Many more centres had adopted digital platforms as a means of recording idea development, which existed alongside physical sketchbooks. Digital sketchbooks were used to undertake research and reflect on the development of their own work and tended to be used more widely in Graphic Communication and Photography titles.
- Where possible, candidates had made use of gallery visits, and many centres utilised virtual galleries as an alternative. Many centres had also turned to local amenities and resources as a means of accessing primary contextual references, and for curriculum enrichment. Pandemic restrictions resulted in many candidates adopting a more personal approach to contextual references, by using their local community as a rich and valuable resource. This was a positive outcome and one that should be maintained.

Unit 2: Personal Investigation

Comments and issues

- Moderators reported that the amount of work produced for the PI was similar to previous years. Some, however, commented on the lack of coherence in submissions, as significant steps in the creative process were missing. Many submissions showed some consideration of outcome but very few explored, changed, developed, and rigorously considered their final responses, with many final outcomes seen very early on within the creative process.

- Many moderators commented on the increased use of Digital sketchbooks and portfolios, many of which were highly professional. Unfortunately, this format was not always a suitable approach across all titles, and in a few instances proved to be a disadvantage.
- Physical sketchbooks were often a source of visual energy and excitement. In many cases work produced in the sketchbooks was of better quality and showed more refinement than the final piece.

Extended Writing

In addressing the extended written requirement, many had continued to include this element as an integrated part within the practical work. In many instances such an approach benefited candidates, as their written response was fully incorporated into their practical work, making connections and influences easily identifiable; however, in less successful submissions, such a format resulted in limited commentaries, which did not go beyond providing descriptive accounts of processes followed and progress made.

The most popular format by far was as an illustrated essay, which were generally of a good standard, displaying thorough, academic styles and utilising formal essay writing techniques and structures. These were usually well-written, intelligent, and well-articulated, often based around the posing of a question or the addressing of a statement. On occasions, these essays became a historical record of genres and art movements, with critical analysis playing a secondary and often insignificant role. In a minority of cases, written submissions did not progress past evaluative commentary or, at the lower range of marking, simply a step-by-step account of how the investigation was undertaken. Some candidates relied on paragraphs within sketchbooks as a means of addressing the extended writing requirement.

Some candidates used the Extended Writing as a reflective tool, composing a thorough response that thoughtfully documented, and appropriately illustrated, significant stages in the progress of their practical and contextual research.

There were also many essay format submissions that incorporated effective use of a *compare and contrast* approach to produce good critical analysis of a range of relevant sources. Some Photography candidates created illustrated digital presentations for the written element which were particularly successful for candidates who might otherwise have struggled with a traditional essay.

Strengths

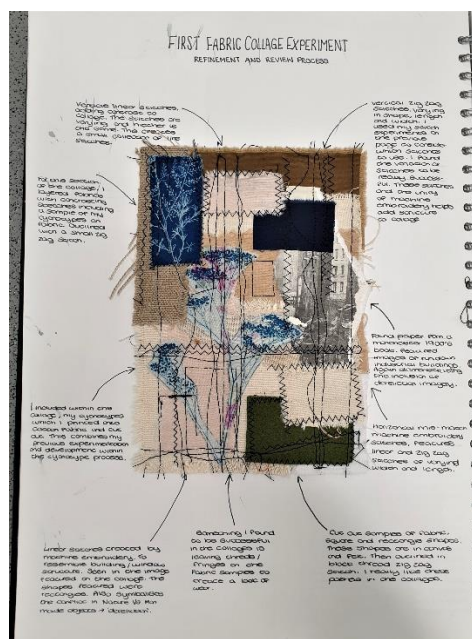
- Across all titles, the most successful submissions were seen when strong connections were made between contextual references and practical responses. Candidates often selected a range of contextual sources appropriate to their studies and intentions. These references were analysed in depth, with candidates demonstrating a sound understanding of their purposes and contexts. In the very best submissions, the extended written element had a direct and significant impact on the practical work, often resulting in surprisingly original outcomes.
- Despite pandemic restrictions, many candidates found alternative methods of gaining primary contextual references, such as direct contact with an artist via a digital platform, interviewing a family member, or using the work of a previous student as reference. This often resulted in highly personal and effective responses. Gallery visits, when available, were effectively used as points of reference and investigation.

- Exploration of techniques and processes was clearly evident across a range of different titles and centres. Candidates revisited skills learnt during their Personal Creative Enquiry and applied these effectively to new contexts as they developed their portfolios, often mastering these techniques and media to create imaginative and skilful responses. The focused exploration of media and processes was a strength, with candidates making informed and intelligent use of their selected methods.



Exploration of techniques and processes in a Textile Design submission

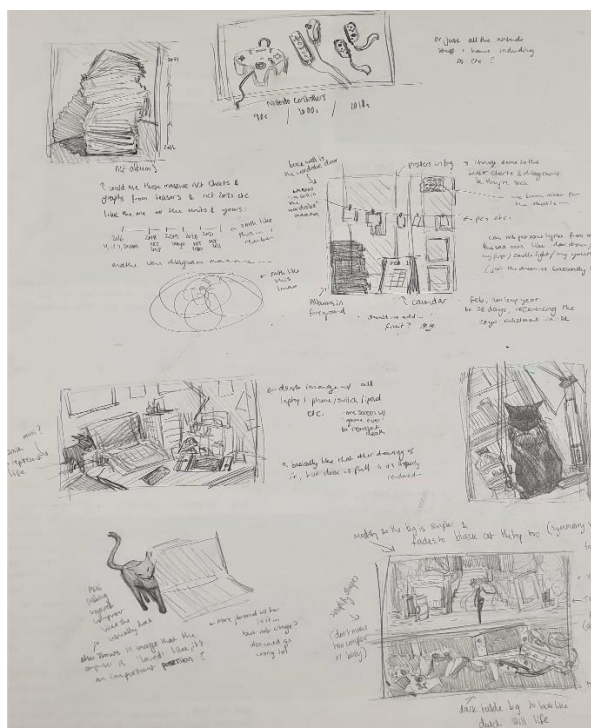
- Explorations and experimentations were purposefully reviewed and reflected upon, with candidates using their conclusions to further develop their ideas. Planned peer-review and self-review opportunities strengthened the overall quality of the submissions, as peer opinions were obviously valued by the candidates and influenced the direction and intentions of their work.



Explorations and experimentation purposefully reviewed

- Many submissions showed evidence of very high-quality visual studies and a breadth of drawing approaches, which provided vigour and excitement and helped document candidates' genuine creative journey. In the most successful submissions, drawing was not restricted to the confines of the sketchbook and a variety of approaches facilitated rapid recording to more in-depth and focused studies. A broad range of themes was explored, with candidates often selecting topics which were local and of personal significance. Many reflected current social issues and their effect on the local community.

Submissions were well considered and presented in forms which enhanced their meanings and purposes. Sketchbooks were effectively used and often contained the most visually exciting responses.



Drawing used to document the creative journey in this ACD unit

Shortcomings

- Despite a broad range of appropriate contextual references being selected which were relevant to candidates' intentions, these were not always robustly analysed, resulting in underdeveloped connections to practical responses. In some centres, candidates spent too much time and effort producing work in the style of their selected sources, which often saw personal responses too closely resembling the original references.
- The relationship between the extended written element and practical responses was underdeveloped. The extended writing was constructed as an illustrated essay, but unfortunate choices made regarding themes made it a largely superfluous document, which had little bearing on the candidates' practical investigations. Written responses often lacked the rigour and understanding required of the A level qualification.
- Progression of ideas was not always thoroughly investigated and, although candidates explored and experimented with a variety of media and processes, the penultimate stages of development were absent or not fully realised, resulting in poorly executed and/or unresolved outcomes. In the weaker submissions, final outcomes often appeared to have little connection to the preceding studies.

- Very little evidence presented of candidates actively reviewing their work and reflecting on their progress. If present, critical reflection was seen as a cursory exercise and had little impact on the creative process, resulting in unresolved and unrefined outcomes.
- Inappropriate use of drawing as a means of communicating ideas and as a tool for gathering visual information. Drawing for research often stemmed from personally derived photographic imagery, resulting in static and lifeless images.

Suggestions for improving achievement

- Place greater emphasis on drawing from primary sources, especially in the initial stages of research and idea development. An appropriate drawing approach is required across all titles, and should play an integral part in investigations, such as carefully considered, detailed storyboards for photographic shoots, demonstrating an understanding of the formal elements of composition in photography.
- Make more effective use of Learner Statements as a tool to organise and plan developments within the portfolio; Explain that it is seen as an integral part of the creative process and is best written pre-emptively as well as retrospectively.
- Provide planned opportunities for candidates to review and refine their own work and that of their peers, so that they receive a variety of feedback and have time to reflect on their own progress and the necessary next steps. This would be advantageous at the mid and penultimate points of their investigations.
- Develop stronger connections between the extended written element and the practical investigation. Place greater emphasis on using contextual references as an intrinsic part of idea development rather than simply as a stand-alone activity. Consider alternative methods of presentation; an illustrated essay is not always the most appropriate and creative form to encourage subject engagement and demonstrate a candidate's contextual understanding.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk