Level 3 Examiners' Report

Foundation Art and Design

Level 3

Summer 2025

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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

This qualification in Art & Design is structured across three progressive stages, each comprising two mandatory units studied consecutively, building from Level 3 (Units 1–4) to Level 4 (Units 5–6). The programme begins with foundational exploration in drawing, colour, materials, and making, encouraging investigative and collaborative practices. Units 1 and 2 fostered enthusiastic candidate engagement through staff-led projects, emphasizing experimentation and personal responses. Candidates who embraced creative risk-taking demonstrated stronger outcomes, while those seeking prescriptive solutions often produced less successful work. Assessment was internally conducted with varied methodologies, including peer and self-assessment, ensuring holistic evaluation.

Units 3 and 4 transition into developing specialist practice and personal innovation. Candidates were supported to define their creative interests, leading to diverse outcomes across digital media, painting, and crafts. Strong results emerged from adventurous candidates who applied skills dynamically, while overly rigid approaches limited growth. Assessment remained internally administered with comprehensive strategies, bolstering candidates' confidence in the process.

Final units, 5 and 6, culminate in proposing, curating, and presenting a major project. Unit 5 focuses on conceptual development; Unit 6 evaluates execution, with final grading based solely on Unit 6. Candidate performance paralleled prior years. Less effective outcomes stemmed from recreating small-scale studies into larger final outcomes or inadequate experimentation with new mediums. Overall, the qualification fosters independent thought, risk-taking, and creative development, preparing candidates for further study or entry into diverse artistic fields.

2025 saw an overall improvement in high grades – with Distinctions increasing by 2.8%

Pass grades awarded lowered slightly from 98.8% in 2024 to 98.3% in 2025
Merit grades awarded reduced from 75.6% in 2024 to 73% in 2025
Distinction grades increased from 36.3% in 2024 to 39.1% in 2025

This series saw a drop in entry numbers.

2024 - 430 candidate entries
2025 - 363 candidate entries

Entry profiles

+19 saw a large increase in entries from 21.6% to 27.2%
19 decreased 71.9% to 70.3%
18 decreased 6.5% to 2.5%

Wales saw the largest entries with 67.6% of candidates which has increased from 63%
England entries decreased to 32.4% from 37%

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FOUNDATION ART AND DESIGN

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Overview

The qualification is presented in three Stages. Each Stage is divided into two Units. Within these Units Projects and Tasks are set by staff, or in the case of the final two units candidates themselves.

All six units are mandatory and studied consecutively with Units 1 and 2 and Units 3 and 4 The first four units are set at Level 3 and Units 5 and 6 are at Level 4.

Unit 1 Drawing and Colour as an investigative process in Art & Design

Unit 2 Exploring materials and making in Art & Design

Within these units the investigation of drawing and colour were interwoven with set projects and tasks and provided sound foundations for the rest of the course.

There was all round enthusiastic response from candidates for projects set by course teams in the first two units. All candidates were encouraged to research, analyse, experiment and develop personal responses to the given briefs. There were many examples of group working in these units – a trend that then had considerable influence on candidates' individual endeavours.

The best responses came from candidates who were unafraid to make errors and who did not hold back when approaching new challenges. They realised early on that there were no 'right' answers.

Less successful candidates did the opposite by trying to produce results that they perceived as being a correct solution.

Assessment of these two units is internal and graded as Pass. All course teams conducted comprehensive assessment methodologies, using the specified criteria, with individual tutorials, group assessment, self-assessment and peer group assessment discussions.

Unit 3 Developing specialist practice and preparing for progression in Art & Design

Unit 4 Personal development and innovation in Art & Design

A candidate's personal creative interests and the development of work leading to an individual specialism is the core of these two units.

Trends this year showed an increase in digital work in its many aspects but also a continuing rise in painting and craft traditions.

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Candidates approached the tasks in a wide variety of ways indicating an excellent learning experience in the previous two units. The results throughout the scheme showed great individuality with no ‘house style’ imposed on any cohort.

Where candidates showed adventure, coupled with skills learned, they produced the best results.

With some candidates there was a sporadic tightening of work methodology as they progressed through these units, this led to less successful outcomes. Candidates should keep an open mind, continue experimenting and developing ideas and acknowledge the importance of reviewing own work.

Most candidates were able to identify one of the four broad areas of art and design that they felt comfortable in. They were able to work in this area and gradually concentrate their efforts to indicate a more finite area for specialist study.

Occasionally, candidates maintained a fuller, more rounded approach to art and design resulting in an intentional progression to a multi-faceted art discipline.

Again, these two units are internally assessed and graded as Pass. Course Teams had comprehensive assessment methodologies. Candidates expressed knowledge and confidence in the assessment process and its outcomes.

Unit 5 Proposing and reviewing a major project
Unit 6 Curating and presenting a major project

The last two units are a combination of the proposal (Unit 5) and the actual production of a final major project (Unit 6). Assessment Criteria is related to the learning outcomes for both units. All assessment criteria must be met in a particular grade band to achieve that grade. The final awarded grade is based on Unit 6 only.

The candidates performance this year has been in keeping with the previous year’s achievements:

There were outstanding examples in Unit 6 from Graphics, Costume, Painting, Art Installation, Performance Art, Animation, Textiles, 3d Design, Architecture, Fashion and Photography.

There was a wide range of approaches from candidates. A 4m long x 1.5m graphics panel, and a 4m high Art Installation contrasted with wonderful animation films, stunning photography and outstanding paintings.

Where a candidate was less successful it was usually because of attempting to reproduce initial small size ideas on a much larger scale or trying to reproduce earlier work in a different medium without sufficient experiment, analysis and planning.

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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

WJEC Qualifications

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