

**A LEVEL**

Moderators' report

# ART AND DESIGN

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**H600-H606**

For first teaching in 2015

**H600-H606/01/02 Summer 2023 series**

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## Introduction

Our moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

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.

## Online courses

We have created online courses to build your confidence in delivering, marking and administering internal assessment for our qualifications. Courses are available for Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016).

### Cambridge Nationals

All teachers delivering our redeveloped Cambridge Nationals suite from September 2022 are asked to complete the Essentials for the NEA course, which describes how to guide and support your students. You'll receive a certificate which you should retain.

Following this you can also complete a subject-specific Focus on Internal Assessment course for your individual Cambridge Nationals qualification, covering marking and delivery.

### GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016)

We recommend all teachers complete the introductory module Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, which covers key internal assessment and standardisation principles.

Following this you will find a subject-specific course for your individual qualification, covering marking criteria with examples and commentary, along with interactive marking practice.

### Accessing our online courses

You can access all our online courses from our teacher support website [Teach Cambridge](#).

You will find links relevant to your subject under Assessment, NEA/Coursework and then Online Courses from the left hand menu on your Subject page.

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If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

**This is a text-only version of this moderators' report. To see the full version with images, please visit [Teach Cambridge](#).**

## General overview

Moderators reported that most centres had provided stimulating and well-structured courses designed to build skills and contextual understanding. Most centres found the return of the Externally set task to be a real benefit, allowing candidates the opportunity to show their skills in response to a given theme, which for many was a welcome change. It also encouraged both the Personal investigation and Externally set task submissions to be more succinct with focused outcomes or conclusions.

Increasing numbers of candidates use digital media, which has become much more commonplace and readily available. Across the specialisms, digital portfolios as a means of presentation for assessment and moderation is increasingly popular, allowing some candidates to fully select their work before the final submission. However, some candidates include copious numbers of slides or pages, creating lengthy repetition rather than a focused and sustained investigation. Moreover, excessive quantity may not add to the overall quality of the submissions.

The work submitted in 2023 continues to show a wide variety of approaches, many of which are cutting edge including, sound and light installations, computer animation, digital painting, computer game graphics, film-making, web and app design, computer supported textile designs, documentary and moving image.

Techniques and skills specific to the specialism entered were enhanced by specialist practitioner-led workshops which equipped candidates to explore their own ideas and resources. This proved most successful when candidates were able to use their own imagery or source materials within the workshops and then apply the skills or techniques gained to support more sophisticated developments.

Centre organised visits to galleries or museums has seen a resurgence in 2022-2023 supporting candidates in their contextual research. Many candidates undertook self-arranged visits to relevant locations, galleries or museums in order to provide first-hand experiences and relevant research materials.

Where visits had been possible, these clearly continue to have an inspirational effect on the candidates and they responded in a variety of ways to the excursion, using these experiences to enhance and extend their ideas.

The experience of seeing art, photography, craft or design first-hand or having the dedicated experience of a practitioner in person was hugely impactful for candidates and helped them to articulate personal, informed and independent projects in direct response.

The impact of the pandemic had led to a great deal of variance in opportunities for candidates however the vast majority of the work seen by moderators in 2023 compared very favourably to pre-pandemic levels of achievement.

## Administration

All centres had uploaded the marks through Interchange and received a confirmation email with a list of the candidates required for moderation. Many centres forwarded the relevant documentation to moderators by the May 31 deadline however in several cases this was not done. **The 'non exam assessment – centre marks form: NEA/A/H600-H606' must be sent to the moderator in advance of the moderation visit.**

**The majority of centres continue to use the Interactive Assessment Summary Form and it is strongly encouraged as this assists in the avoidance of arithmetical error.**

Full instructions are to be found on the reverse of this '**NEA/A/H600-H606**' form

Digital files should be labelled to remove candidate names and ensuring clear and consistent identification of files. The format this should take is:

**Centre Number/Specialism/Component/Candidate Number/Mark, e.g.:**

**62007\_H601\_PI\_0413\_85**

This should be completed in advance of the moderation for 2024.

Those centres that accelerated administrative procedures by the early submission of marks are thanked for their cooperation and good organisation.

## Moderation

Moderators reported that centres continue to take considerable satisfaction in 'guaranteeing that candidates' work is displayed to the best advantage for moderation'. Moderators once again universally praised the time and effort that centres invest in this vital aspect of the assessment process. Typically, submissions were exhibited vertically on walls or display boards with sketchbooks or other supporting studies at hand. Often the work was carefully labelled, thoughtfully 'mapped' and, **of vital importance, in rank order.**

**Centres are reminded that each component should be presented separately and in rank order for moderation purposes.**

During moderation, a member of staff responsible for the department should be available at any time to deal with administration or submission related queries.

For digital submissions, centres must facilitate appropriate access by which the moderator can readily make comparisons between the performances of individual candidates. **Invariably more than one monitor/screen is required for moderation.**

**Centres are asked to provide a table for the moderator.**

**In addition, the supporting work of candidates, including sketchbooks or journals should not be placed on the floor.**

## Personal investigation

The themes for Personal investigations ranged from the traditional and well-established to the thought-provoking. 2023 saw themes generated from:- the giants of literature; visuals from the past and future; alternative viewpoints and reinventions of the established. These starting points were very often intensely personal and reflected concerns and the challenges of modern life. Moderators reported they included recycling waste and unwanted items, the misuse of cosmetics in beauty and pain, the exploration of sexuality and gender, and the celebration and strength of family. In contrast, there was great creativity to be found in the 'everyday', with the home setting providing much stimulation. The impact of such thoughtful consideration of themes is the elevation of opportunities to be personal, creative and in-depth.

**When considering themes and content, teachers should be mindful of safeguarding practices and the appropriateness of content, both visual and written, for entry into a public examination.**

It was commendable to see in the work submitted that many candidates had independently visited museums, galleries and other external sources of inspiration. These allowed candidates a significant and important experience, which sustained their work and concepts, and supported research of a more meaningful exploration of ideas.

The broad concept of mental health had been used by a number of candidates to spark initial explorations, with many making reference back to the Covid-19 pandemic and its after-effects.

Mature topics and contemporary issues such as gun violence in America, the impact of social media on young people and homelessness allowed for in-depth exploration of current issues affecting society. It was clear that where candidate-set themes were developed, there was a great deal of personal and meaningful consideration as work progressed.

Traditional themes such as portraiture maintained a strong following albeit with many different approaches. Digital enhancements to candidates' own photographs were often used as a highly effective basis for further developments. Inspiration and ideas gained from the abundance of material available on the internet as well as from the work of contemporary practitioners supported many candidates in their individual journey through the creative process.

Once again in 2023 it is important to stress that at GCE Level individually negotiated themes appear to be a successful model in which candidates review and reflect on their work and identify their strengths.

Generally, the less successful submissions continue to be descriptive rather than showing sustained critical analysis. Candidates would be better advised to pay attention to the analysis of their own work and that of others by providing insights into their intentions and progress. Reviewing and selecting is critical in this respect.

For the purposes of assessment, candidates will provide evidence of all the Assessment Objectives through the **careful selection and presentation** of their work.



Teachers are reminded that the work produced in response to this GCE Art and Design specification, as specified in the '**Core Content**' section, indicates clearly that the aims which the qualification set out have been achieved in terms of candidates being able to show:

- intellectual, imaginative, creative and intuitive capabilities
- investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgement
- independence of mind in developing, refining and communicating their own ideas, their own intentions and their own personal outcomes
- an understanding of the inter-relationships between art, craft and design processes and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate
- knowledge and understanding of art, craft, design and media and technologies in contemporary and past societies and cultures
- an interest in, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of art, craft and design.

## Related study

The aim of the Related study element is to enable candidates to develop a wider understanding of the context of their practical work.

The specification states:-

*Learners are required to establish through this written and, where appropriate, illustrated component, the related context in which their chosen practical portfolio exists.*

*This may be established by exploring the genre, subject matter, movement or historical framework of the overarching starting point, course of study or theme selected.*

*The aim of the related study is to enable learners to develop their ability to communicate their knowledge and understanding of art historical movements, genres, practitioners and artworks, considering the way that these change and evolve within chronological and other frameworks. It also builds their understanding of the relationship between society and art: art historical terms, concepts and issues; methods of researching, investigating and analysing; and how works are interpreted and evaluated.*

*The related study should be separate and clearly identifiable from the contextual research embedded in the development of the practical portfolio. Learners should also highlight their own work and clearly distinguish it from collected or transposed material.*

*Learners may produce the related study in an appropriate form of which the following are some examples: an illustrated essay, digital presentation/ blog, illustrated study sheets or written report.*

*It is a requirement of the related study that all source material and research are listed and acknowledged in a bibliography and should be clearly identifiable in the work presented for assessment.*

The Related study continues to allow candidates the opportunity to produce research that is an extension to their practical work. For many, there was a close connection between the contextual references included in the Personal investigation and the work that was analysed in greater depth in the studies. This allowed the cross-pollination of ideas between contextual understanding and creative practice however this approach may not fully support the '*related context in which their chosen practical portfolio exists*'.

The most successful studies were resourcefully developed, with candidates creating objets d'art that matched the aesthetics of their chosen genre or practitioners. In these instances, it was clear that candidates had taken a great deal of care to consider the purpose of the Related study in allowing them to reflect on their creative practice. This allowed much greater evidence of sophisticated investigation through enlightening and convincing analysis, with candidates drawing pertinent conclusions that were a pleasure to see and read.

However, for some candidates, the Related study became rather descriptive in repeating the review and refinement of their own contextual research embedded in the practical portfolio. Where this was the case, there was little evidence of an extension to the practical work or insightful reflection.

There was a tendency in some centres to create traditional illustrated essay responses, where candidates referred to artist images alongside written prose.

In some Related studies, images were not included, or shown only on a small scale which did not allow for visual reflection. Centres should seek to make sure that candidates create a balance between text and images to strengthen their skills in visual communication. Where there was evidence of careful consideration of imagery, the application of visual understanding allowed candidates to generate more sophisticated responses.

Some Related studies made connections to social issues and demonstrated an awareness of contemporary pressures, included racism, gender or law and order. In some instances, the complex topics chosen by candidates were not fully explored and a narrower field of investigation would provide greater opportunity for real critical understanding.

Candidates produced a range of creative responses, including video presentations with audio analysis, digitally designed magazines, PowerPoints as well as the traditional illustrated essay response applied using platforms such as Google Slides or Microsoft Sway.

Bibliographies, are in the main included as required by the specification and it is pleasing to see that Harvard Referencing was used by many candidates, preparing them for academic study in higher education. Sources used often referenced news articles and YouTube videos, in addition to traditional book research. The most successful candidates were able to analyse research from a broad range of sources, which led to mature responses. Some candidates had been able to interview artists either through digital platforms, or through artist workshop and studio visits.

## Externally set task

Judging by the quality of work presented for the Externally set task, it was often difficult to perceive that Covid had caused any level of disruption for many candidates in this subject. The range of media was extensive, so too was the scale of work, with many centres exhibiting large-scale outcomes in all the specialisms. The nature of work has been significantly informed by a range of social issues connected with the pandemic. A wide range of artists and practitioners have critically informed candidates' ideas and responses to the selected themes show clearly well-developed skills and advanced levels of visual understanding.

Moderators stated that candidates should be commended for their performance in this component especially as no prior GCSE Externally set task had been experienced.

## Theme 1: Three

A very popular theme with candidates across the specialisms.

This theme offered many candidates opportunities to explore their own subject matter, while considering compositional groupings and presentations of trios/thirds, etc. Some candidates explored triptychs, both historic and contemporary approaches. This resulted in some thoughtful and ambitious work, for example, photography triptychs exploring themes of vulnerability and individuality in relation to the work of Nan Goldin and Christian Boltanski. In Fine Art, a focus on planning and composing across multiple frames possibly split the focus of candidates and consequently their achievements were impaired. More often, the imagery of Option (b) inspired candidates to explore groupings of three objects or people within one composition.

Photography, Textiles, 3D Design and Critical/Contextual candidates produced interesting variations on this theme including variations of 'triumvirate'.

In Graphic Communication, imaginative responses included children's book illustrations, inspired by Eric Carle and variations of design marketing for a self-selected product across three different platforms.

Analysis of three as a compositional device in the arts and visual arts and design in particular, tended to be limited. Little explicit reference was seen to the suggestions in Options (d) and (e) of the various devices used by practitioners beyond triptychs, such as the Rule of Thirds.

## Theme 2: Insect

A popular choice across the specialisms especially well-liked by Fine Art candidates with Options (a) (b) and (e) frequently chosen. Printmaking was an approach seen in many centres, with candidates linking the patterns of insects with the potential of relief processes such as lino or intaglio using Perspex sheets.

Links with artists such as Eugène Séguy and Levon Biss from Option (e) were frequent. While this encouraged some thoughtful observations, moderators reported some disappointment that approaches did not seem to move beyond straightforward portrayal to explore either associated contexts such as those alluded to in Option (c) or the potential metamorphosis or abstractions of imagery which artists such as Marlene Huissoud, suggested in Option (e).

Submissions with a focus to design generated interesting and creative outcomes, with explorations linked to symmetry inspired by artists such as Damien Hirst typical. There were also abstracted, asymmetric painted compositions because of investigations into practitioners such as Rachel Steely or Beth Hoyes. Imaginative approaches were also seen in Textiles, with felting and stitch work used to represent cocoons in both 2D and 3D noteworthy.

Across the specialisms it was noted that many candidates made use of local museums to carry out first-hand research. Studies of entomology collections helped inform observations and developing ideas. In Graphic Communication, digital manipulation supported the creation of textural imagery for museum poster designs in response to Option (d).

## Theme 3: The 1920s

This theme was popular with candidates entered for a number of the specialisms. Most interpreted the theme with still life and portrait compositions featuring the style and dress of the decade. In both photography and painting, portraiture was by far the most commonly presented interpretation, drawing on The Great Gatsby imagery of Option (b) and the terms 'Jazz Age', 'Roaring' and 'Flapper' from Option (a).

Some moderators reported the reference to change and rebellious thought in the quote for Option (c) as a catalyst for some strong historical research, with women's rights and changing attitudes towards women proving popular. Changes in women's fashion and clothing, because of liberation and entry to the world of work resulted in interesting investigations of 'Genderless' fashion. Such gender questioning themes featured elsewhere in photographic work inspired by Claude Cahun's androgynous self-portraits.

Contextual references built on those offered in the paper through Options (b), (c) and (e), with Art Deco a clear favourite as an art and design movement to explore. This was evidenced in thoughtful reference to both styling, composition, pattern and layout in many Photography, Fine Art and Graphic Communication submissions and designers such as René Jules Lalique in Three-Dimensional Design. Many candidates, from a variety of specialisms, used local Art Deco buildings such as Cholmeley Lodge in London and The Broadway Cinema in Letchworth for location photography and critical reference.

Tamara de Lempicka proved a popular reference in portraiture and 1920s design in Graphic Communication.

## Theme 4: Footwear

A lesser subscribed choice across the specialisms but well received by Photography candidates with Options (a), (b) and (e) the most frequently chosen.

Most candidates who tackled this theme were fine artists and did so in a rather literal way, making reference particularly to descriptive words of specific footwear in Option (a) and popular artists such as Lisa Milroy from Option (e). While this allowed candidates to showcase their observational skills, the more exciting possible interpretations of the emotional, cultural and political associations of footwear suggested in Options (b) and (c) were less exploited.

Photography and Graphic Communication candidates who responded to this theme had moderate levels of success mainly because observations were overflowing with sports footwear in a literal and repetitive form.

More successful submissions such as photography of traditional cobblers resulted in rich documentary work. In another, performance art invited the onlooker to be submerged in the ground while watching a video highlighting the importance of reconnecting with nature. In another notable example, a candidate explored family identity and dynamics through shoes.

## Theme 5: Yellow

A steady uptake of this theme, with responses seen across the specialisms. The theme proved especially popular with candidates submitted for Photography. Most examples explored the colour through objects and people, making use of the words and images of Options (a) and (b) to explore the tonality of yellow, contrasting this with darker browns and purples and blues. Some linked the yellow qualities seen in gold to their interpretations, with Gustav Klimt and religious icons referenced in fine art painting and photography.

Moderators reported seeing some inventive approaches to the theme, with candidates exploring abstract qualities in their work, especially in relation to light and surfaces and textures. This helped to add depth and richness to resulting imagery.

Photography, Textiles, 3D Design and Critical/Contextual candidates produced interesting variations on this theme including adaptations connected to natural forms including yellow flowers, bananas, oranges and other yellow fruits. Alternatives included the Post-Classical period in Critical and Contextual as well as interpretations from Vincent van Gogh who was a particular admirer of the colour yellow, 'the colour of sunshine'.

## Theme 6: Fast Food

While not one of the most popular, there was a steady response to this theme, especially among Fine Art and Photography entries. Many examples favoured the depiction of consumption of fast foods, inspired by prompts in Option (a) and (d). This resulted in some very expressive and tactile works in painting and mixed media, though some moderators relayed that outcomes here could be somewhat 'safe' and 'predictable'.

Some moderators reported seeing exploration of the environmental impact of fast food culture, though explorations of the health consequences of fast food, as suggested by the quote in Option (c) were not very much in evidence. Instead, candidates favoured the social and tactile aspects of the theme.

Graphic Communication, Textiles, 3D Design and Critical/Contextual candidates produced variations on this theme however the responses mainly focused on fast food as a mass-produced food designed for commercial resale, with a strong priority placed on speed of service. It is a commercial term, limited to food sold in a takeaway or store with frozen, preheated or precooked ingredients and served in packaging for mass consumption.

## Theme 7: Endings

This was a very popular theme across disciplines and seen frequently in Fine Art submissions. In the same way as the theme 'Three' moderators reported candidates favouring the open ended nature of the theme, allowing for varied and multiple interpretations. While some candidates veered towards the macabre, the majority explored sub themes such as the end of the day and end of eras. Words and images given in Options (a) and (b) also inspired observations of edges of forms. The passage of time and ageing featured in portrait work supported by the study of artists such as Gerhard Richter and Tai-Shan Schierenberg.

Themes of family, generations and 'times lost' featured frequently, often in mixed media installations and textiles art with candidates making use of objects and artefacts from their own family heritage/collections. The artwork of Tracey Emin and Kirsty Whitlock informing such literal and metaphorical weaving of materials and references.

Candidates found inspiration across the Options, though (c) was less seen, with few exploring narrative endings, apart from some entries in Graphic Communication exploring illustration.

## Assessment Objectives

### AO1: Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.

Research is a driving force in A Level Art and Design, with contextual understanding pivotal across the submissions to support a journey of ideas; from the initial planning stages to the final refinement of work to realise intentions.

Across the specialisms, contextual sources ranged from traditional fine artists, installation work and film directors, through to digital design, including branding. References to popular culture through television programmes, film and social media kept themes current. In contrast, this year saw a resurgence of reference to classical works, both in art and literature.

The diverse choice of research led to exciting responses that synthesised a range of media and approaches from historical and contemporary practitioners. Connection through genre and style, rather than approach to construction and creation showed the candidates were working beyond transcriptions to show a deeper understanding. For many candidates, creating transcriptions from their chosen artists gave opportunities to develop skills and practise techniques. However, for some, the use of transcriptions was not only a starting point but a full realisation and, in these cases, work became pastiche and did not reflect truly personal development of ideas.

Work that is easily accessible through social media such as Instagram was referenced through QR codes to showcase the images and clips that the candidates had seen and responded to. Digital research works best alongside first-hand research, where candidates had visited exhibitions and even artists' studios. Extensive use of Pinterest and Instagram to find practitioners do not always bring underlying qualities of formal artists.

In some instances, candidate understanding and analysis was varied, with some candidates repeating biographical information, rather than truly reflecting on the specific artworks they were engaging with. However, in practical work, most candidates were able to communicate levels of understanding of their selected works through developmental studies and personal departures incorporating techniques and compositional devices learnt from their artists.

Advanced concepts which sparked investigations, while clearly personal and interesting, were not always applied effectively to candidates' own work.



## AO2: Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.

Use of media and exploration of techniques has been impressive this series, with many candidates achieving high levels of technical proficiency. This has not always fed into final outcomes or been reflected in culminating pieces, but in sketchbooks, on worksheets and through studies, candidates have shown skill and accomplishment. Drawing in a variety of media, paint in oils and acrylics, collage, and digital painting and drawing were all seen, as well as use of animation and product design. In Photography, for some, exploration became somewhat repetitive, with multiple test strips and recreations of existing photographs, not leading to any personal or meaningful refinement.

Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, alongside Procreate were used in most centres to record and explore the development of composition. While increased evidence of considering compositions at times it has stopped short of the illusion of depth on a flat surface.

In submissions where exploration was more limited, the work produced appeared repetitive rather than enhancing the development of ideas.

In addition, many centres are continuing to place much emphasis on providing candidates with opportunities to explore the qualities of a frequently amazingly diverse range of materials, processes and techniques linked to intended outcomes.

## AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.

Recording took many forms in this series, including a large amount of drawing in many centres. This was pleasing to see and was well-executed, showing candidates' skills and communicating their ideas. For some, written ideas communicated truly personal and fascinating insights into the candidates' work and clearly communicated their understanding of the role of art and design in our society. Recording through photography is commonplace and further enhanced by digital manipulation. In Graphic Communication, analysis of products and branding was truly effective in helping candidates to reflect on their intentions and to progress.

The recording of ideas and observations was thorough and there was much evidence of skill and refinement. A range of media had been utilised and for many candidates, directly connected to intentions, however, in some submissions there was evidence of a lack of consistency in the recordings undertaken. The recording of observations and ideas was wide-ranging but, in some cases, became repetitive, rather than truly explorative.

The use of formal elements has seen a new renaissance, with work showing an awareness of foreshortening, considered viewpoints and illusionistic compositions. Placement of images, the nuances of different types of mark-making in conjunction with line, form and colour allowed candidates to record and resolve their work with a high level of technical skill. The ability to explore with these elements is strongly matched with the skills to apply them.

## AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

For many candidates, Fine Art outcomes have moved beyond a singular piece and are often entwined with digital media, such as projections and audio, as well as installation spaces. Where candidates had carefully considered the display of their work, they were able to showcase a sophisticated response to presentation.

Some candidates in Textiles are taking work off the wall, off the mannequin and into the environment to create installations reflects the contemporary practice in galleries.

There was a clear focus on final outcomes and extended pieces, but these did not always reflect the skills and ambitions demonstrated in earlier studies.

Teachers commented that most candidates were proud of their responses and felt that they had selected and presented to the best of their ability. Some candidates presented the full body of work because they did not appreciate this was unnecessary and the mixture of work of an inconsistent standard submitted was potentially disadvantageous.

Moderators commented that most candidates had made the most of their abilities in all the specialisms and those who had 'organised, selected and presented' most effectively submitted work that truly represented the best of their ability.

A wide range of artists and social issues have critically informed candidates' work and perhaps, due to renewed course structures, has also been critically well-informed and supported, resulting in portfolios and outcomes that are both highly personal and creative.

In the Personal investigation, many candidates were not truly selecting and presenting their work in an organised manner, rather presenting the whole of their output over the course. This proved disadvantageous for some, and centres should encourage their candidates to organise, select and present their work to communicate their ideas more effectively. A lack of selection resulted in too wide a range of material, sometimes not relevant and detracted from candidate achievement.

## Digital technologies across the specialisms

### Art, Craft and Design (H600/01/02)

Combinations of 'areas of study' are considerable with Fine Art and Textiles, Printmaking and Photography, 3D reliefs and installations, Fashion and Graphics were all employed to explore a variety of ideas incorporating digital technologies. Moderators highlighted digital sketchbooks, cloud-based files and in-tablet camera technology captures practical work and enables placement into digital sketchbooks or further editing with mobile applications.

### Fine Art (H601/01/02)

Fine Art is far from being the solely 'painting and drawing' biased discipline of the past it is by no mean unusual for moderators to witness submissions that incorporate:

- digital drawing, including the use of Procreate on tablet devices
- graphic tablets for drawing straight into Illustrator and Photoshop on a desktop device
- possibilities to animate illustrations and timelapse recording a workflow
- exploration of projection including projection mapping content to objects.

### Graphic Communication (H602/01/02)

Moderators noted that candidates used:

- InDesign for desktop publishing and e-publications containing moving image and linked content
- digital tablets with mobile versions of Adobe products and applications such as Procreate, connect seamlessly with desktop edits.

## Photography (H603/01/02)

In this specialism moderators noted:

- digital imaging, sophistication in camera technologies, user-friendly interfaces, high-quality output, and more versatility in one-camera technologies, including moving image at 4k and above and in slow motion. Premiere for moving image editing and Adobe action for sound editing. Greater emphasis seen in audio recording for still and moving image works including soundtracks to films, computer games and podcasts
- in studio technologies including software such as Capture 1 to view images as they are shot on a screen or projector, supporting sophistication in quality of the recording
- Photoshop editing, Lightroom editing, editing the code of an image to distort or modify
- portable lighting systems for internal and external use, LED panel lights to support high-quality image record. Light modifiers including colour gel photography and wider use of polarisers and on-camera filters
- 360 cameras for recording for VR experiences, editing capabilities in Premiere and After Effects
- drone technology, for aerial moving and still image record. Small scale lightweight drone technology with higher output quality, licences not needed, free to use
- camera stabilisers coinciding pocket technology for recording stabilised footage on a phone
- AR triggering, of still and moving image on location and location mapped content capabilities.

## Textile Design (H604/01/02)

Responses to this specialism continue to split into two main pathways: Textile Design and Fashion. The former is shown in many forms but especially constructed, dyed, expressive and printed Textiles. Commonality is found in the employment of processes and techniques which include free machine embroidery, screen and photo-transfer printing, to name but a few. Digital applications included the use of Illustrator and Procreate for digital drawings.

## Three-Dimensional Design (H605/01/02)

The revival in this specialism is, in part, due to the merger and mutuality between Art, Design and Technology departments. In addition, moderators reported the growth in the use of CAD modelling including Blender, SketchUp, Fusion 360, Cinema 4D, Vectorworks and applications on tablet technology including Shapr3D and the use of lidar technology on mobile devices for 3D scanning objects and spaces resulting in rendered 2D images to 3D printed and 3D milled objects.

## Critical/Contextual Studies (H606/01/02)

- Critical and Contextual Studies continues to attract a dedicated following that is clearly aware of new digital approaches.
- Greater integration of referencing technologies in applications such as Word.
- Handwriting recognition software, such as Nebo, enables tablet handwriting to be transformed to type.
- Speech to text is more sophisticated and more widely used and Grammarly for high-quality grammar checking.
- Digitally printed documents, pamphlets, magazines, and books.

## Exemplar work: The specialisms

### H600: Art, Craft and Design

In Art, Craft and Design – combined specialisms candidates must work in two or more of the specialisms from those listed below. Candidates may work in an area or areas of study within and/or across specialisms.

### H601: Fine Art

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Portraiture; Landscape; Still Life; Human Form; Abstraction; Experimental Imagery; Narrative; Installation or Working in a Genre.

### H602: Graphic Communication

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Image and Typography; Illustration; Advertising; Layout Design; Packaging; Editorial Design; Experimental Imagery; Signage or Abstract approaches.

### H603: Photography

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Portraiture; Landscape Photography; Commercial Photography; Still Life Photography; Documentary Photography; Experimental Imagery; Editorial Photography; Photographic Installation; The Photographic Process; Moving image; Animation.

### H604: Textile Design

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Garments/Fashion; Accessories; Soft Furnishings; Printed and/or Dyed Textiles; Constructed Textiles; Textile Installation; Expressive Textiles; Digital Textiles.

### H605: Three-Dimensional Design

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Craft or commercial ceramics; Commercial sculptures or sculptural commissions; Commercial three-dimensional design, working for a client to create a three-dimensional item such as an item of jewellery; Design and/or construction for television, games or film; Stage, environmental or architectural design and/or construction; Experimental three-dimensional design (construction/montage/ assemblage); Body ornament (jewellery, fashion accessories, body painting and film or TV prosthetics); Product design and realisation; Construction in a range of materials.

## H606: Critical and Contextual

Candidates are required to choose one or more area(s) of study, such as: Fine art and sculpture; Design; Craft; Art theory; The human form; Landscape and natural forms; Still life and designed objects; Architecture and the built environment; Art movements, styles and genres; Curating exhibitions; Art management and art in the community; Cultural representations within art and design; Multimedia, emerging technologies and their use in art.

## Common misconceptions

First-hand observational drawing is not a requirement for a high level of achievement. Recording should be appropriate for the specialism undertaken.

Moderators are not involved in marking work, rather they make a comparison to national standards to discern if centre assessment is accurate. The internal marking and moderation process is in place to ensure consistency of marking within the centre, whereas moderation by the awarding body ensures that centre marking is in line with national standards.

Moderators are unable to amend the rank order of the work displayed and it is therefore the responsibility of the centre to make sure the order is correct. Centres are reminded that each component and specialism should be displayed separately.

The quality of work submitted is crucial rather than the quantity. The specification requires candidates to organise, select and present work for submission, thus a concise portfolio of high-quality studies is far more desirable. Moderators do not need to see the course, or indeed candidate improvement, but clear evidence of achievement.

Candidates are required to explore their theme or topic rather than experiment; Assessment Objective 2.

The Related study should be separate and clearly identifiable from the contextual research embedded in the development of the practical portfolio. Candidates should also highlight their own work and clearly distinguish it from collected or transposed material.

## Common misconceptions: The following as reported by moderators during the 2023 session

Moderators to be able to moderate work in corridors and open spaces, which often become populated or are prone to interruptions.

Teacher assessment can include giving weight to 'creative risk-taking' or the candidate's journey, neither of which are in the Assessment Objectives.

That it is acceptable for activities such as band practices, lunch-time discos and dance classes, perhaps taking place in nearby spaces to occur during moderation.

The Related study can be inter-connected with the candidates' practical work, consequently existing information contained and marked in Assessment Objective 1 'Develop'. It can, however, be an extension of topics previously explored.

Candidates' work can be presented on the floor or combined with teaching and learning exercises produced as part of the general GCE course.

Moderators can view candidate submissions in very tight or confined spaces.

Do not need a desk with a power supply nearby. The moderator requires a suitable clear surface on which a laptop/paperwork will be used.



## Avoiding potential malpractice

The integrity of candidate work must be always maintained, with no third-party involvement in either supporting pieces or final outcomes. For example, AI content creation tools such as ChatGPT may have been used to generate written analysis or part or the whole of the Related study. Evidence for this may include, incomplete referencing, where a candidate has not acknowledged the source of a piece of writing or varying quality of content or style of writing, dated expressions and references to past events as being current, use of American expressions and contexts, inconsistent use of font or format (if the document is typed).

It is also possible for candidates' own work to be plagiarised if made available, via online technology, on social media or online forums. Candidates posting their work online, in part or full, before an assessment session is complete, including the period for Review of Results, should be avoided.

Online platforms where work is stored must be secure.

In the Externally set task, preparatory work must be submitted before the 15-hour time period.

Centres should not allow candidates to continue working on any preparatory materials either during, or after, the 15 hours has taken place.

Centres are reminded that candidates' submissions must not include inappropriate, offensive or disturbing material including obscenities, lewd comments or drawings, offensive comments aimed at others, and sexist or racist remarks.

## Helpful resources

See OCR's [Teach Cambridge](#) website for a range of resources, guidance, and information on: teaching activities, schemes of work, teacher guides, sample assessment material, candidate exemplars, OCR Train, Switching to OCR, summary brochures.

OCR wishes to thank teachers for their encouragement during moderation visits. This was much appreciated and the suggestions made greatly informed the support materials for both candidates and teachers.

The exemplar photographs in this report show a small selection of the GCE work displayed for moderation in 2023 and they are reproduced with the permission of the centres concerned. OCR would like to thank all the candidates, teachers and moderators who made this possible.

Further information regarding professional development, either face to face or online, for this GCE Specification 2023-2024 will be available on the OCR website, [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk) or by contacting OCR Training on 02476 851509 or by email to [cpdhub@ocr.org.uk](mailto:cpdhub@ocr.org.uk) in September 2023.

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# Supporting you

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## Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

**Don't have access?** If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

## Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

## Access to Scripts

For the June 2023 series, Exams Officers will be able to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts' for all of our General Qualifications including Entry Level, GCSE and AS/A Level. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

## Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

## OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular CPD courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

## Signed up for ExamBuilder?

**ExamBuilder** is the question builder platform for a range of our GCSE, A Level, Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals qualifications. [Find out more](#).

ExamBuilder is **free for all OCR centres** with an Interchange account and gives you unlimited users per centre. We need an [Interchange](#) username to validate the identity of your centre's first user account for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.

## Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals.

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**01223 553998**

Alternatively, you can email us on  
**support@ocr.org.uk**

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