



Qualifications and  
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
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*Rewarding Learning*

# GCSE subject criteria for art and design

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## Introduction

1. GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in art and design. They provide the framework within which an awarding body creates the detail of the specification.
2. Specifications must also meet the regulators' general requirements, including the common and GCSE criteria as defined in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications* (QCA/04/1293).
3. Subject criteria are intended to:
  - help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies
  - ensure that the rigour of GCSE is maintained
  - ensure that specifications build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established by the national curricula for England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and facilitate progression to higher level general or vocational qualifications in art and design, applied art and design or related sectors of employment
  - help higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders such as learners and parents/guardians know what has been studied and assessed.
4. Any GCSE specification that contains significant elements of art and design must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

## Aims and learning outcomes

5. GCSE specifications in art and design should encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study. They should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.
6. GCSE specifications in art and design must enable learners to:
  - actively engage in the process of art and design in order to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
  - develop creative skills through learning to use imaginative and intuitive powers when exploring and creating images and artefacts that are original and of value

- become confident in taking risks and learn from their mistakes when exploring and experimenting with ideas, materials, tools and techniques.
  - develop competence, with increasing independence, refining and developing ideas and proposals, personal outcomes or solutions
  - learn to actively engage with the experience of working with a broad range of media, materials and techniques, including, when appropriate, traditional and new media and technologies.
  - develop cultural knowledge, understanding and application of art, craft, design and media, and technologies in historical and contemporary contexts, societies and cultures
  - develop an understanding of the different roles, functions, audiences and consumers of art, craft and design practice
  - develop critical understanding through investigative, analytical, experimental, interpretive, practical, technical and expressive skills to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
  - develop personal attributes including self-confidence, resilience, perseverance, self-discipline and commitment.
7. Specifications should further provide opportunities for learners to gain:
- a personal interest in why art and design matters
  - experience of working within real and relevant frameworks
  - experience of the work practices of individuals, organisations and creative and cultural industries
  - understanding of art, craft and design processes, and associated equipment and safe working practices.

## **Subject content**

8. The content of GCSE specifications in art and design must reflect the learning outcomes.
9. Art and design specifications must require integrated critical, practical and theoretical study in art, craft and design that encourages direct engagement with original work and practice.

10. GCSE specifications in art and design must require learners to develop knowledge, understanding and the capability to evaluate:

- how ideas, feelings and meanings are conveyed and interpreted in images, artefacts and products
- how the knowledge and understanding of the work of others can develop and extend thinking, and inform their own work
- a range of art, craft and design processes including two and/or three dimensions, and traditional and new media and technologies
- how images, artefacts and products relate to social, historical, vocational and cultural contexts
- a variety of approaches, methods and intentions of contemporary and historical artists, craftspeople and designers from different cultures and their contribution to continuity and change in society.

11. GCSE specifications in art and design must require learners to develop the skills to explore and create by:

- recording experiences and observations in appropriate forms – undertaking research and gathering, selecting and organising visual, tactile and/or sensory materials and other relevant information
- exploring relevant resources – analysing, discussing and evaluating images and their meanings, objects and products, making and recording independent judgements in visual and other forms
- generating and exploring potential lines of enquiry using appropriate new media and techniques
- applying knowledge and understanding in making images, artefacts and products – reviewing and modifying work, and planning and developing ideas in the light of their own and others' evaluations
- organising, selecting and communicating ideas, solutions and responses, and presenting them in a range of appropriate visual, tactile and/or sensory forms including the use of new technologies

- working both as individuals and in collaboration with others in a range of situations.

## **Titles and endorsements**

12. All art, craft and design specifications must offer an unendorsed course in the following areas.

### **Art, craft and design**

13. A broad course exploring practical and critical/contextual work through a range of 2D and/or 3D processes and new media and technologies.

14. All art, craft and design specifications may also offer one or more of the following:

### **Applied**

15. A course that is explicitly vocational in nature and content, requiring a broad understanding, knowledge and skills of art, craft and design applied within a work-related, client-orientated context. Learners explore the application of techniques and processes of art, craft and design based on professional practice.

### **Fine art**

16. A range of approaches, including painting, drawing, mixed-media sculpture, installation, printmaking, lens- and light-based media and new media.

### **Critical and contextual studies**

17. This includes areas of study across art, craft and design.

### **Textile design**

18. This includes fashion, printed and/or dyed fabrics, constructed textiles and installed textiles.

### **Graphic communication**

19. This includes illustration, web design, advertising, packaging, design for print, multimedia and animation.

### **Three-dimensional design**

20. This includes jewellery, body ornament, theatre design, exhibition design, film-set design, interior design, product and/or environmental design and architectural design.

### **Photography: lens- and light-based media**

21. This includes traditional and digital photography, documentary, photojournalism, experimental imagery, photographic or digital installation, animation, video and film.

22. Examples under each endorsed area are illustrative and not exclusive. Awarding bodies will further exemplify each area as appropriate.

23. All endorsements must allow learners to work with both traditional and new media. Learners may be allowed to work solely with new media within any endorsement, provided the assessment objectives are met. Within each endorsed area, learners' work should integrate practical and critical/contextual work.

## Assessment objectives

24. All specifications in art and design must require candidates to demonstrate their ability to:

Assessment objectives		% weighting
AO1	Develop their ideas through investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and cultural understanding	20–30
AO2	Refine their ideas through experimenting and selecting appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes	20–30
AO3	Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to their intentions in visual and/or other forms	20–30
AO4	Present a personal, informed and meaningful response demonstrating analytical and critical understanding, realising intentions and, where appropriate, making connections between visual, written, oral or other elements	20–30

The four assessment objectives are interrelated and connections must be made.

## **Scheme of assessment**

25. GCSE specifications in art and design must allocate a weighting of 40% to the externally set task and a weighting of 60% to the candidate portfolio in the overall scheme of assessment. Specifications must consist of two assessments as follows.

### **Assessment 1: candidate portfolio**

26. Internally set and developed from personal and/or given starting points, the candidate portfolio must:

- be selected and presented by the learner based on work undertaken within the course
- provide evidence of how the learner has met each of the assessment objectives.

### **Assessment 2: externally set task to elicit a personal response**

27. The externally set task or starting point should:

- enable learners to provide evidence of how they have met each of the assessment objectives
- provide a sustained period of focused study of no longer than 10 hours
- be presented to the learners no earlier than the start of January in the year of the examination.

28. Each scheme of assessment must define how learners are to be assessed when working in groups, or specific roles, during the production of an artefact or product.

## **Grade descriptions**

To be added later