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# **GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**GCSE (NEW)  
ART & DESIGN**

**SUMMER 2018**

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

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### **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**

### **GCSE (NEW)**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This report marks the first year of the new GCSE Art specification and has been compiled from feedback received from our much valued team of moderators who visited centres during the moderation period of June 2018. The arrival of the new specification and the shift to numerical grading in England has heralded the creation of the EDUQAS brand to serve the differing requirements of English-based colleagues and the independent sector in Wales. This report will focus exclusively upon issues arising from the WJEC specification undertaken by centres within Wales and Northern Ireland; however, colleagues may also find it useful to peruse the report written by Mr David Scott, the Principal for EDUQAS Art GCSE, as both specifications are essentially identical, albeit with differing grading systems.

The new specification is regarded as a refinement to what was already deemed a highly successful model; greater clarity in relation to Assessment Objectives and the inclusion of Indicative Content across all areas of specialism have aspired to dispel any ambiguity regarding contemporary requirements. The major changes are primarily focused upon the need to ensure evidence of drawing [in its many differing forms] within all areas of specialism, as well as annotated commentary across the four Assessment Objectives. Allied to these two key requirements is the reduction of questions in the Externally Set Assignment paper to fifteen and the need for candidates to complete Creative Statements / Authentication Documents for both Portfolio and Externally Set Assignment submissions.

Recent CPD events held nationally have focused upon informing delegates of these changes, in addition to hosting practical workshops to furnish colleagues with skills that may further enhance the teaching of the GCSE specification and the assessment of candidates' work. Moderators have reported that current financial constraints upon centres are undermining the ability of some colleagues to attend CPD events; this is extremely regrettable, [particularly on the cusp of establishing the new specification] as these colleagues may not have been in receipt of important information relating to contemporary developments. Unsurprisingly, shortcomings in the delivery of the new specification this year have often been as a result of non-attendance at CPD events. This has been particularly apparent with regard to the requirement for annotated comments across the four Assessment Objectives, the occasional absence of drawing within specialist areas such as Photography, muddled interpretation of Assessment Objectives and a lack of understanding of national standards in relation to the internal marking of candidates.

Generally however, despite these concerns, moderators have commented very positively with regard to the manner in which centres have organised and delivered their cohorts through to the first year of accreditation in the new specification. We have witnessed an improvement in relation to how the four Assessment Objectives have been interpreted and assessed and it is now increasingly rare to see an Assessment Objectives underrepresented or absent within a sample. Most centres are marking within tolerance which suggests that teachers are becoming better versed in the assessment of candidates across the Assessment Objectives; however, it is still common for moderators to consistently see evidence of over-generous marking within too many centres nationally. The purpose of moderation is to ensure that centre marking is aligned to nationally agreed standards; over-

generous marking suggests that the centre is unfamiliar with national standards and I would strongly advise colleagues experiencing difficulty in this regard to refer to the assessment samples on the WJEC website for further guidance.

The colour-banded assessment guide has proven to be very well received and is swiftly becoming an essential tool for teachers and moderators involved in the marking of GCSE artwork, although some ambiguity still persists in relation to the interpretation of key words such as 'sophisticated'. It is strongly recommended that all colleagues seek to use this document for the internal marking of GCSE work as it is already proving an invaluable aid in achieving greater accuracy of assessment nationally. The universal use of the colour-coded system would facilitate better consistency of assessment and help negate the problems of hunch marking.

Whilst WJEC has always reinforced the desirability of 'drawing' across the areas of specialism, it has only become an essential requirement by virtue of the new specification. It is pleasing to note that the mantra 'drawing in all its differing forms' has been well understood and that moderators have reported seeing evidence of a pleasing breadth of drawing processes which have a direct relevance to the specialist areas being studied. This is particularly encouraging and suggests that the initial fear and misunderstanding expressed by some colleagues of having to embrace traditional Fine Art drawing processes for areas such as Textiles, have for the most part been dispelled.

The introduction of the Creative Statement document for the Portfolio in addition to the Externally Set Assignment component has received a mixed response from colleagues at centres. Whilst some have viewed the form as being a burdensome extra for their candidates to complete within an already time constrained schedule, for others it has been embraced as an opportunity for their candidates to better inform the moderator and teacher of their intentions. When these statements have been undertaken with consideration and purpose, they have invariably proven to be extremely valuable to moderators in enabling them to gain a significantly enhanced insight into the work. These forms are designed to be of advantage to the candidate and are also an essential document to validate their efforts; consequently centres are respectfully requested to please ensure that these essential documents are completed by all candidates and signed by the teacher.

Moderator reports to centre have embraced a different format for the 2018 moderation; the adoption of a tick box report allied to assessment objective breakdowns has been designed to provide centres with a reporting model that seeks to highlight Assessment Objective coverage in a more specific manner. Whilst this may initially appear to be more impersonal, it is hoped that upon closer inspection colleagues will find this to be a far more useful tool for addressing strengths and shortcomings. This has been trialled for 2018 and will be subject to further scrutiny and feedback before consideration as a possible permanent replacement to the traditional written report.

This introduction to the Principal Report has focused upon aspects directly relating to the new specification and it gives me considerable pleasure to reinforce that the moderating team are of the opinion that the new courses are delivering an enhanced level of provision for candidates nationally. The initial foundation course of skill development is now firmly embedded within the majority of centres and it is pleasing to comment upon how these initially structured experiences are assisting candidates in developing more confident, independent and personal lines of enquiry as they mature and progress. Centres are increasingly ensuring that they offer candidates sufficient choice of materials and techniques, and moderators often comment upon the truly exceptional work achieved by candidates working across a breadth of differing contexts nationally. Assessment Objective 2 Creative Making and Assessment Objective 4 Personal Presentation are particularly well addressed with evidence of high quality technical exploration, experimentation and

outcomes. Assessment Objective 1 Contextual Understanding is successfully delivered in most centres, with the best examples demonstrating a pleasing degree of rigour, insightful analysis of contextual sources, followed by evidence of candidates applying what they have learnt in ways which truly inform the development of their own creations. Assessment Objective 3 Reflective Recording, however, is remaining stubbornly problematical with regard to the ability of many candidates to demonstrate a clear and explicit journey of ideas from initial sources to outcome. This is one of the perennial issues that many centres nationally would be well advised to consider as a focus for departmental development.

The remaining text will highlight areas of strength and shortcomings in relation to the Portfolio and Externally Set Assignment. Most of these issues have been reported upon annually regardless of specification, yet remain as areas of concern, or conversely, aspects to celebrate. Whilst the situation nationally is overwhelmingly positive, all centres following this first delivery of the new specification would benefit from reflecting upon these following issues carefully and giving due consideration to which extent the content may apply to their own departmental context.

## **ART & DESIGN**

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### **PORTFOLIO**

WJEC is eager to promote and facilitate a breadth of approaches to presenting the course work portfolio at present, models focus primarily upon mounted sheets and / or sketchbooks with final outcomes, however the use of e-portfolios is also becoming increasingly more evident. Centres are free to adopt models which suit their own particular preferences and contexts, however it is critically important that the four Assessment Objectives are embraced in equal measure and that these are made fully explicit to the moderator. This is the absolute key to a successful GCSE moderation as any weaknesses or indeed absences in relation to Assessment Objective coverage will naturally undermine the performance and GCSE aspirations of candidates.

Centres are also at liberty to design and deliver the coursework component in a manner of their own choosing, but it is important that candidates are in receipt of a model which enables them to work in increasingly independent and personal ways. Moderators still comment upon the practice, seen in some centres of overprescribing the work undertaken by candidates. Inevitably, this inhibits the ability of candidates to develop personal lines of enquiry and has a detrimental effect upon their attainment. Regrettably, it is not unusual for moderators to see all candidates within a sample pursuing one narrow theme, employing exactly the same creative techniques and studying the same contextual references, regardless of differing levels of potential and attainment. This issue has been regularly highlighted at CPDs and within recent Principal's reports; consequently it is most disappointing that a significant minority of centres still persist with this method of course work delivery.

It is now well documented that the most successful models offer an early foundation course period designed to enable candidates to develop and acquire essential skills and experiences. The early part of these courses will have a strong element of structure and prescription often leading to short focus tasks, but will increasingly facilitate the ability of candidates to pursue personal creative journeys as their skills and confidence develop. Consequently, whilst it is perfectly acceptable for portfolios to include evidence of early work, it should be reinforced that there is an expectation that the more mature part of the portfolio demonstrates the candidate's ability to undertake a more sustained and cohesive line of enquiry [this may be undertaken within one overarching class theme or a personal theme negotiated with the department]. All four Assessment Objectives should receive equal attention and include evidence of research and gathering of primary sources, investigation into relevant contextual references and an explicit journey of design / idea development leading to an outcome or outcomes. The successful implementation of this course structure enables candidates across the breadth of attainment to develop highly personal creative work that has been rooted within a strong foundation of skills development, allied to a clear understanding of the four Assessment Objectives.

Moderators comment upon seeing highly accomplished work across the areas of specialism and differing centre contexts. Some of our highest achieving candidates are creating truly outstanding portfolios, often of considerable quality and rigour, which reflect most positively upon the guidance provided within individual centres and a specification which enables candidates to truly flourish when well directed. It is also evident that many centres are eliciting very pleasing portfolios from candidates across the breadth of attainment. Well-

structured and tailored courses are ensuring that individual candidates are able to enjoy pursuing their creativity, often within the most challenging of personal circumstances; this is also something to celebrate.



*Highly creative photographic outcomes. St David's College, Llandudno*

Drawing is now well represented within portfolios in most centres and it is pleasing to note that this is also evident within areas of specialism other than Fine Art and Art Craft & Design. It has been frequently reinforced that drawing within areas of specialism needs to be relevant to the discipline being studied; this message has been generally understood and applied successfully within the majority of centres. Likewise, annotated comments have for the most part been evident across the four Assessment Objectives and have enabled candidates to support and further clarify their analysis, thoughts and intentions. As previously mentioned, well-considered analysis of contextual sources has often informed the practical development of portfolios in highly relevant and useful ways. Whilst it is not expected or indeed desirable that candidates engage with essay writing within portfolios, it is nevertheless necessary that candidates expecting to achieve the higher grades of attainment demonstrate a reasonable level of rigour in relation to providing evidence of written work.

The quantity of portfolio work expected at GCSE level is often a source of enquiry by colleagues nationally; most art educators would agree that it is extremely problematical to attempt to quantify a specific amount for example, of mounted sheets or sketchbook pages as differing creative techniques demand different levels of commitment and time, regardless of the 'paper space' the effort may occupy. It is ultimately important to state that candidates need to submit sufficient evidence across the four Assessment Objectives for moderators to be able to make a considered judgement of their attainment. Inevitably, what is considered to be 'sufficient evidence' may well differ from centre to centre, but thankfully most are managing to ensure that the submission of their candidate portfolios demonstrate an acceptable balance between sufficient rigour and judicious selection. Colleagues who are still unsure regarding this issue are advised to study the portfolio examples on the WJEC website in addition to the breadth of portfolios that will feature in the forthcoming November 2018 CPD events nationally.

To conclude, the strongest features of portfolio work were evidenced in centres which had:

- allowed candidates to develop a portfolio based on their own personal interests and preferences;
- provided candidates with a clear structure to organise their work and respond to Assessment Objectives;

- organised visits to galleries, museums as part of their course, visited specific places of aesthetic interest and / or worked with visiting artists;
- encouraged candidates to offer a well-explained visual and written route through direct annotation and analysis of work as it progressed.

The following 'Strengths' and 'Shortcomings' highlight issues which are reported upon annually but nevertheless continue to be raised by moderators.

### **Strengths**

- Well-planned and delivered Portfolio courses that facilitate the development of personal interests within a supportive and well guided framework.
- The use of primary sources as a basis to creative work.
- Contextual work which informs the development of candidates' practical work in meaningful and relevant ways.
- Annotated commentary across the four Assessment Objectives, providing clear evidence of analysis and the intentions of the candidates.
- Well considered and presented Creative Statements that enable teachers and moderators to swiftly comprehend the intentions of the candidate.
- Strong evidence of drawing using techniques, materials and methods which are relevant to the specialism being undertaken.
- Portfolios which have been carefully edited and presented for moderation.
- The judicious and sensitive use of digital media within the developmental work of candidates.
- A pleasing breadth of creative media and techniques.
- A clear path of progression and idea development from initial sources to final outcome(s).
- Lively and highly personal portfolios which embrace the four Assessment Objectives in equal measure.

### **Shortcomings**

- Over-prescriptive programmes of study that curtail and limit the development of candidates.
- Poorly planned and delivered Portfolio experiences bereft of structure and guidance leading to low attainment.
- Contextual references of spurious relevance that contribute little to the creative work of the candidate.
- A sparse portfolio demonstrating limited evidence of engagement with Assessment Objectives.



- A restricted range of creative media and materials.
- An over-reliance upon the use of secondary materials.
- Poorly selected and edited portfolios, high in volume but low in quality.
- Portfolios that do not demonstrate a clear progression of ideas from initial investigations to outcome.
- Computer software used inappropriately and which presents no aesthetic or technical challenge to the candidate, e.g. the use of filters for no ultimate purpose.
- Sparse evidence of drawing.
- A lack of sufficient rigour and Assessment Objective coverage in relation to annotation.

# ART & DESIGN

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### EXTERNALLY SET ASSIGNMENT

The reduction of the choice of assignments to fifteen within the new specification does not appear to have undermined the ability of candidates to make a breadth of original responses to the Externally Set Assignment paper. Indeed, this more focused and time-restricted element generally elicits the most exciting responses; this of course is not surprising given the increased maturity and skill development of candidates at the final stage of their GCSE courses. Well-structured and delivered Portfolio programmes invariably enable candidates to respond to the Externally Set Assignment paper with confidence and enjoyment. This is a truism that has been evident in previous specifications and remains a key to success of the Externally Set Assignment. Departments who continue to exert an excessive degree of over prescription in relation to the Portfolio course are not preparing their students adequately for the highly personal challenge of the Externally Set Assignment. Likewise, a minority of departments are guilty of dictating and controlling their candidates' choice of assignments; moderators will often comment upon the very limited uptake of responses undertaken by candidates within individual centres. Whilst some assignments are inevitably more popular within a given year, prohibiting candidates from exercising personal choice in relation to GCSE examination questions is unacceptable.

Popular assignments this year include Q2 Revealing, Q5 Abandoned, Q9 Water, Q12 'Document your response to a piece of music' and Q15 'Explore the idea of doors, entrances and portals'.



...inspiration has come from the numerous holidays to Spain and seeing the many shades of white, natural materials, the same inspiration I have combined the Spanish towns in my work, by mixing from the architecture of towns which are based in limestone, Spain, to the Spanish village like that appear in my project, clearly their shades of white with the different shades of the white facade, and the layout of the town, giving structure and character for the Spanish village.

I have created three different Spanish houses using a palette with the following colours: white, yellow, orange, grey, and black. I have used these colours to create a palette that I can apply to the whole design.

In my portfolio, using these white, yellow, orange, grey, and black, I have created three different Spanish houses using a palette with the following colours: white, yellow, orange, grey, and black.

My final piece will be primarily made up of different coloured and sized pieces of card. This will layered on top of each other, similar to the collage above. My goal will also have a three-dimensional element in it. I will create more than one, I can stick together to make a pattern of the different houses. This will create the elements needed for the structure.

I understand that my final work may not look like a collage, so in that case, I might create some pattern work, similar to that in my first board, although the layer of paper using a white foundation.

### VIET MONDIAN

He is a Dutch painter of abstract art, who developed from early landscape pictures to geometric forms in his most famous work. He was influenced by Cubism, which he carried to the point of abstraction.

I thought that his work would work in with this project, especially with the multiple 3D work that I have done. There have been references to my contemporary Spanish village. Mondrian takes the form and layout of it to create a house. Mondrian was inspired by the lines of the street and buildings in his work, creating a grid.

## LA PEDERA

### MATTHEW SHILIAN

As a designer Matthew Shilian focuses his work on a... (text partially obscured)

...inspiration has come from the numerous holidays to Spain and seeing the many shades of white, natural materials, the same inspiration I have combined the Spanish towns in my work, by mixing from the architecture of towns which are based in limestone, Spain, to the Spanish village like that appear in my project, clearly their shades of white with the different shades of the white facade, and the layout of the town, giving structure and character for the Spanish village.

### HIRONAKA OKAWA & ASSOCIATES

Hironaka Okawa & Associates is an architectural practice based in Tokyo, Japan. They design both the interior and exterior of buildings.

The image on the right, the present building was built for a residential facility. The existing plan was used as both a reference and building structure. The plan was modified to change from the way the building was built into a more modern style. The plan was then a revised pattern of the building structure. Therefore, even a single plan could contain different levels of the exterior and interior simultaneously.

The image above is located in this building, where the existing pattern completely transforms the whole interior. The plan is controlled by the light windows, bringing out the light and shade of the building.

I have decided to incorporate this plan into my work because I think it is a clear way of representing shades of white. It is different to just using paper to create the plan but actually incorporating it into architecture for a project and making a distinctive piece of art.

### PAUL JACKSON

These two plans were done just created by Paul. In this plan, the plan is very similar to the plan of the building. The plan is very similar to the plan of the building. The plan is very similar to the plan of the building.

A response to the question 'Shades of White' 2018 (not all images from the submission included)

As with the Portfolio, the 'My Creative Statement' forms have been invaluable in enabling moderators to gain better insight into the candidates' thinking, planning and evaluations, including changes in direction, and are most useful when not written retrospectively. A minority of centres continue to neglect to ensure that these forms are presented for moderation and need to be reminded that they are an essential document which authenticates the submission of candidates.

Shortcomings within Externally Set Assignment often relate to the inability of some candidates to manage their time appropriately from receipt of the examination paper in early January to commencing the final 10 hour controlled period in spring. Moderators comment annually upon seeing research and investigation work allied to contextual references, but little evidence of sustained idea development and media experimentation leading to the final outcome. Whilst this is also a shortcoming within the Portfolio, it is particularly evident within the Externally Set Assignment submissions of some candidates and centres nationally. WJEC has strongly suggested that centres furnish their learners with a series of in-house deadlines during the preparatory period in order to try to negate this problem of insufficient coverage of the Assessment Objectives. Ensuring that learners adhere to a strict timetable of dates for the completion of different elements of the preparatory work is a well-established and successful method of ensuring that valuable marks are not lost by candidates.

An inability to make a firm decision regarding question choice has also resulted in undermining some candidates' ability to make progress; some submissions have contained evidence of muddled thinking and a lack of direction, consequently much of the initial research material and / or contextual references has little relevance to the remainder of the work, resulting in a disjointed effort. This is a perennial problem and candidates are strongly advised not to procrastinate following the opening of the paper, and to strive to make a firm and carefully considered selection of a question as early as practicable in order that valuable time is not lost.

Colleagues comment annually in relation to how core subjects' intervention and revision classes often undermine the contact time and the Art GCSE focus of candidates, particularly during the spring months and the lead-up to the Externally Set Assignment during the later weeks of the Christmas term. This is naturally frustrating for art educators charged with leading their students through the final stages of the course, however, the WJEC does not have the authority to intervene with the in-house arrangements of individual centres.

Please note that the deadline for inputting marks has been extended to the 31<sup>st</sup> May this year as opposed to the previous 15<sup>th</sup> May deadline. Whilst this will provide centres with greater flexibility regarding the completion of the Externally Set Assignment element, time allowance should also be made for the JCQ requirement for candidates to challenge their internally awarded marks if desired.

Despite these challenges, the majority of centres manage to elicit a pleasing breadth of lively and original Externally Set Assignment responses from their candidates which are often of outstanding quality at the higher range of attainment.

## **Strengths**

- Well-researched responses to the Externally Set Assignment paper followed by a clear path of progression to the final outcome where the candidate's intentions are clearly explicit.
- The 'My Creative Statement' sheet completed at regular intervals during the preparation phase, thus reinforcing the intentions of the candidate.

- All four Assessment Objectives thoroughly embraced in equal measure, facilitated by furnishing candidates with clear deadlines for the completion of work during the preparatory phase.
- Carefully analysed and considered contextual references that inform and enrich the development of the candidate's Externally Set Assignment in a meaningful manner.
- Well considered and rigorous annotated commentary that makes clear the intentions and thoughts of the candidate.
- First-hand primary sources used as initial starting points for candidate responses to the Externally Set Assignment.
- Externally Set Assignment photography work which engages in experimentation with a broad range of creative media.

### **Shortcomings**

- Poorly documented final outcomes that have been arrived at with little reference to preceding work.
- The 'My Creative Statement' sheet completed retrospectively or not at all.
- Sparse Externally Set Assignment submissions which reflect little rigour on behalf of candidates and consequently insufficient engagement with Assessment Objectives.
- Externally Set Assignment submissions which contain pleasing evidence of research and investigation but no reference to idea development and experimentation of media.
- Candidates opting for questions prior to considering the availability of first-hand sources.
- Contextual work which is biographical and descriptive in nature, contributing little to the development of the candidate's work.
- Externally Set Assignment outcomes which have been arrived at by copying web-based images.
- Externally Set Assignment submissions within Photography that are limited in the use of creative media; it is important to reinforce that the photography endorsement is within the context of 'Art & Design' GCSE and should therefore reflect the breadth of creative materials expected within all other endorsements.
- Make reference to artists throughout the preparatory work as ideas develop and changes are made, rather than at the beginning, where the study and any influence loses impact as work progresses.
- Experiment with a broader range of processes and materials.
- Limited evidence of drawing.
- Limited evidence of annotated commentary.

To conclude, I would wish to take this opportunity to remind centres of the forthcoming autumn CPD events, and to encourage attendance at these events in order that art

educators are able to continue to be in receipt of on-going contemporary developments relating to this new specification.

My best wishes for a successful and fulfilling new academic year.

**Huw Williams**



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