

GCSE

Art and Design

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J160 – J167**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016



OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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Art and Design

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: J160

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Fine Art J161

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Graphic Communication J162

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Photography J163

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Textile Design J164

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Three-dimensional Design J165

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Critical and Contextual Studies J166

OCR GCSE in Art and Design: Applied J167



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Art and Design Units A110 – A127

General comments

Again in 2016 this GCSE Art and Design specification continues to be well received by teachers and candidates alike. Indeed teachers continue to develop teaching and learning strategies that supports their candidates in achieving to the best of their abilities within OCR's GCSE framework.

The majority of candidates continue to benefit from well delivered courses, which had been carefully designed to take full advantage of the strengths of the qualification. The Fine Art pathways remain the most popular approaches to study. The other endorsements, often supported by specialist teachers but by no means exclusively, are significant areas of delivery in some Centres, which have the appropriate physical resources to facilitate delivery. Photography – Lens and Light-based Media (J163) is particularly notable for the continuing increase in the number of candidate entries. Contextual Studies (J166) entries have also risen especially in those Centres where candidates undertake more than one GCSE Art and Design endorsement, sometimes aimed at gifted and talented candidates. Similarly, Applied Art and Design (J167), which meets the needs of those candidates seeking a more vocational pathway within the subject, has won further adherents and is now also delivered by Design and Technology Departments.

As in previous years work for moderation continues to be very well displayed, with most centres going to considerable effort to showcase work and to meet the needs of the moderation process. Work was generally presented in ideal locations with minimal or no disruption. All Centres were aware of the requirement to display the work in separate rank orders per unit which aided the moderation process.



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The release of work for the purposes of Grade Award, Standardisation and CPD Training is essential to the well-being of the qualifications and the support given to the new GCSE. OCR acknowledges Centres' and Team Leaders collaboration in this respect. The dispatch of 'moderation samples' is an important undertaking and whilst every reasonable precaution as regards safety and security is taken whilst these are in OCR's care Centres are urged to package work appropriately and not send fragile or glass items.

Again in 2016 Centres are thanked for their co-operation in making visit arrangements. Most Centres met the May 15 deadline for the dispatch of mark-sheets to OCR. Similarly, the majority correctly forwarded the Assessment Summary Form (GCW930i) and the Centre Authentication Form (CCS160) with the MS1s to the moderator. Nonetheless, the Centre Authentication Form was frequently completed for each Unit rather than the qualification overall. It was gratifying that the advice given in respect of the 'interactive' Centre Authentication and Assessment Summary forms had been taken. The use of the latter resulted in the incidence of 'arithmetical or transcriptional error' being reduced significantly.

Orders of merit were generally dependable. However, the levels of assessment, although generally more reliable than 2015, were on occasion adjusted to meet the OCR national standard.

Centres staff again accepted that moderators could not give verbal feedback at the conclusion of the moderation and looked forward to receiving this written report with its accompanying photographs in September.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Download and use the Assessment Summary Form GCW930, which is available on the OCR web site. This option allows for the entry and addition of marks, thus avoiding arithmetical errors.

Display the Portfolio and Set Task in two separate rank orders.

Clearly identify individual units and highlight final outcomes.

Centres are reminded that in addition to the work sampled for the purposes of moderation all submissions must be readily available.



Art and Design Portfolio

In 2016 the majority of work seen was for the Art and Design A110 and Fine Art A111 units. The other areas of study were also represented with Critical and Contextual Studies A116 and Applied Art and Design A117 being well supported. Once again this year new entries are evident in 3D Design many of which are Design and Technology Departments entering candidates in the Art and Design Suite of qualifications. Photography is universal and expanding across all endorsements apart from being a well subscribed endorsement in its own right A113. Likewise digital approaches continue to flourish at a significant rate. Work in three dimensions is often a feature of Unendorsed, Fine Art and Graphic Communications submissions, which reflects the multi-disciplinary approach adopted by many candidates.

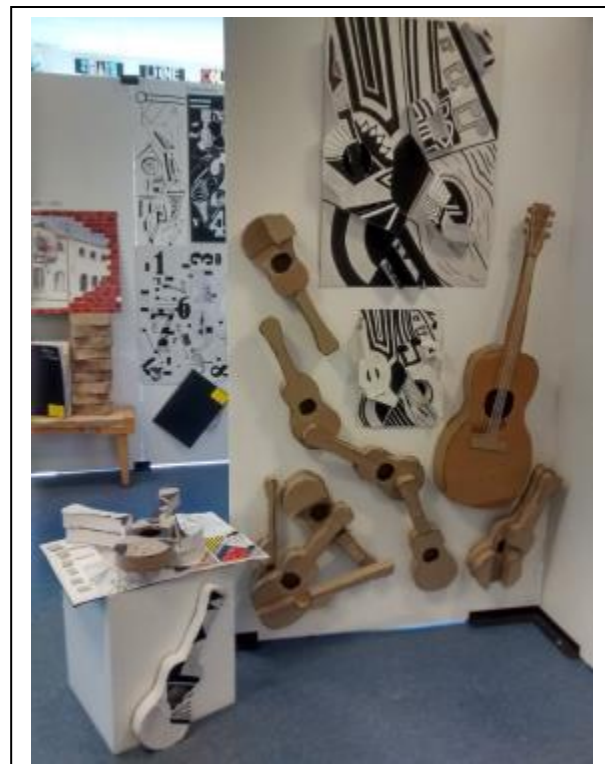
Some Centres make good use of local cultural sources and resources, resulting in strong, personal development. External resources and cultural references were often really well used in Centres that encouraged the candidates to engage with their local environment or context. This led to some interesting and individual investigations using local museum collections, local architecture and familiar landscapes as well as local events.

In many Centres the approach to the Portfolio continues to be thematic, focused and well-sustained with the requirements of the Assessment Objectives met in equal measure.

As in recent years the use of worksheets, rather than sketchbooks, for preparatory studies continues to be prevalent. This approach may assist greater selection in the choice of work presented for assessment. Certainly weaker candidates were less inclined to substantiate submissions by including superfluous material. Now, irrespective of the means of presentation, with the emphasis on **'quality rather than quantity'** this tendency appears to be in decline. Moderators reported that digital sketchbooks continue to grow in numbers seen.

As in previous years most candidates made excellent use of sketchbooks, journals and diaries but it is still evident that some candidates became somewhat obsessive with presentation and the decoration of pages. Inconsistency of achievement within the submission can be detrimental to accurate assessment. In this respect, Centres are reminded that the purpose of moderation is to assess the best of candidates' achievement using a selected sample, which will determine the outcome for all candidates.

Centres encouraged and supported candidates to produce individual portfolios. In the best examples it was evident that candidates benefited from a course structured so as to ensure coverage of the Assessment Objectives without becoming too prescriptive. However, some Centres encouraged engagement with the Objectives in too rigid a manner, which did little to promote the full review, modification and consolidation of ideas as the work progressed towards final outcomes.



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Once again and regrettably moderators continue to report that some candidates in their Portfolio submissions had presented sketchbooks filled with collage and magazine 'cut outs' however these examples are declining. This practice inhibits genuine involvement in a creative subject.

It is pleasing to report that even more submissions show candidates, under the guidance of their teachers, selecting and presenting their work for assessment. Some candidates still produced large quantities of work but failed to develop their ideas in sufficient depth. Candidates should always be guided by their teachers and consider carefully the extent to which their initial intentions are selected and presented in their submissions. Successful candidates provided evidence of a creative journey undertaken with a genuine sense of purpose. Less accomplished work was often fragmented and poorly executed.

When all the work produced throughout the GCSE course is submitted invariably it results in inconsistency in levels of achievement as well as showing the development of skills over time and this will be responded to in the moderation process.

Once again in 2016 Centres are reminded to impress upon candidates the importance of distinctly acknowledging reference material. Candidates may utilise research, quotations and other evidence in their submissions but they must identify their sources. It is also important that candidates differentiate between their own work and that of other practitioners.

Centres are also reminded to impress upon candidates that when they are communicating in writing they should ensure that text is legible and spelling, punctuation and grammar accurate so that meaning is clear. Furthermore, Centres are reminded that candidates are required to present information in a form that suits its purpose by using an appropriate structure and style of writing.

The exploration of practitioners' work and 'mind mapping' of themes remained a purposeful activity. However, some candidates are encouraged to go to great lengths to present worksheets about a wide variety of often very disparate artists, without evidence of how this connects with or informs their own work. Similarly, when researching themes candidates sometimes generated much visual investigation but failed to appropriately consider how they might select and develop specific ideas.



Assessment Objective 1 – Develop

Candidates showed strong emphasis on developing ideas by the investigation of images, objects and other contextual source material which was evident in the work sampled. Many candidates showed independent, well-informed investigations. The stronger presentations were approached confidently, displaying perceptive contextual understanding, often in a strongly visual manner with less need for written annotation.

In the best work, candidates produced highly thoughtful and analytical annotation, increasing researching contemporary practitioners or other sources, which demonstrated true engagement with the work of others or context, showing a clear understanding of how this informed their own practical work.

Once again in 2016 cultural themes founded on the study of a variety of sources, including once again the ever popular Aboriginal Art, African masks, Indian miniatures and Japanese prints.

As in previous years sources and inspirations varied from exploring aspects of portraiture or candidate's home locality, to inspiration found on the internet. Other candidates related to personal explorations into an aspect of work from a range of artists, craftspeople or artefacts. The majority of candidates clearly identified artists and cultures and understood the need to make them relevant to the outcome while the weakest explorations still tend to be thinly based on basic biographical information and “bolted on” rather than engaged with in any meaningful way.

It is candidates' responses to ‘artworks’ in which critical evaluations are made and appreciation of context shown that positively informs the development of ideas.

Once again this year, Banksy and other graffiti artists were popular with a small number of candidates however the work produced showed superficial understanding with obvious and predictable interpretations.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Use a wide range of sources to develop ideas and establish a balance between the use of media and photographic imagery. Avoid too much reliance on secondary sources from the Internet or magazines. At the core of much of the most successful work, across a range of endorsements, was the development of drawing skills as a means of researching and investigating, and developing ideas. In some cases drawings were successfully presented as final outcomes.

Assessment Objective 2 – Experiment

The purposeful and considered refinement of ideas through a consistent and sustained ability to experiment using a range of media and materials was evident in much of the work viewed in moderation. Increasingly a strong and consistent ability in selecting resources independently and using them thoughtfully and systematically with an on-going review and modification of work was evident in the stronger, more successful realisations sampled.

In some Centres candidates were prompted to experiment with a wide range of materials and techniques at the expense of selecting and refining. This Objective was at its best when candidates were encouraged to link it closely with AO1 and build on investigations into the working processes and approaches of the practitioners studied with a view to intended outcomes.

Once again this year some candidates in photography engaged with some exciting digital photographic techniques and approaches, including experimentation with projecting and printing onto unusual surfaces, which gave a highly expressive effect. Regrettably other used popular 'filters' such as 'neon glow' as the only means of experimentation.

While candidate's use of an ever wider range of facilities and resources has clearly expanded opportunity for very unusual interpretations and explorations, some of the most successfully developed work sampled was produced by skilful investigation through the use of a selective range of tools, processes and resources.

Once again printmaking was undertaken in a number of Centres. Textiles candidates, as always, employed a diversity of techniques and media and demonstrated a keen and well-informed interest in designers.

Critical and Contextual Studies candidates continue to show not only sound research skills but the ability to be explorative and selective when refining ideas towards practical outcomes.

Applied candidates displayed creativity in resolving design problems and presented convincing practical solutions when responding to vocationally orientated or commercially orientated briefs.

Regrettably in less successful work, the basic skills of handling materials or techniques failed to be developed making it difficult for candidates to successfully explore or refine ideas and fully realise their intentions.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Make the most of local resources:

1. **Museums or galleries.**
2. **Botanical gardens, parks and zoos etc.**
3. **Artists and designers**
4. **Community Arts Centres**
5. **Workshops or artists in residence**
6. **Exhibitions or studio visits**
7. **Carnivals, fairs and parades**

Successful work often provided evidence of a coherent journey, with a genuine sense of purpose.

Assessment Objective 3 – Record

Many candidates displayed a strength and consistency in their ability to record ideas, insights and observations in ways that were appropriate to their course and endorsement.

Considerable focus and attention had been given by the Centres to working from observational recording. While a very significant amount of direct observation was seen, there was also, although entirely permissible, an increasing amount of secondary source material which could have instead been worked from primary observational resources.

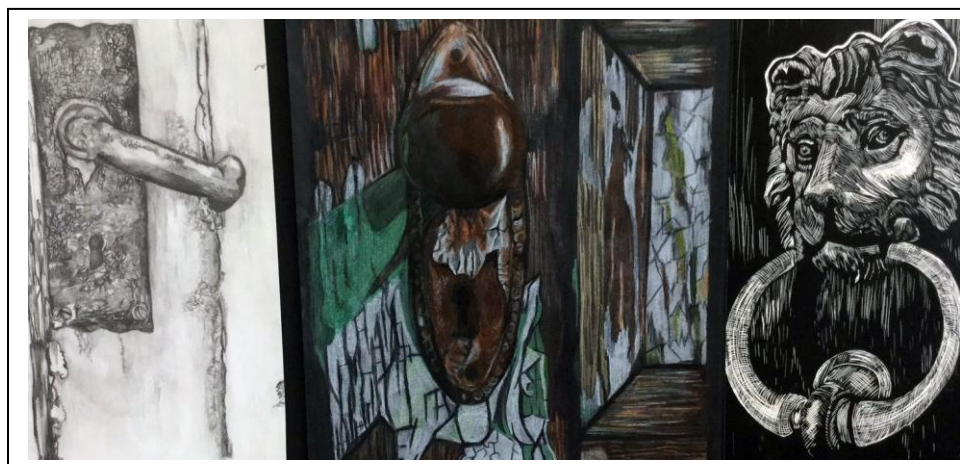
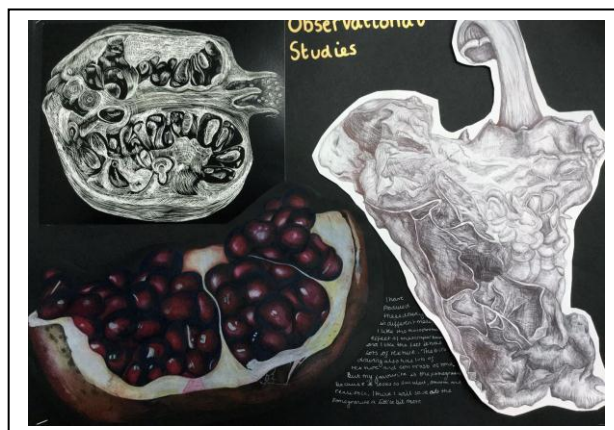
For some candidates the advancement of observational skills is a neglected aspect of their studies and those who substituted thoughtful recording with poorly selected collections of images from magazines and elsewhere continue to be misguided.

When 'found' imagery is gathered from the Internet or elsewhere candidates must acknowledge their sources.

Photography, particularly digital, continues to be a major method of recording across all endorsements however transpositions into drawing from these photographs were inconsistent in some submissions.

For many candidates observations were well linked to intentions but for others the work produced was disconnected from intended final pieces or outcomes.

Annotation and other written recording, rarely just descriptive but often reflective and analytical, were extensively used by candidates. Those who were clear about their own intentions and related these to the work of others invariably produced the best examples.



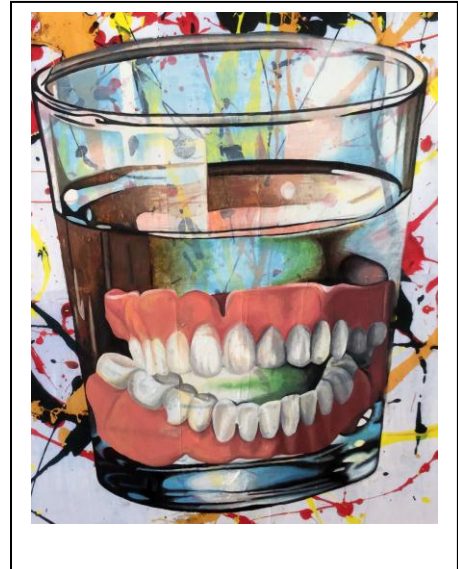
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Centres are reminded that candidates may record their ideas, feelings, insights and observations in any way that is appropriate to intentions and this is not the sole domain of drawing and photography. Indeed, successful candidates often record their thought processes, opinions and responses to experience in a range of different ways.

Centres are reminded once again that the quality of written language is important. Moderators continue to report:-

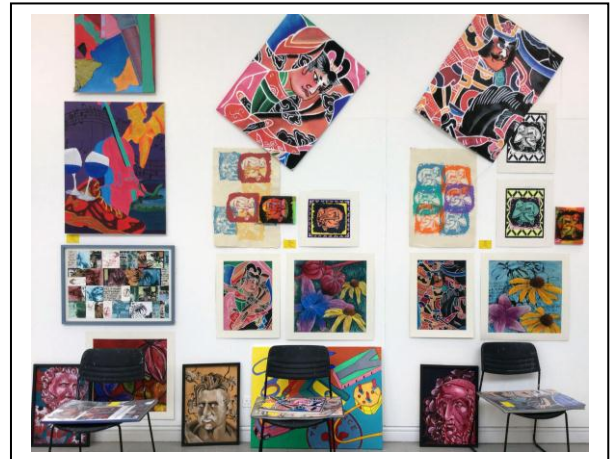
“Again in 2016 the frequency of poor spelling, grammar and punctuation was alarming.”

The quality of recording invariably impacts throughout all the assessment objectives and in the best submissions candidates ensure that the standard of work produced remains consistent throughout.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Present the work in a way that clearly shows the creative journey through the Assessment Objectives. Empty plastic bottles, cans, packaging and other throwaway items are just some of the free materials used by Centres in respect of AO3.



Assessment Objective 4 – Present

The wide range of artistic and cultural influences where the candidates had made contextual connections was varied and frequently very personal. The great majority of candidates had developed creative outcomes through taking elements of the styles, character or techniques they had found in their cultural/contextual influences or their chosen artistic influence and used them to good effect in their own work.

Moderators reported again that there are unfortunately still some instances of candidates presenting all of their coursework for assessment whereas being discriminating would have been more advantageous in terms of meeting the requirements of Assessment Objective 4; however it is pleasing to say that these numbers are reducing significantly.

The strongest candidates continue to produce exceptional work, which impressed with the sophisticated use of detail, colour, scale and technique. These candidates made connections with contexts and the work of other practitioners that demonstrated insight and sound critical and analytical understanding.

Conversely in some instances candidates continue to transpose an image from the preparatory phases and, although sometimes well executed, this did little to disclose the narrative of the creative journey.

Moderators reported that submissions are at their best when there was the 'journey' of an idea or theme leading to an edited presentation of work which evidenced clear and insightful connections between all the AO's, but also imaginative and personal expression.

A few Centres are still presenting 'the course', rather than guiding candidates to select and present work, which best evidenced not just their skills but strengths through the Assessment Objectives.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

In the OCR-set Task candidates should avoid using unfamiliar materials or techniques in the production of the final outcomes, especially during the ten hours supervised period when guidance by the teacher may not be given.

OCR-Set Task

The 2016 OCR-set Task paper promoted responses that were almost invariably creative and well intentioned. Moderation confirmed that the range of starting points provided a platform for all candidates to display their individual creativity and technical skills to the best advantage.

As in previous years most teachers previewed the paper upon receipt and were thus well primed for its distribution to candidates early in January. Candidates largely took advantage of the preparatory period and consequently most submissions were well sustained throughout the Assessment Objectives.

It continues to be reassuring to see candidates in the lower mark range showing fewer tendencies to select predictable responses to the starting points, such as the direct copying of secondary sourced material with insufficient emphasis on development and exploration.

As usual, many Centres supported candidates well by guiding them to build on the experiences gained during the Portfolio unit.

Popular Starting Points:

‘Tranquil’ – was interpreted in a number of ways, including environmental, spiritual and landscape-based themes. A number of Photography candidates had used a range of landscape photographers as inspiration, including Charlie Waite and Helen Dixon. Other responses were based upon the work of artists Tom Wheeler and John Robinson and Bill Viola’s submerged figures were also considered.

‘Changed’ - proved popular with candidates with work based upon the illustrations of Arthur Rackham, Fantasy Art, Surrealism, Cubism and changing architectural styles. Michael McConnell’s morphed animal and human figures had inspired some detailed drawing in the Fine Art endorsement. Responses to the work of H.R Giger, Francis Bacon and Jens Hesse were also in evidence, along with connections to the work of photographers Laurence Demaison, John Stezaker and Christoffer Relander.

‘Eyes’ – was also a popular choice from Section 1, inspiring many examples of portraiture in a range of styles. Examples included investigations of dripping paint in the style of Marion Bolognesi, Agnes Cecile and Svenja Jödicke. Detailed observations of eyes were evident and candidates responded to the work of photographers Suren Manvelyan, Jose Vergara and Kate Powell amongst others.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Teachers should open the paper when it arrives in the centre to enable them to prepare teaching and learning resources to support the candidate in the preparatory period.

The Set Task paper is generated from the provisional entry lists submitted to OCR by the centre in the autumn term.

‘Drama Studio’ – inspired some predictable responses in the form of theatre masks and music notes. This starting point also attracted interpretations based on masks from a range of cultures, and film and theatre productions. Alexander Kholkhov’s optical illusions were also used.

‘Laundry’ – proved popular particularly amongst Textile Design candidates. There were many examples of a range of textile applications inspired by clothing, pegs and washing machines. Links with the Pop Art prints of Andy Warhol, Andrea Joseph’s detailed drawings of a washing machine window and the still life paintings of Lisa Millroy were often in evidence.

‘Single’ – was a less popular choice and this was interpreted in a number of ways. For example, a single plant form was photographed in the style of Karl Blossfeldt or Sue Bishop or a single figure was shown in a landscape.

‘Planting’ – work inspired by ceramicists Roberta Polfus, Emma Clegg and Sue Dunne was presented by a number of Three-Dimensional Design candidates. Further popular references were the close-up floral paintings of Georgia O’Keeffe, Gigi Hoeller and Cedar Lee. Responses were also made to Tiffany glass and trees also proved a popular source of inspiration.

‘Wheel’ - some predictable responses in the form of cogs and car wheels were in evidence. This starting point also attracted more imaginative interpretations based on circular objects and the kaleidoscopic paintings of Beatrix Milhazes. Steam punk was a popular reference, as were Mullanium birds, kinetic sculptures, Eduardo Paolozzi and Kandinsky. Photography candidates had explored digital manipulation software to mimic the circular distortions of Nicholas Kennedy Sitton and David Copithorne.

The Section 2 Visual Starting Points were inviting with **‘Interesting Characters’** in particular winning much attention. **‘Home’** was selected by fewer candidates.



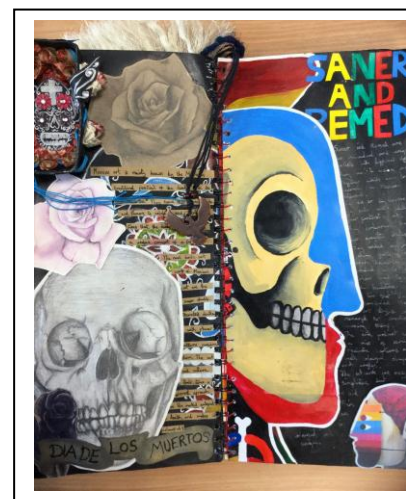
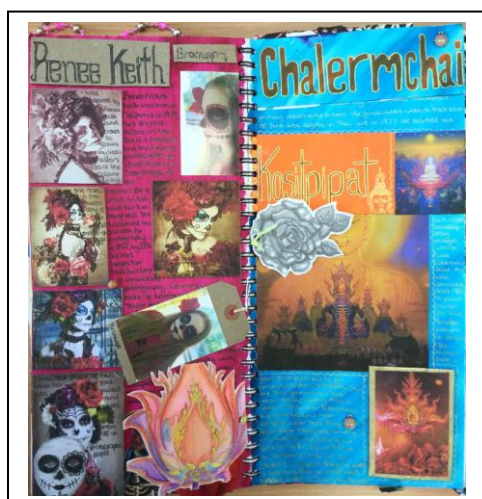
Critical and Contextual Studies

This endorsement continues to attract a good following especially from Centres wishing to offer their candidates the opportunity to follow a course that is underpinned by contextual research, reference and finding practical solutions.

Moderators once again commented positively on the wide variety of subjects and themes undertaken. Predominantly candidates made highly personal responses to art and design works through their own practical work.

Good practice is often shown when practical work is frequently supported by thoughtful written observations that demonstrated commendable levels of critical understanding and appreciation.

Once again it was encouraging to note that most candidates successfully avoided repeating factual information gathered from the Internet and made a genuine attempt to be interpretive and insightful. Not surprisingly candidates' performance in Assessment Objective 1 was almost invariably strong, impacting positively on the rest of the submission.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

Introduce a programme of research using a range of different approaches, from sketching, to photography, to collecting pictures and items. Ask your candidates to edit and annotate their research.

Applied Art and Design

Once again in 2016 the number of candidates taking this endorsement remains stable with many Centres reporting that the Applied endorsement fits well with the needs of their candidates.

As in previous sessions much ingenuity is shown in devising vocationally or commercially orientated briefs, which often established commercial clients and target audiences with whom candidates could readily identify. Working within such parameters continues to promote the creativity of many candidates who display much originality of thought in resolving design problems and presenting convincing solutions.

Candidates continue to research a broad spectrum of commercial, industrial or design contexts and make connections with a considerable array of practitioners, equally from the fields of Design, Industry and Applied Arts. Although candidates had the latitude to work within the broad areas of study identified by the endorsements the approach was frequently multi-disciplinary with candidates demonstrating much versatility in exploring the potential of an impressively extensive assortment of 2D and 3D media, resources, materials, techniques and processes.

It continues to be common practice in some Centres to establish a series of deadlines throughout the year of work for candidates to follow.

Annotation in Applied Art and Design can refer to specific design issues such as materials, structure and alternative approaches to making supplemented by specific fashion, textile, graphic design, architectural or product design terminology.

Candidates should give proper attention to the design process in a vocational context so that the gap between research and final outcome is bridged by developmental stages.



SHARING BEST PRACTICE:

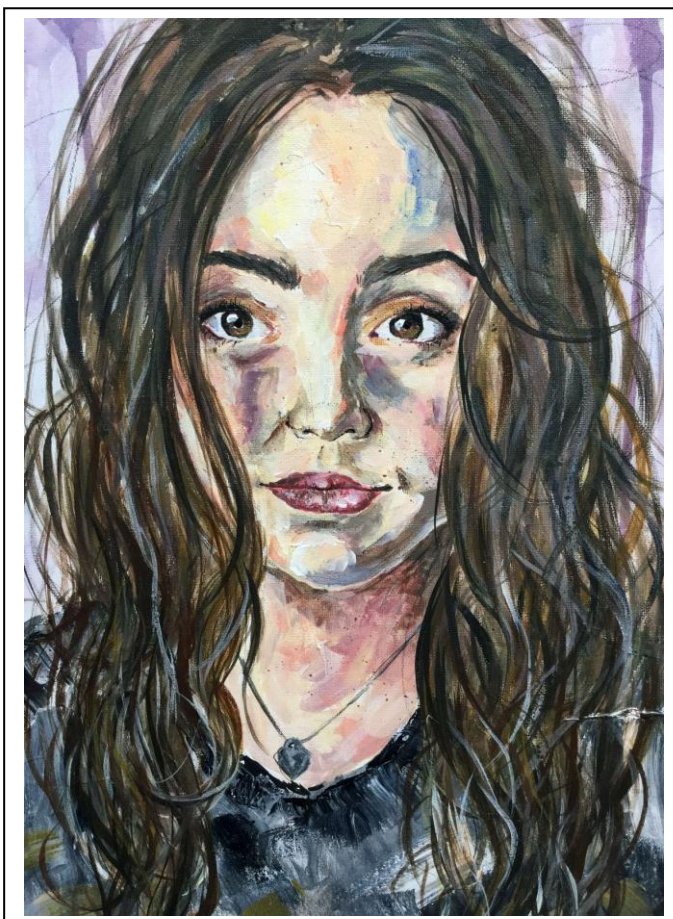
Candidates should remember that the work should be seen 'in a vocational context' and that the 'work must be supported by relevant work of their own'.

Summary and Guidance

All Centres should find it significant that this 2016 session clearly showed the OCR GCSE Art and Design specification greatly helped candidates achieve in all the endorsements and make full use of the creative and skills based opportunities afforded.

2016 once again confirmed that Centres continue to take advantage of the range of endorsements offered and candidates' submissions distinctly demonstrated the broadest possible approaches at GCSE.

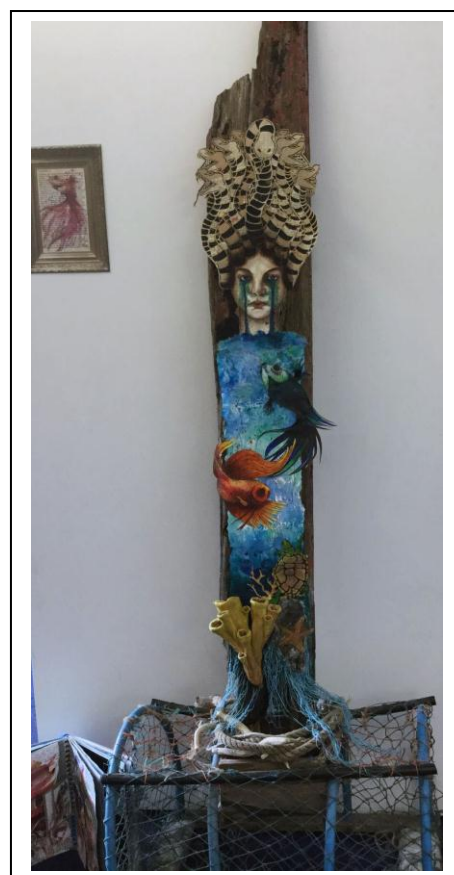
The number of Design and Technology departments entering their candidates in either the 3D Design or Textiles endorsement continues to grow and in 2016 a significant number of new Centres entered for this Art and Design qualification.



Reassuringly moderators report that informed teaching, well-conceived course structures and appropriate resources ensured that candidates generally performed to their full potential in both Units. Teachers in the vast majority of Centres achieve this and they are commended for the constructive assistance, support and guidance given to their candidates.

Centres are reminded that applications for Special Consideration must be made well in advance of the moderation visit. This responsibility lies entirely with Centres as the moderator cannot activate the procedure. It is advisable to notify the moderator of such cases when forwarding documentation for the May 15 deadline.

Once again in 2016 the use of ICT was a significant feature of work across all endorsements. The Internet continues to enable candidates to access the work of a wide range of artists, designers and craftspeople as well as cultures. However, teachers and lecturers need to maintain their vigilance in monitoring the websites used and steer candidates away from inappropriate material.

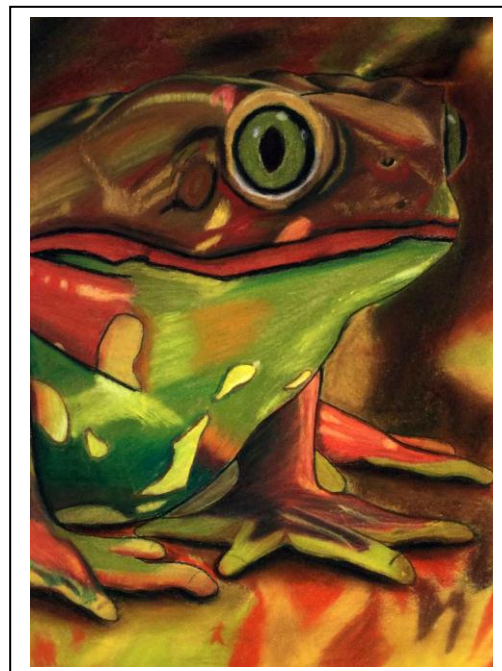


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Once again in 2016 OCR thanks the many teachers for their encouragement which was much appreciated and the suggestions made greatly informed the support materials for both candidates and teachers.

Further information regarding professional development for the New GCSE Specification 2016-2017 will be available on the OCR website, www.ocr.org.uk or by contacting OCR Training on 02476 851509 or by email to cpdhub@ocr.org.uk in September 2016.

The exemplar photographs used in this report show a small selection of the work displayed for moderation 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.



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