



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**ART & DESIGN
GCSE**

SUMMER 2023

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

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

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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PORTFOLIO

General Comments

Centres are still adjusting to a new normality following the Covid lockdowns and it is important to note that nationally the picture remains fragmented in terms of the residual effect of the pandemic upon the attainment of our learners. Whilst it is evident that many centres have managed to present work for moderation that demonstrates no tangible difference from pre-pandemic standards, others have clearly struggled.

Indicate the standard of the GCSE work seen during your visits. Give your general impression of higher, maintained or lower standards compared to 2019 and/or 2022, e.g. the quality/quantity of Portfolio/ESA work presented.

A breadth of centres has found the return to two components challenging and many have been experiencing additional issues, particularly with regards to the mental health of their candidates, but despite this, the work produced has often been outstanding. Many responses have been highly personal and insightful, indicating the vital impact creative subjects have on wellbeing. Generally, therefore whilst standards appear to have been maintained compared to 2019, a significant number of centres have nonetheless experienced the following issues:

- Submissions at times were rather sparse in terms of evidence and lacking in rigour.
- Skills appeared to be underdeveloped; thus, impacting on the quality of experimentation / exploration of primary sources and the final outcomes.
- The challenges of time management were a factor which undermined progress and assessment objective coverage at ESA and the ability of candidates to complete the portfolio element prior to the start of the ESA.
- Increased learner absence and apathy impacting negatively upon attainment.
- Portfolio work was in general good to reasonably good in covering the AO objectives with diversity of research, exploration with media and processes of making and planning towards clear objectives and responses. However, the ESA work often tended to be thin on productivity, particularly regarding depth and breadth of ideas development, thus impacting most noticeably on AO1 and AO3.

Describe one of the STRONGEST and WEAKEST features of the Portfolio work

STRONGEST

One of the strongest features of portfolio work was in Assessment Objective 2 when candidates showed the willingness and confidence to work in new, experimental ways, exploring a wide range of techniques and creative media. In the very best examples this investigative work was inspired by initial research in AO1. Indeed, the responses to AO1 were at times of an exceptional standard with many candidates responding with maturity and thoughtful analysis, ensuring that the influence of the artists they had chosen was clearly demonstrated through their own personal interpretations.

Many centres allowed candidates to pursue individual lines of enquiry that led to projects that were of personal interest to them rather than the whole group producing a formulaic and uniform response. This approach appeared to intrinsically motivate learners. The depth of personal connection to the projects elicited a wide variety of outcomes and presentations which were a delight to see. **CONT.**

Candidates who developed their portfolio responses from first hand sources invariably produced more original and personal submissions, which impacted positively across the four Assessment Objectives, particularly AO3 & 4.

WEAKEST

Some candidates across the range of attainment presented work that lacked sufficient breadth, depth, and complexity. Sketch books and folders were at times filled with superficial adornment that did little to support their chosen theme in any real sense. This was particularly evident in AO1 work where some centres persist in allowing candidates to include irrelevant biographical details of artists as evidence of analysis and critical awareness [at centres where the AO1 had been addressed in a more analytical and integrated way there was an inevitable pay off in the quality and originality of the candidate's subsequent creative development].

A minority of centres dictate contextual references to the candidates, thus hindering the individuality of the portfolio. Whilst such an approach is used to support and provide guidance at the lower end of attainment this can regrettably undermine the individual thinking of higher achieving candidates. Centres who overprescribe the content of portfolios, lessen the ability of candidates to present a truly personal response, thus negatively impacting upon engagement, and creativity.

It was disappointing to see some portfolios lacking in primary first-hand photography and drawings. Too many centres used secondary sources from Google images thus undermining performance at AO3 and AO4.

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ESA

Describe one of the STRONGEST and WEAKEST features of the ESA work

STRONGEST

Candidates having the opportunity to embrace more personal lines of enquiry [particularly if centres have a restricted structure within the Portfolio] invariably made personal connections and developed outcomes that were engaging and important to them. The strongest features of the ESA work therefore were the highly personal and often unique responses to the ESA paper, where candidates demonstrated considerable ability in selecting and developing initial ideas, materials, and techniques prior to adopting a process of refining their work in preparation for the 10-hour controlled period.

Contextual references have become increasingly diverse with social media platforms such as Pinterest allowing candidates access to a varied choice of creative practitioners. This has been a pleasing development post pandemic contributing to the creative development of candidates in a manner that is often more useful and relevant.

WEAKEST

Compared to the portfolio, the ESA is a more succinct and focused body of work that is undertaken within a constrained period. Nevertheless, moderators often commented upon the number of ESA submissions which lacked adequate quantity and heft leading up to the 10-hour sessions. Some candidates had not embarked upon creating a sufficiently sustained body of preparation work from early January to Spring, consequently the ESAs were at times sparse, disjointed and bereft of evidence across the AOs. One of the weakest features of the ESA therefore was the lack of thorough experimentation and development of ideas. Many candidates did not give enough time and consideration to this component which inevitably had a detrimental effect upon the standard of the final outcome. Teachers have commented that the congested Spring term involving mock examinations and pressures from other subjects have undermined the ability of candidates to focus adequately upon ESA preparation. However, as this was also an issue pre pandemic, it may be suggested that some of our candidates have struggled to regain the levels of application and rigour that was common prior to the Covid pandemic.

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SUMMARY

In general, were administrative procedures in Centres carried out satisfactorily? (marksheets, creative statements, authentication documents and layout of work for moderation etc.)

The overwhelming majority of Centres ensured that all administrative procedures had been diligently undertaken thus ensuring that the moderation process could be undertaken smoothly. The samples of work were generally laid out or exhibited in a manner which aided moderation and moderators are grateful for the efforts made by centres in this regard.

It is evident that the Creative statements documentation are at times proving to be a contentious requirement, perceived by some teachers and learners to be a burdensome extra task that impinges upon precious time needed in the classroom to focus on portfolios and/or ESAs. Others comment that they are often just a replication of what is already being recorded as annotation within the main body of work. Nevertheless, when dutifully undertaken they provide candidates with opportunities to secure extra marks and moderators often comment upon their usefulness as regards gaining a swift insight into the work. It is recommended that candidates work on their statements at various stages in the development of their portfolios and ESAs and not retrospectively.

To conclude, it is pleasing to note that many moderators have commented upon how centres are now of the belief that there are signs of marked improvement in relation to the situation of learners due for assessment in 2024, and that hopefully the residual effects of the pandemic are being gradually dissipated moving forward.

On behalf of our dedicated team of GCSE moderators I wish our centres well as they prepare candidates for the challenges of the new academic year.



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