

PREPARATORY PERIOD

The Externally Set Assignment is an important element within the assessment process and it is essential that its validity, reliability and integrity are well understood, together with an appreciation of the valuable learning opportunities it offers.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the delivery and assessment of these Art and Design examinations that requirements are strictly adhered to and it must be recognised that this is not solely the responsibility of examination board personnel.

In all circumstances, the authenticity of all work submitted for assessment, including preparatory study undertaken away from the Centre, must be unquestionably the candidate's own work. As far as possible, this should be supervised by a member of staff. Where work has not been closely supervised, suitable measures should be in place to ensure that the character and quality of work is equivalent to that produced under supervision.

Several strategies can be used for this purpose, such as:

- requiring the candidate to carry out similar work under close supervision and comparing standards with work that has been produced unsupervised;
- conducting a viva with the candidate to question the origin and development of work to determine authenticity;
- asking the candidate to provide evidence that unsupervised work is authentic.

To avoid misunderstanding or embarrassment at a later stage, some centres establish these strategies contractually from the commencement of the course. All work produced for the Portfolio and all preparatory work for the Externally Set Assignment must be subject to the above procedures to protect the integrity of the assessment system.

SUSTAINED FOCUS WORK

This period is 10 hours for the Externally Set Assignment under examination conditions.

Due to the enormous variety of approaches adopted by candidates in tackling the Sustained Focus Work period, it is neither possible nor desirable to detail specific procedures for the conduct of the sessions.

Instead of setting out regulatory details, centres are required to observe certain general principles which, as well as rigorously protecting the integrity of assessment procedures, will provide the necessary flexibility to accommodate the plethora of media, techniques and processes that are utilised by candidates across the various endorsed areas of the examination.

These range from ancient technologies, such as fired ceramic work, to the digitally processed new media of our present age.

1. The first and probably most important of these principles takes account of the educational value of Sustained Focus Work. We all have to operate within fixed time constraints in our everyday lives and in the workplace. The 10 hour period provides candidates with the opportunity of experiencing what it is like to work under certain constraints and within a predetermined time frame. Maximising this opportunity calls for detailed advance planning and preparation to ensure that it is a positive learning experience.
2. The second principle, therefore, is that the 10 hour period must be properly planned. This advance planning should be undertaken by each candidate in close consultation with their teacher. The planned period(s) must take account of organisational factors that might include:
 - resources, equipment, workspace that will be required;
 - time taken to carry out the various procedures and associated processes such as washing, printing, cleaning, drying and firing.

If necessary, the 10 hour period should be split into shorter periods to allow supplementary work, such as the preparation of screens, the drying of clay work and the cutting of mount boards to take place outside the 10 hour period.

3. This leads to the third principle which is that the 10 hour period should make best use of a range of the candidate's abilities so that it is a valid test of important competencies and represents a suitably high level of challenge. It is not desirable that narrow or relatively undemanding tasks such as the labelling or mounting of work or digital printing of photographs should occupy much, or any, of the time allocated.

4. Finally, the work completed during the 10 hour period must be clearly identified in the body of evidence presented for moderation.

Although the assessment of the Externally Set Assignment will take full account of all work submitted, the moderator will need to take into consideration what the candidate has been able to produce under the controlled conditions of the Sustained Focus Work period.

In most circumstances, the 10 hour period will be arranged so that the candidate is able to bring their work to a conclusion during that time but, in certain exceptional cases, such as the application of the last glaze to a ceramic piece, the work will be finalised shortly after the Sustained Focus Work period has ended.

It might be necessary to remind candidates that the outcome of the Externally Set Assignment does not have to be a finished piece of work, but that they should complete enough to demonstrate their ability to take the assignment through to a resolved conclusion.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: What is permitted in preparation for the Externally Set Assignment?

In order to reflect creative practice and afford students comparable access and experiences across respective disciplines and themes, it is essential that students are allowed to undertake preparatory work outside the classroom. For example, preparatory work may take the form of external photo shoots or filming sessions, or the recording of other forms of research whilst out on location (sketching, making exploratory paintings or other works such as landscape/cityscape studies, plein-air paintings or experiments with land art, independent investigative gallery visits to view graphic, textile or 3D design work in situ.) Work may be digital, 3D, sketchbook or portfolio-based, or any combination of these.

Q2: What are the regulations with regards to the 10 hours under examination conditions?

The following extracts have been taken from the JCQ booklet Instructions for Conducting Examinations, which relate specifically to Art examinations. This document may be updated or amended in the future:

Page 13, point 4.4: 'For Art examinations, appropriate art materials and design media, materials and technology must be provided by the centre.'

Page 15, point 5.5: 'Art timed tests... must be held under conditions that will give all students the chance to carry out their tasks and to display their true levels of attainment in the subjects concerned.'

Page 18, point 6.3: 'The head of centre, or exams officer, or quality assurance coordinator must: ...appoint invigilators to make sure that the examination is conducted according to the following requirements: ...at least one invigilator for each group of 20 students or fewer sitting Practical [Art] examinations.'

Page 18, point 6.4: 'The Art timed test will normally be invigilated by an Art and Design teacher. However, as the Art and Design teacher may be required to give technical assistance to an individual student, additional invigilators should be deployed at the exams officer's discretion to ensure the supervision of students is maintained at all times.'

Page 30, point 11.2: 'For Art examinations students may take into the examination room any preparatory supporting studies, work journals, notes or sketches which they have produced and which are to be submitted for assessment along with the work done in the period of the timed test. Students may also take into the examination room the objects and materials which are required to set up a still-life group. The invigilator must ensure that when students take preparatory supporting studies into the examination room, these are their own studies. These examinations must be taken under formal conditions. Students are not permitted to listen to music.'

Page 32: 'The invigilator must: ...remind students sitting timed Art examinations that the work produced during the timed test period must be their own, that they are not allowed to communicate in any way with, ask for help from or give help to another student while they are in the examination room. (The timed Art examination must be carried out under formal examination conditions.)'

Page 60: 'Under no circumstances may members of centre staff: ...communicate with students, (except in Art timed tests... or where maintaining discipline in the examination room). This constraint extends to coaching students, reminding students which section(s) of the question paper to answer or which questions they should answer.'

Q3: Can students have internet access?

Students are **not** permitted access to the internet. All preparatory work must be checked including all electronic storage devices to ensure only preparatory work is loaded on the storage facilities that are to be used in conjunction with a PC or laptop. Internal centre intranet systems can also be used as long as access to the internet is switched off.

Q4: Can students have access to their work once the controlled sessions begin?

From the end of the first controlled session students must not have access to any preparatory or final outcome work outside supervised sessions. At the conclusion of the focus period students are able to select, present and evaluate their material ready for centre marking.

Q5: What are students to do in the 10 hours under examination conditions, especially within digital submissions?

An important principle to take into account here is the educational value of Sustained Focus Work. We all have to operate within fixed time constraints in our everyday lives and in the workplace. The 10 hour period provides candidates with the opportunity of experiencing what it is like to work under certain constraints and within a predetermined time frame. Maximising this opportunity calls for detailed advance planning and preparation to ensure that it is a positive learning experience.

The 10 hour period must be properly planned. This advance planning should be undertaken by each candidate in close consultation with their teacher. The planned period(s) must take account of organisational factors that might include: resources, equipment, workspace that will be required; time taken to carry out the various procedures and associated processes such as washing, printing, cleaning, drying and firing, etc. If necessary, the 10 hour period should be split into shorter periods to allow supplementary work, such as the preparation of screens, the drying of clay work and the cutting of mount boards to take place outside the 10 hour period.

The 10 hour period should make best use of a range of the candidate's abilities so that it is a valid test of important competencies and represents a suitably high level of challenge. It is not desirable that narrow or relatively undemanding tasks such as the labelling or mounting of work or digital printing of photographs should occupy much, or any, of the time allocated.

It is important that candidates working digitally should have comparable entitlement and experiences to those working within more traditional disciplines during the 10 hours. To this aim many teachers recommend an applied approach for the sustained focus work in digital submissions. For example, photography students might creatively combine, layer, manipulate and juxtapose text and imagery to bring their work to a resolved conclusion in Photoshop – producing campaign posters, adverts or magazine/newspaper articles. Or they might combine photographic images with another medium such as painting or machine embroidery. This kind of context often extends and strengthens the work and provides a heightened sense of purpose. In contrast film or animation students may struggle to complete their responses in the 10 hours. In such cases, careful planning is needed to identify what can be achieved within the sustained focus period and what should be completed as part of the preparatory and presentational work. As a comparative example, a Textiles student might not have time to complete a fabric print **and** construct and embellish a garment in the sustained focus period. The fabric printing could however be completed as part of the preparatory work and the garment construction and embellishment would then be completed during the 10 hours. **In all cases the work completed during the 10 hour period must be clearly identified in the body of evidence presented for moderation.**

Although the assessment of the Externally Set Assignment will take full account of all work submitted, the moderator will need to take into consideration what the candidate has been able to produce under the controlled conditions of the sustained focus work period. In most circumstances, the 10 hour period will be arranged so that the candidate is able to bring their work to a conclusion during that time but, in certain exceptional cases, such as the application of the last glaze to a ceramic piece, the work will be finalised shortly after the sustained focus work period has ended. It might be necessary to remind candidates that the outcome of the Externally Set Assignment does not have to be a finished piece of work, but that they should complete enough to demonstrate their ability to take the assignment through to a resolved conclusion.

Q6: Does the centre have to record the 10 hours under examination conditions?

Yes. It is the responsibility of each centre to record which sessions each student attends. To help centres WJEC has produced a template in an MS Word format Timesheet (Externally Set Assignment). Centres may wish to devise their own system to record sessions and this is acceptable to WJEC as long as the information on the template is covered. Students can also use this template as a planning tool for each session, so that they understand exactly what they want to achieve in each block of time.