

2015 AS and A level Art and Design – frequently asked questions

The new AS and A level Art and Design qualifications

1. Are the new qualifications accredited?

Yes! We're really pleased to say that Ofqual has accredited both our AS and A level qualifications. Accredited specifications and Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) are available to download from [our website](#).

2. What changes have you made in the 2015 AS and A level Art and Design qualifications, and why?

Here's a summary of the main changes we've made:

- **No Critical and Contextual Studies endorsement**

We have taken the decision not to offer a Critical and Contextual Studies endorsement in our redeveloped qualifications. We worked closely with academics from UK universities during the redevelopment, and they wanted critical and contextual studies to be integrated within all other courses, rather than being a discrete course, so that all students develop the critical thinking skills essential for progression in the subject.

- **Newly-designed assessment grids**

We spoke to lots of teachers to try to understand how we could improve our assessment grids to make them easier for you to apply to student work from all endorsements. Here is a list of the changes we have made in response to your feedback.

- **A single assessment grid for both AS and A level**

There is now one assessment grid for marking all practical work and written annotation at both AS level and A level. We have made this change to allow you to differentiate the full ability range in both qualifications.

- **A separate assessment grid for marking the personal study at A level**

You told us that you wanted a way of awarding discrete marks for the A level personal study to allow you to reward different levels of achievement for the written work. In response to this feedback, we have created an assessment criterion which relates just to the personal study in a separate assessment grid. There are now 18 discrete marks available, making it worth 12% of the A level.

- **A consistent taxonomy in both assessment grids**

We have developed and applied a consistent taxonomy to both assessment grids to help you understand better which band student work falls in to.

- **Narrower mark bands**
You told us you had difficulty placing students accurately in the current mark bands so all mark bands have been reduced to 3 marks so that students are either top, middle or bottom of the band.
- **Longer periods of sustained focus**
In the new AS qualification, the period of sustained focus for Component 2 Externally Set Assignment will be 10 hours (rather than 8 hours). In the new A level qualification, the period of sustained focus for Component 2 Externally Set Assignment will be 15 hours (rather than 12 hours).
- **Enhanced Externally Set Assignment paper**
We have retained the broad theme and the starting points for each endorsement but we have also made some small improvements.
 - **Colour images**
We have added colour images to break up the text and make the paper more visually accessible.
 - **Additional website and artist references as hyperlinks in a digital version**
We have removed some of the additional website and artist references from the paper. We will be providing a digital version of the paper in which the additional references are included as hyperlinks, so that they are just one click away.

3. What is the structure of the new AS and A level qualifications?

Both the AS and A level qualifications comprise two components:

A level

Component 1: Personal Investigation (60%)	Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)
<p>Part 1: practical work (72 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● From personal starting points ● Students submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ supporting studies ○ personal outcomes <p>Part 2: personal study (18 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students submit a piece of continuous prose of a minimum of 1000 words <p>Total marks available: 90</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Externally-set, broad-based theme released to teachers and students on 1 February ● Sustained focus period of 15-hours controlled assessment in which students create final response(s) to the theme ● Students submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ preparatory studies ○ personal outcome(s) <p>Total marks available: 72</p>

AS

Component 1: Personal Investigation (50%)	Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (50%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From personal starting points • Students submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ supporting studies ○ personal outcomes <p>Total marks available: 72</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Externally-set, broad-based theme released to teachers and students on 1 January • Sustained focus period of 10-hours controlled assessment in which students create final response(s) to the theme • Students submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ preparatory studies ○ personal outcome(s) <p>Total marks available: 72</p>

4. Does the AS count towards the A level like it used to?

No it doesn't. The AS and A level are now separate qualifications, so marks achieved at AS will not contribute towards A level mark and grade.

5. Can work completed and assessed as part of the AS form part of a student's A level submission?

Yes – students may submit work they have completed and had assessed as part of their AS Personal Investigation as part of their A level Personal Investigation submission. It is important to bear in mind that:

- The A level standard is higher than the AS standard, so the performance expected of students at A level is different to the performance expected of students at AS.
- Any AS work that forms part of an A level submission will be assessed at the A level standard.

We are creating a bank of AS and A level exemplar materials to exemplify the different AS and A level standards. These will be available on our website from May 2015.

Delivering the new AS and A level Art and Design qualifications**6. How can I register an interest in teaching the new Pearson Edexcel AS and A level Art and Design qualifications?**

Please complete [our Intention to Offer form](#). If you complete the form, we'll make sure you're kept fully up to date with the latest support and information for centres.

7. When will students enter for the new AS and A level Art and Design qualifications?

The new AS and A level Art and Design qualifications will be available for first teaching in September 2015, with first AS level examinations in summer 2016 and first A level examinations in summer 2017.

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Current specification	Summer series as normal	Summer series as normal	Final AS and A2 examinations	
New specification	Specifications in centres	September – first teaching*	First AS examinations	First A level examinations

* If you deliver the A level in 1 year, students starting in 2015 will need to take the current qualification because, in summer 2016, there are no A level examinations available for the new qualification.

8. Is it possible to co-teach my AS and A level students in Year 12?

We have designed the AS and A level qualifications to be co-teachable so you can teach your AS and A level students together in Year 12 if you want to. The table below suggests three approaches to co-teaching the two qualifications.

	Sep 2015	Jan 2016	Jun 2016	Sep 2016	Feb 2017	Jun 2017
AS level	Personal Investigation	ESA released	Enter for AS qualification	-	-	-
A level option 1	Personal Investigation	Use AS ESA as a Personal Investigation task or mock ESA		Continue with Personal Investigation	ESA released	Enter for A level qualification
A level option 2	Personal Investigation				ESA released	Enter for A level qualification
A level option 3	Personal Investigation	ESA released	Enter for AS level qualification	Personal Investigation for A level (may include AS level work)	ESA released	Enter for A level qualification

9. How much do students have to write for the personal study at A level?

Students' personal studies must be a minimum of 1000 words of continuous prose and we have set a guide upper limit of 3000 words to encourage students to be concise. Students will not be specifically penalised on the basis of the length of their personal study. However, failure to meet the minimum word count may restrict students' ability to develop the required depth and breadth to access the full mark range.

10. Will the A level Externally Set Assignment paper be available to teachers before 1 February when it can be released to students?

We will no longer be able to release the A level Externally Set Assignment paper to teachers before the release date to students on 1 February. This change applies to all awarding organisations. But 1 February is the date from which the paper can be released to students – if you wanted to, you could release the paper to your students a few days after 1 February to give you time to prepare resources.

11. Would it be possible to introduce a written element at AS, and to mark it using the assessment grid?

It is possible to introduce a written element at AS if you want to start developing students' writing skills. You can mark a written element at AS as part of the evidence towards AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.

12. Is it possible to deliver the AS over 2 years?

Yes, you can deliver the AS over 2 years. You'll just need to make sure you use the correct AS Externally Set Assignment paper – the one released on 1 January of students' second year of study.

13. What quantity of work should students submit for assessment?

The bank of exemplars should help with this. We will provide exemplars for all different titles at different ability levels, and we will start uploading them to our website before first teaching, along with marks and commentaries to show how the assessment grid has been applied. Remember that it is the quality of the work submitted, and not the quantity, that is important.

14. How does it work having one assessment grid for marking all AS and A level practical work and written annotation?

The standards of the new qualifications aren't changing: the new AS will be assessed at the same standard as the current AS level, and the new A level will be assessed at the same standard as the current A level. There is a common assessment grid, but there are two standards, and these will be exemplified through the visual exemplars we will be providing.

Support

15. Who can I contact if I have questions about the new Pearson Edexcel AS and A level Art and Design qualifications?

You can contact Susan Young, the Art and Design subject advisor, or one of the teaching services team on:

- Email: TeachingArtandDesign@pearson.com
- Telephone: 0844 576 0032 (outside UK: +44 (0)207 010 2181)

16. Will you be producing free support materials?

We will be producing a wealth of free support materials to help you as you plan to deliver our new AS and A level Art and Design qualifications. These will include:

- an extensive bank of AS and A level exemplars covering the coursework and exam components, as well as the written element (personal study)
- editable course planners
- detailed schemes of work
- mapping documents – to help with the transition to the new qualification
- getting started guide
- documents giving guidance on:
 - changes to the ESA
 - changes to the assessment grids and how to use the new grids when marking student work
 - the personal study (a piece of continuous prose of a minimum of 1000 words), approaches your students might want to take and possible starting points

17. What training will you be offering teachers for the new AS and A level Art and Design qualifications?

In 2015, we will be running free Getting Ready to Teach events. Details can be found on the Training from Pearson website.

18. Will you be running standardisation events?

We will be running standardisation events to help you understand the standard of the new AS and A level qualifications. We will be running online events as well as regional face-to-face events. Details of all training events for the new Pearson AS and A Level Art and Design qualifications will be listed on the Training from Pearson website over the coming months.

Other

19. Will the new AS qualifications attract UCAS points?

We have received confirmation from UCAS that new AS levels will attract 40% of the points that the new A levels attract.