

AS and A-LEVEL ART Edexcel

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

The best foundation for success in AS and A-Level Art is a good grade at GCSE. However, this isn't a requirement. If you have an aptitude for the subject, if you are creative or 'good at drawing', you may have the basic skills to succeed. However, AS/A-Level Art is not an easy option and you should be prepared to work hard at developing your abilities.

You should have an understanding of the basic elements of art – colour, tone, form etc. and also some understanding of the place of art and design in the world – its history and its purpose. Above all, you should have an interest in creating and understanding art and the determination to develop that interest.

What will I learn on this A-level course?

The main purpose of any course in art and design is to develop your ability to appreciate the visual world, respond in a personal and creative way.

The skills you will explore will be varied. Amongst them you will develop a working knowledge of materials, practices and technology within art and learn the skills to interpret and convey your ideas and feelings using art and design. You will improve your imaginative and creative powers and your experimental, analytical and documenting skills. You will also develop a specialist vocabulary and the knowledge and understanding of the place of art, craft and design in history and in contemporary society.

What kind of student is this course suitable for?

- Students who wish to undertake further studies in art and design, usually at art college or further education.
- Students who are looking to take up careers for which an art background is relevant. These might include advertising, publishing, architecture, museums, theatre or art gallery work.
- Students who have an interest in and aptitude for the subject, but who do not intend to take the subject beyond the AS or A-level.

What examinations will I have to take to get my qualification?

Advanced Subsidiary (AS)

This is the first half of the A-Level course.

If you and your teacher agree that it's best for you, you can take the AS-Level on its own. Or you can decide at the end of the AS course to continue to take the full A-Level qualification.

The AS is made up of two units:

Unit 1 Fine Art Coursework – 60% of the AS, 30% of A-level.

This is a structured project taking students up to their exam. Beginning with an exploration of a theme, students will take part in workshops to broaden and develop their skills base.

Unit 2 Externally set assignment – 40% of the AS, 20% of A-level

Candidates will be given a theme to work on in the Spring term from which to create preparatory studies. This research will culminate with an eight hour timed exam.

Advanced Level (AL)

The full A-Level qualification is made up of the two AS units as above, plus two more units studied at a higher level.

You don't necessarily have to take the full A-Level qualification; you can still get a certificate just for the AS, and your teacher will help you to decide what is best. If you do decide to take the second half of the course, it will cover the following three units.

Unit 3 Fine Art Coursework – 30% of A-level

This unit consists of two elements:

- a) practical work and
- b) a personal study.

Students will pursue their own creative and visual ideas with guidance from tutors. Practical work should arise from the students' current interests and experiences in art. They must support their own work with that of the world of art and design. The presentation of this study can take many forms. This may be:

- Presentation on CD or DVD with text
- A collection of images produced by the student with a written text
- A study in a book form which may include images produced by the student

Unit 4 Externally Set Assignment – 40% of the AS, 20% of A-level

Candidates will be given a theme to work on in the spring term from which to create preparatory studies. This research will culminate with a twelve hour timed exam.

How can I develop my full range of skills by doing this course?

As well as covering the advanced level study of Art, this course will enable you to develop some Key Skills that will be essential to you whatever you go on to do afterwards. The Key Skills you can develop during this course are:

Communication

The Key Skill of communication is integral to the study of AS/A-Level Art and will be assessed as specified in the mark scheme. This involves, amongst other skills, the ability to:

- Summarise the information found in many different types of sources – e.g. books, paintings, museums, galleries, the Internet.
- Use accurate and relevant information in the best format for the piece of work you are doing.
- Make sure that written work is legible and that its meaning is clear.
- Choose suitable images to illustrate your ideas clearly.

Other Key Skills appropriate to the study of art are:

- Information Technology
- Improving own learning and performance
- Working with others
- Problem solving

What could I go on to do at the end of my course?

There are many careers in art, craft and design. Most of these require further study at an art school, further education college or university. If you are unsure about whether to make a career of the subject, the best thing to do is to speak to your art teacher who will know about the courses on offer in your area or elsewhere.

At present, most students wishing to take art or design further will go on to do a one year 'Foundation' course at an art college or college of further education before applying for degree courses in more specialist areas of art and design.

You may wish to do an art AS or A-Level for its own sake, perhaps to form the basis of a future interest or as part of a range of other subjects. Alternatively, you might wish to go into a job where it is useful to have had experience of art, craft and design, or where you will need to use some of the skills developed during this course. These might include careers in such fields as advertising, marketing, design, architecture, publishing and the media. The study of Art can also help you develop transferable skills that you can take into any career or job. Success in AS/A-level Art requires determination and dedication. However, whichever future path you choose, it can be a very rewarding beginning.