



Moderator's Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2024

**Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in Art
and Design**

Component 1 Personal Portfolio

4FA1/4GC1/4PY1/4TE1/4TD1

and

Component 2 Externally Set Assignment

4FA1/4GC1/4PY1/4TE1/4TD1

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Introduction

This report reviews the 2024 series of the International GCSE Art and Design (9-1) examinations; Fine Art 4FA1/01 & 02, Graphic Communication 4GC1/01 & 02, Photography 4PY1/01 & 02, Textile Design 4TE1/01 & 02, Three-Dimensional Design 4TD1/01 & 02.

Component 1 Personal Portfolio (50%) consists of students' practical coursework, where students respond to theme(s), project(s) or task(s) set by the centre and is externally marked.

Component 2 Externally Set Assignment (50%) externally set and marked.

The International GCSE Art and Design (9-1) specification aims to provide all centres with the framework to develop and devise courses across all five endorsed titles:

- Fine Art
- Graphic Communication
- Photography
- Textile Design
- Three- Dimensional Design

Centres can enter students for more than one endorsed title in any one-examination series.

Administration and submission requirements

The 'Centre Guidance Document' which can be found on the Pearson Edexcel website covers:

- Key events and deadlines
- Entry information
- Summary of scheme of assessment
- Private candidates
- Preparation for the submission of artwork
- Instructions for the submission of work
- Digital submission guidance
- Special consideration
- Malpractice
- Grade awarding
- Authentication form

Detailed information on submitting work can be found in a separate International GCSE Art and Design Administrative Support Guide - this also includes Digital Submission Guidance. (see link below)

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/International%20GCSE/Art%20and%20Design/2017/forms_and_administration/international-gcse-art-asg-2024-v0-2.pdf

General Administration

Examiners made the following observations regarding how work was submitted on the Learner Work Transfer platform for Component 1 and 2.

- Examiners noted that presentation formats were notably improved from last year with most centres opting for up to 20 PowerPoint or PDF slide submissions or 4 A2 sheets in one PDF folder. The quality of photographic images was good, with images in focus and positioned straight.
- Examiners thought that this year there had been much more consistency in the way the centres had submitted work.
- Examiners found it much more straightforward to mark work that had been presented as a 'rolling' pdf or PowerPoint presentation.
- Viewing the work as individual photographs often felt like the flow of viewing the work was diminished as it took a carefully coordinated effort to view all the images in the intended order.
- Some centres included their own mark sheets, this is not required as work is externally marked for both components.
- The random use of image files which had not been linked into a format which facilitated the use of a slide show (and therefore had to be individually downloaded) was also slow and unnecessarily complicated.
- Centres that placed the authentication form with the presentation slides helped with administration logistics.
- There has been a mix of 'traditional' 4 sheet submissions and PowerPoints.
- The use of .rar file types which cannot be opened or read should be stopped.
- Some centres submitted poor quality photographs of candidates' submissions.
- A considerable number of centres did not include authentication forms with their submissions. This slowed down the marking process as examiners had to request authentication forms from these centres.
- PowerPoint presentations were straightforward to mark, and in some instances offered the candidates an additional opportunity to evidence their visual communication skills.

It is hoped that highlighting the examples above will improve how digital submissions are submitted in future series. Please note, no candidates were disadvantaged by the way their work had been submitted on Learner Work Transfer (LWT).

Students must submit:

- Three sheets of supporting studies (maximum size A2 for each sheet) one sheet of final outcome/s (maximum size A2), photographed and submitted digitally.
- Digital portfolios should be no more than 20 slides if done in a PowerPoint presentation
- Digital portfolios should be in chronological order, so the sequence of development can be followed by the examiner.
- All submissions must include signed authentication forms.

You will be able to access individual candidate marks for each assessment objective and the total mark awarded for Component 1 and 2 by using our Results Plus service, using the link below.

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/Services/ResultsPlus.html>

Results Plus is a free online results analysis tool for teachers that gives you a detailed breakdown of your learners' performance in Pearson qualifications. This will enable you to analyse the strengths and weakness of each candidate in each Assessment Objective. You will find it helpful to refer to the taxonomy and candidate assessment grid when using this service. If you have any difficulties using Results Plus, please speak to your exams officer.

Components 1 and 2: Assessment Objectives

Below are general comments in relation to the four assessment objectives made by examiners. They are generic and must not be seen as a blanket list of criticism or praise for individual centres.

AO1 Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources:

- The best examples of recording with the camera were accompanied by drawings and quick paintings or notes done in the field.
- There was a lack of rigorous contextual research seen in some submissions.
- Higher achieving candidates showed clear connections to sources.
- Local art exhibitions had inspired some candidates to acquire ideas and to support their own practical experiments and explorations, and ultimately to initiate more research on an artist.
- Artist's connections were effective and clearly supported their ideas and development of skills.
- Lower mark range candidates would have benefited from more in-depth investigations.
- Candidates sometimes changed from one idea to another without adequate depth in terms of development.
- Other approaches focused on only contemporary artists which were easily accessed and more inspiring in terms of the context of imagery to support the candidate's ideas.
- Ideas not developed in enough detail were sometimes predictable and often safe choices were made.
- Some centres presented work without a clear theme in Component 1, presenting a collection of unrelated images.
- Excellent recording seen in many candidates' work – skillful and accomplished, showing a sound understanding of the formal elements and the application of different materials.
- Candidates who make no reference to other artists often struggle to demonstrate critical understanding.
- Excellent use of own local environment and culture as a starting point.
- Greater variety of visual references needed to provide information to work from.
- Repetitive drawings.
- Good use of first-hand photography.
- Obscure artists are not always useful.

AO2 Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes:

- Very often centres guide candidates towards an artist or group of designers and the choice and their selection has been made for them. Where candidates discover their own inspirational images, objects, artefacts and artists, the response is more in depth and considered.
- Clear lack of refinement in some submissions.
- Creative use of mixed media.
- Experimentation which showed promise was not developed fully in weaker candidates.
- Refining becoming a natural process in the creative journey.
- Exciting experimentation
- It was notable this year that many more candidates had been to galleries/spaces to view artwork, firsthand. This created curiosity and helped to spur real artistic development.
- Playing safe with known techniques.
- Processes and techniques used in traditional ways with predictable results.
- Little evidence of risk taking.
- Refinement came about by practice with materials, media and developing technical skills rather than analysis of work.
- Limited range of materials and techniques
- Successful use of thumbnail sketches to plan for an outcome.

- At the mid to top band, many projects were reflective, informed and making perceptive and sophisticated links to refine work towards an outcome.
- It was interesting to see how candidates responded to artist referencing in their own work, rather than copying an artist's artwork, which was common in some lower-level submissions.
- Experimentation with media did not always have a sense of purpose or direction.
- Effective use of sophisticated software and digital programmes showing well taught submissions.
- Well documented creative journeys.
- Some inappropriate media used to fill research sheets.
- Decorating and embellishing sheets at the expense of substance.

AO3 Record ideas, observations, and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses:

- Where centres maybe didn't have access to a range of materials, the ones they had used had been practised and polished, subsequently producing high quality pieces throughout the project.
- Good development and recording using a variety of media.
- More judicious selection and analysis required by some candidates.
- Good evidence of having worked from direct observation and experience.
- Incomplete or unrecorded journey.
- Recording and drawing simplistic and repetitive.
- Recording showed advanced skills and exceptional performance.
- A foundation of drawing skills allows candidates to meet this assessment objective.
- In some centres, students responded to a technique or process and simply moved on without fully exploiting the medium.
- Weaker students quickly decided on an approach and repeated this in their slides, not developing or experimenting beyond a basic ability.
- Students who performed well in this area moved beyond simply copying and looked at how this informs more experiments within their personal area of study.
- Strong drawing and painting moved into mixed media, or into complex compositions which clearly demonstrated a confident and assured approach. The confident handling of materials, alongside sustained enquiries allowed some students to move into band 6.
- Excessive scrap booking of images from magazines and the internet or Pinterest.
- Recording not always relevant.
- More able candidates resolve ideas successfully due to their ability to visualise ideas and intentions.
- Photographic compositions record situations as possible formats for painting.
- A few lower mark range candidates spend far too much time gathering images to strengthen ideas rather than exploring those images in a variety of different media.
- Digital images were more evident in this year's submissions, but it was encouraging to note that digital art was not being 'substituted' for observational drawing from primary sources, and centres seemed to be placing greater importance on recording from first-hand than in previous years.

AO4 Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language:

- In a few cases, where the development work had been average, the actual outcome had been very well executed.
- A common issue in this assessment objective involves the uniting of all or most of the preparatory work into a large tableau and in so doing frustrating independent creativity.
- Final outcomes did not always show the promise of initial research work.
- Many exceptional outcomes realising intentions and clearly demonstrating sophisticated connections and visual language.
- The personal response is a concept which is sometimes misunderstood by the weaker submissions.
- The ability to review and refine work seems to be reserved for the higher achieving candidates where they understand fully the idea of sustained investigation and line of reasoning.

- Consistently precise drawing and painting but unresolved compositions.
- Disappointing when final outcome is a copy of smaller earlier work from the research sheets showing no development or extension of work.
- Considered outcomes showing clear selection from research work.
- Continuing to explore in the final piece in both components demonstrating an artistic journey for higher placed candidates.
- Weaker candidates relied too heavily on collage and juxtaposition of images.
- Repeating images in final outcome.
- Final outcomes enlarged from smaller images in research sheet so not as refined, resulting in lower marks in this assessment objective.
- Outstanding, fully resolved, independent, imaginative and in some cases exciting outcomes.
- It was good to note that fewer candidates had produced 'mini versions' of their final outcome; this resulted in more successful final realisations, with well-balanced compositions and more refined visual language skills suited to an A2 format.
- Weaker candidates often repeated ideas and images without any development or progression, producing final realisations that bore little or no connection to the sources explored.

Component 1: Personal Portfolio

Centres are free to devise their own theme(s) during the course or use a title from a past legacy examination theme. Some centres opted to use the sample assessment theme. **Centres should select the best project that each candidate has produced during the course. This should be a submission that exemplifies a full 'work journey' and provides evidence for all assessment objectives.** The quality of the work is key. Centres should support candidates in their selection of a focussed body of work for their submission.

The specification states clearly that during the course 'Centres are free to devise any theme(s), project(s) or task(s) which may each have a separate focus or be interconnected.'

The centre is then required to choose just ONE project for assessment.

Students must submit:

- Three sheets of supporting studies (maximum size A2 for each sheet) one sheet of final outcome/s (maximum size A2), photographed and submitted digitally (please see the administrative support guide for further information)
- Digital portfolios should be no more than 20 slides if done in a PowerPoint presentation
- Digital portfolio should be in chronological order, so that the sequence of the development can be followed by the examiner.
- All submissions should also include signed authentication forms.

It should be noted that in 2024 a number of centres chose to submit more than one project by students for assessment. Centres should refrain from this practise when submitting work in the 2025 series.

Below are the strengths and areas of improvement of candidates' submissions highlighted by examiners in the 2024 series:

Strengths

- Where centres encouraged candidates to devise and explore their own themes related to personal interests, a more eclectic and individual range of sources were selected, with candidates responding to their own choice of artists. Overall, this resulted in more imaginative and exciting personal outcomes.
- Some of the more exciting projects were formed from students' life experiences or their culture/heritage; this meant they could develop more sustained projects that led to strong, individualised outcomes.
- Many centres used starting points from previous exam titles. This gave all candidates the chance to interpret a theme in a more personal way. This was more evident in centres with larger cohorts.
- Candidates who embark upon a focused and sustained journey develop skills which enhance their preparatory and supporting studies. The best examples show ample studies of recording, drawing and mark-making which build towards the final realisation.
- Annotations were focussed and informative, critical and reflective - not simply used as labelling or description.
- Some submissions had used digital platforms, mainly Procreate on iPad, to photograph their drawings/sketches and then manipulate and explore a range of creative options using Procreate's digital tools.
- AI was also used in some submissions to kick-start concepts, clearly referenced as per authenticity requirements.
- High achieving candidates produced highly skilled and intuitive work. The references were appropriate, well-chosen and moved their work forward. There was a level of sophistication and visual awareness which enabled critical analysis with inspired outcomes.

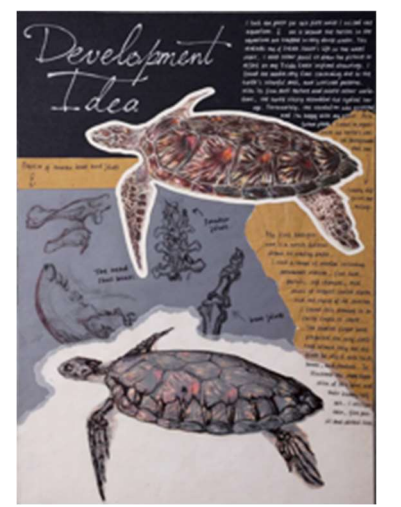
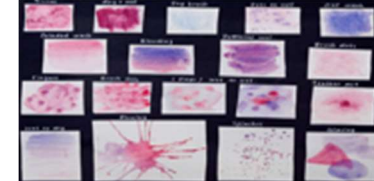
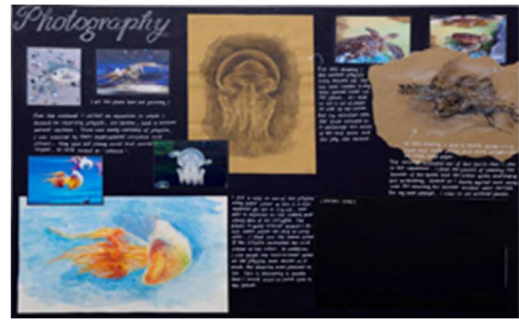
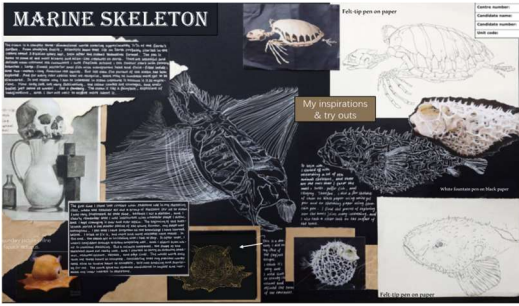
- A wide range of media was used, exploiting the qualities of each and often using combinations of processes and materials to give rich surface textures and subtle colour. Candidates used the formal elements with confidence, flair and to good effect.
- When personal photography was used, the quality of the subsequent development was much higher. Using images from the internet did not provide the same level of engagement.
- Candidates appeared to take advantage of local artists and exhibitions when they had the opportunity. It is exciting to see the local traditions and culture reflected in the work and this should be seen as a positive, rather than an emphasis on work in the Western European traditions.
- Most of the candidates understand the requirements of the four assessment objectives and structured their work around these. Most appeared to have an adequate range of materials and media to work with.
- Centres who offer work for assessment within the traditional format for International GCSE (3 research sheets and a finished outcome sheet) seem able to focus on the assessment objectives with clarity and purpose. Evidence is stronger when the selection process has been adhered to with consideration and a genuine focus on the formal elements.
- Some centres submitted powerful and exciting Graphic Communication portfolios with high achieving candidates evidencing a real command of visual language. There were some innovative 3D computer generated designs developed through rigorous analysis of form and function.
- The use of PowerPoint and PDF files helps to understand the breadth of the course followed and, when successful, the technology serves to illustrate the candidates' work rather than dominate the submission.
- Drawing from firsthand observation and selecting primary sources seems to germinate stronger ideas at the start of the course, rather than trawling through the internet for artists with a similar interest or theme.

Areas of Improvement

- Mood boards made up from internet images with tenuous connections to the area of research were often the most substantial element of a submission. Many candidates submitted more than the equivalent of four sheets of work, much of which was repetition or irrelevant.
- A lack of focus and intent left weaker candidates with ill-considered or non-existent realisations. Instead of reviewing progress, there was description of feelings and thoughts. Lack of analysis led to stilted progression and missed opportunities.
- Some candidates showed low levels of basic skills and understanding of materials and media. Centres should use the Exemplar Gallery on the Pearson website to understand the levels of achievement required to meet the common standard in all assessment objectives.
- There was evidence of over-reliance on copying artists' work (pastiche) and not using this experience to produce personal responses.
- Overpowering PowerPoint presentations with a plethora of contextual sources and gathered influences often dominated the submissions. It is difficult to establish the level of the candidate's ability when their work is reduced significantly in scale or masked by uncredited work by their chosen artists. This is especially true when candidates prefer to illustrate their inspirational source (copy), rather than deliver an outcome of their own creation.
- Photography candidates focus far too much on creating mood boards based on the work of other photographers, rather than using these images to inspire creations of their own.
- In some cases, where the projects fitted into performance bands 'limited' and 'basic', the work was unstructured and disjointed, which amplified the lack of skill with media and techniques. The lower end submissions lacked the ability to make critical connections between their work and the sources that informed them. Some references appeared to be added to fill a gap, rather than to aid development.
- It was evident that some candidates had endeavoured to improve their projects and this progress could be seen in their work. This meant that the work accessed the 'emerging competent' band, with signs of 'broadening' and 'intentional' work.

- A reliance on secondary sources from the internet usually results in drawing which is flat and lacking in tonal range. Candidates' own photography is not widely used as a recording tool, but where it is, the act of choosing and framing an image improves the subsequent observational work.
- When candidates approach each AO individually rather than a holistic and integrated way, meeting the objectives in a sequential manner, the work can become a series of exercises and the sense of journey and development of ideas is fragmented.
- Some teachers do not fully understand the scope and range of the specification.
- Meaningless annotation and written biographies shortened the space available for the candidates' own work.
- Lengthy PowerPoints or PDF files from centres, which had not undergone any kind of final selection for their submission were difficult to mark.
- Extra slides used for 'cut and paste' tasks, creating mood boards and arbitrary images did not develop ideas or generate a personal response.
- A lot of pastiche and direct copying of artists work/style failed to translate into a personal response in the final outcome.
- Candidates who had excellent drawing and mark making skills sometimes chose to limit the evidence by writing substantive text and gathering examples of work by artists and designers.
- In some centres there is extensive use of digital enhancement which produced polished images but can mask a lack of developmental thinking.
- A small number of centres submitted an excessive number of projects and this can disadvantage candidates.

A selection of images produced by a Fine Art candidate for Component 1: Personal Portfolio



Component 2: Externally Set Assignment

It should be noted that in 2024 a small number of centres did the incorrect externally set assignment (ESA) paper. Some centres did the GCSE Art and Design (9-1) exam paper with the theme 'Power'.

This year's International GCSE Art and Design (9-1) examination theme was 'Protect'.

Below are the strengths and areas for improvement of candidates' submissions highlighted by examiners in the 2024 series:

Strengths:

- Some of the most powerful work was based around personal stories and experiences – protection has yielded some fantastically creative responses through culture, family, helmets/armour, and the environment.
- There was a lot of work around family, pets, friends, local traditions, history, and culture, acknowledging the value of heritage which enabled students to use more primary observations in their work.
- Time was well managed during the 10-hour period of sustained focus in examination conditions, particularly where candidates had considered scale and medium as part of preparatory work.
- The exam theme seemed to be well received, with students responding positively to the theme of 'Protect'. Ideas tended to focus on family, self, health, the climate, and the natural world.
- Confident candidates gave detailed responses to the theme of 'Protect', looking at it in terms of protecting family, ways of life, people, relationships, or locations. Several candidates used cultural context and tradition to explore 'Protect' in their work.
- A very broad theme, allowing candidates to research many different aspects of 'Protect'. Topics such as 'Shelter', 'Architecture', 'Human Body', 'Protecting traditions from extinction', 'The Mind', 'Masks', 'Memories, Emotions and Experiences', 'Media Consumption' and 'Identity: LGBTQ+' were amongst some very individual, exciting, and advanced ideas and concepts being explored.
- There appears to be a trend in stronger, purposeful project submission for Component 2 in comparison to, in some cases, much more simplistic submissions for Component 1. Students had shown growing control and thoughtful progress over the entire International GCSE course.
- Candidates used the formal elements with confidence, flair and to good effect.
- Candidates who performed well started with a diverse source of references, often with 'mood boards' consisting of artist references, secondary source images related to their initial ideas, or starting points inspired by the ESA paper. These images generated ideas that progressed, recording a process of experimentation and exploration, using a wide range of materials and processes.
- Sophisticated recording, especially in the Fine Art title, through personal observations and ideas
- Global issues featured within the ideas generated and particularly the issue of 'protecting' the planet from man-made ecological disaster.
- Unexpected developments and risk-taking seen in higher ability candidates, all cleverly linked and supported by artist referencing.
- Lots of work based on family, friends, heritage, culture, animals to more complex matters, such as escaping from war zones.
- A very diverse approach to the theme – some thoughtful and unexpected, some straightforward and methodical.
- There was an increase in the use of image manipulation technology to enhance photos and explore these options for drawing. This was not confined to Graphic Communication or Photography and is becoming more evident in Fine Art solutions.
- There is within this new submission format an inevitable increase in written descriptions of ideas and processes used to achieve outcomes. Again, inventive, and personal solutions dominated the higher achievement levels with photography being used effectively to support personal drawing and recording objectives.

- Candidates in the higher performance levels produced very mature and credible responses to the ESA theme.

Areas for Improvement:

- The broad-based theme has always been a welcome 're-start' for candidates in previous years with the Externally Set Assignment (ESA) allowing a further opportunity to tackle a fresh starting point. It was evident in the submissions this year that a lack of previous experience, when working to a shorter timescale, had inhibited personal responses in some ESA submissions.
- Lower achieving candidates lacked the skills to achieve their aims. Over-reliance on digital manipulation and imagery, without review and refinement, resulted in repetition and little progression. This was seen to be used particularly when drawing skills were minimal.
- Some candidates had clearly struggled with the period of sustained focus in examination conditions, where ideas created within the preparatory period had been unresolved or explored with insufficient depth.
- Greater reflection on completed preparatory studies, ideas, and concepts before beginning the timed test, would help some candidates.
- Often the final outcome was totally unconnected with the supporting studies, with a completely unseen composition, choice of images and media. Some weaker candidates used collage for backgrounds and repeated some of their supporting studies in the composition in random arrangements.
- Some students had used AI to generate ideas, and this was referenced and acknowledged, while this could be a strength to further develop ideas, it often wasn't
- A number of candidates appeared to struggle with the 10- hour timed test. Some candidates appeared not to take advantage of the full 10 hours. This time was not used productively with slight and unresolved outcomes, and the work was disappointing compared to their performance in Component 1.
- Many centres incorporate a mock exam into the teaching program which gives an opportunity to practice managing the time element of the 10 hours.
- The quality of work was noticeably reduced in the weaker submissions.
- Analytical review and critical analysis are sometimes curtailed early by a lack of energy and engagement with personal ideas.
- A lack of focus and somewhat random choice of artists' references did nothing to inform in the lower achieving candidates' work and resulted in little development and exercises which were repetitive and showed little progression.
- There was evidence of repetition in the development of ideas, with the same image (usually copied from a photograph or secondary source image) drawn in 2-3 different mediums with minimal progression through experimentation.
- Some centres included an entire page of internet links to sources as a substitute for critical written analysis.
- Many candidates included their own photography, but the quality was often poor, and images were unrelated to their ideas.
- Some centres had used the same photographs for both Components, and in some cases, the same artists' images, which limited students' ability to develop in depth and personal creative journeys.
- Personal style was often frustrated by the lack of technical skill, so candidates often copied internet images in coloured pencil or pencil.
- Lower mark range candidates' final realisations were often unresolved and simplistic.
- Repetitive photographs, presented with little development or understanding of context in relation to the exam theme.
- Some Graphic Communication candidates' responses to the ESA theme had little knowledge or use of graphics, the work was more appropriate as a Fine Art entry.

A selection of Fine Art candidate's final outcomes from one centre in response to the examination theme of Protect 2024 for Component 2: Externally Set Assignment



Summary

A clear understanding of the International GCSE Art and Design (9-1) specification requirements, good teaching, well-structured courses, and appropriate resourcing ensures that candidates perform to their full potential in both components.

A programme of online and face to face training and professional development covering various aspects of the specification can be found on the Pearson website for 2024-2025. Centres may also wish to contact their Regional Development Managers for further information and support regarding training requests.

If you have a question about the International GCSE Art and Design (1-9) specification '**Ask the Expert**' is a resource, you may decide to use. Information about this resource can be found on the Pearson Edexcel website under 'information for teachers'.

Jaclyn Wiid is the subject advisor for Art, Design, and Media, and you can contact her and the Art and Design Team via the Pearson website in relation to questions you may wish to ask, or training opportunities.

Email: TeachingArtandDesign@Pearson.com
TeachingMedia@Pearson.com

Phone: +44 (0) 344 463 2535

(Teaching Services team | Mon - Fri, 8am - 5pm GMT)

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Centres should be commended for their hard work in preparing candidates for this qualification.