WGS6 A Level Options
Art FAQ Information Sheet

Which exam board and courses are studied at A Level?

The department uses OCR exam board and currently chooses the Fine Art specification. The course is made up of three assessed sections, a 'Personal Investigation', 'Related Study' and the 'Externally Set Assignment (ESA)'. The Personal Investigation and Related Study are coursework-based and makes up 60% of your final grade, with the remaining 40% which is the ESA. The assessment criteria/specification is very similar to that of GCSE, with each assessed section being marked against AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4 criteria.

What skills will studying Art equip me with?

A Level Art requires an enthusiastic ability to generate and sustain your own creative ideas and concepts. You should have a love and passion for the subject and be dedicated to pursuing your own personal journey and investigation. You should have already developed a strong foundation of technical skills in either drawing, painting, sculpture or photography (ideally a combination). As the course requires a high degree of independence, good personal organisation is essential, as you will be required to manage and take accountability for the development of your work and ideas. A good ability to critically analyse and evaluate the work of artists and artworks is also essential, as it is expected that you will continually engage with critical and contextual sources to support your work.

Do I need a specific grade at GCSE to access A level?

We would usually expect a grade 6 at GCSE in a subject such as Art, Graphics, Textiles or Design Technology. However, we have often taken A-level students onto the course without a GCSE in a creative subject due to the strong work ethic and enthusiasm of the candidate. These students are not usually disadvantaged by not having studied a creative subject before A-level.

How is the course structured and how will it be taught?

The vast majority of the course and your creative journey will be directed by you, and this will be facilitated by advice and feedback from your subject teachers. The A Level course is about you taking ownership of your ideas and directing these independently. If you have an idea that you want to develop or a specific media that you want to work in, then we will do our best to support and direct you with this.

Is there a coursework component?

Similar to GCSE, the A Level course is 60% coursework, which is comprised of a Personal Investigation and a Related Study. This coursework element is often a benefit, particularly for students opting for other exam-based subjects, as it can help alleviate some of the pressure during examinations.

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Who teaches the course?

The course is split equally in teaching hours between Mr Ingram (Head of Creative and Performance Faculty) and Mrs Johnson (Head of Art Department). In year 13 we tend to take responsibility for individual pupils, depending on what Art specialism you are working in. Having access to both teachers provides pupils with the opportunity to benefit from a wealth of experience, feedback and input.

How is the course resourced?

It is essential that you purchase your own Sketchbooks (although these can be purchased from the department). The equipment list wouldn't be dissimilar from your GCSE study, for example, a set of good quality shading pencils, acrylic paints, watercolour paints, graphic pens etc. It is essential that you do have the equipment and materials at home to support your independent study, however this can sometimes be purchased/resourced through the department. As your projects become more specialised, you may be required to purchase equipment or materials that cannot be resourced through the department, for example, digital software packages, oil paints, printmaking, wet photographic materials, etc.

How well do students achieve in Art?

As a consistently high performing department, pupils regularly make excellent progress and achieve in excess of their target/expected grades. Art A Level is often one of the pupils' best grades, across their subject choices.

Will I need to do a lot of independent study?

On average you will receive 2 hours of structured homework a week, which is broadly the same as the expectation of every other subject area. However, if you are familiar with studying Art at GCSE you will know that creating quality pieces of work can often require a commitment in excess of this expectation. With the increase in independence at A Level, we also expect you to use some of your non-contact time to work in the department, in our sixth-form area.

What are typical A level subject choices alongside Art?

There is no typical A level subject combination with Art A level, as it can be studied to support applications for careers both within and outside of the Creative Industries.

Do I need to take another subject to support my study of Art?

No

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What subject related extracurricular opportunities are offered at A level?

You will have the opportunity to attend two weekend residential trips to the Conwy Art Centre. On these residential trips you will be in artist-led workshops, in which you will produce a small body of work. We have also regularly sent and support pupil applications to the regional gifted and talented European Cultural visit (offered by Edsential and usually visiting Tuscany).

How might Art help me in my next steps / university / career planning?

A Level Art is accepted by all universities and is no differently weighted than any other subject. Many university courses and careers have indicated that they would prefer students to have at least one creative subject option, as this provides evidence of a broader range of skills and understanding. Taking A level Art would only enhance and benefit a university application, regardless of your university course choice.

What careers can A level Art lead to?

There is a wealth of career opportunities in the Creative Arts sector!

Over the past few years the most popular further education and career pathways have been Architecture, Games Design and Concept Art. However, we have also recently supported pupils with applications to Product, Graphic and Interior Design, as well as routes onto Art Foundation Courses. Within the Arts Sector you could also look at career and further education opportunities in Advertising, Marketing, Photography, Videography, Digital Illustration, Digital 3D Modelling, Fashion Design, Film/TV/Digital Production, Fine Art, Curation, Book Illustration – to name just a few!

Will I get help putting an Art portfolio together to apply to university?

Yes! The majority of Art-based university courses will require a portfolio of work as part of your application submission and their interview process. We have a lot of experience in the department of pupils' successfully being offered places at some of the best Art Schools and University institutions. We would of course help you organise and present any portfolio requirements and with your practice interviews! We have a long-standing tradition of pupils in the department successfully gaining places at their first/ top university course choices!