Exam SIG response to Ofqual’s consultation on an additional GCSE, AS and A level exam series in autumn 2020 - proposals for an additional exam series in autumn 2020 in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We are very encouraged by the full and thorough consideration given by Ofqual to the unique position of art and design as the only NEA subject at GCSE, AS and A’ level and by its ambition to ensure that art and design students have equality of opportunity with other subjects by making provision for assessment in an autumn series of exams when it is proposed that in general, NEA components will not form part of the assessment process.

**Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that grades for GCSE, AS and A level art and design awarded in the autumn should be based on a new task completed under supervised conditions?**

We fully support the proposal that the exam boards should provide a new task to be set under supervised conditions in an autumn series. We view this as being fairest for all candidates. Some students may have had the opportunity to continue working on their preparatory studies during the lockdown period but many will not and some centre assessment grades may have taken into account some or all of the preparation for the summer series ESA tasks, depending on the timing of the exams in individual centres prior to school closures on 20 March.

If the exam boards set a new task a clear timetable can be set by centres and all candidates will have a set, equable timeframe to work within.

**Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that any new task for GCSE, AS and A level art and design should be set and marked by the exam board?**

As introducing an autumn series of examinations is done under exceptional circumstances we are happy to endorse the arrangement that requires the exam boards to set and mark the candidates’ work. Teachers will, inevitably, be busy working with their students, who will have missed months of face to face contact and it is unlikely that schools will be happy to release them to moderate the ESA. There will be little time for the exam boards to recruit, train and deploy moderators, given the tight timescale.

We would not expect there to be high numbers of candidates in an autumn series of exams, however the marking and internal standardisation process takes time and, as teachers will have their full teaching commitment during the autumn term, this proposal will alleviate additional pressure, as well as being the most cost effective solution for the exam boards.

**Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to the assessment of GCSE, AS and A level art and design in the autumn 2020 series?**

Whilst we are happy to support the notion of an exam board set and marked task in these exceptional circumstances we firmly believe that teachers play a very important role in the assessment of art and design and that the move proposed by Ofqual is seen as a temporary arrangement only, **not to set a precedent for future years**. When centres are required to send work into the exam boards for assessment it naturally impacts on the range and scale of the work set by centres and undertaken by students, which is potentially very detrimental to the breadth of the subject and the experience of the students.

We fully support Ofqual’s ambition to promote equality and fairness so that disadvantaged students are not disproportionately affected by the assessment arrangements during this exceptional year.