

Art (fine art)

A-level art is a popular subject that encourages students to develop their capacity for creative problem-solving, lateral thinking and creative expression. Students will be encouraged to be brave and take risks initially, experimenting with a variety of materials. They should be open to new ideas, not just those obviously linked to the subject, but to engage with the wider world and to use these influences to explore their own ideas of expression in as broad a way as they feel able to. Art at this level means hard work, but it is also incredibly rewarding.

Specification Content

Our A level follows the fine art specialism. This allows for an extremely broad approach, encompassing both traditional as well as new techniques and media. These include painting (watercolour, acrylic and oils), printmaking (monotype, lino, drypoint and screen-printing), sculpture (clay, card, paper wax and mixed-media), photography (silver and digital), film-making (live-action and animation). Underpinning everything is the continuous development of observational skills, with weekly life drawing classes and an emphasis on drawing to express opinion and ideas at all times.

The A Level is a two-year course, beginning with introductory skills-based workshops in year 1 before Component 1 (Personal Investigation, or coursework) is started. Component 2 (Externally Set Task, or exam) begins in February in U6. The overriding concept for A-level art is that of each student bringing their own individual opinions and ideas to their work, making their own, informed choices, and justifying their decisions with intellectually sound reasoning.

Scheme of Assessment

Component One: Personal Investigation (60% of the total A Level mark)

This is a practical portfolio of work with supporting contextual research where clear links are made, in which students develop a personal response based on a theme agreed upon with their teacher. The best themes are those where the student can relate to the idea personally, be that through experience or a desire to discover anew. This will develop into a sustained project, or journey of discovery, which is recorded as it develops, in sketchbooks, experiments, testing and explorations and ensures that each of the four assessment objectives are met. This will lead them to create a finished outcome that realises their intentions. Concurrently the students will develop a supporting written element to this component which is used to clarify and extend ideas and influences.

Component Two: Externally Set Task (40% of the total A Level mark)

The paper, set by the examination board, will give students a choice of seven themes, starting points, briefs or stimuli. The students choose one option, for which they will generate an appropriate personal response for assessment. Much like Component One, the structure is the same, albeit a shorter project.

Students will be given a preparatory period during which they will research, plan and develop ideas for their own response to the option they have chosen. They will then have fifteen hours (split over 3 days) in which to independently complete their work, usually in the form of a significant final piece.