

A-LEVEL Fine Art/Photography

A strong Art student is someone who is creative, curious and motivated, and feels confident using different materials and techniques. They come up with their own original ideas, take time to improve and develop their work, and explore their ideas in depth. Good art students regularly research a variety of artists and sources, making clear links between these influences and their own work. They learn from their research, explain their work clearly, and stay organised and focused. They are willing to try new things, listen to and act upon feedback, and keep going even when things are challenging, showing resilience, attention to detail and a real passion for the subject.

Summary of course content

Component 1: Personal Investigation	Component 2: Externally-set assignment
60% of overall grade Personal Investigation project includes a written component (1000–3000-word essay about the work). The Personal Investigation unit is a project that is student-led.	40% of overall grade Externally set assignment project includes a period of preparatory time (approx. 7-9 weeks) and 15 hours supervised time (3-day exam). Themes for the externally-set assignment project are suggested by AQA. Students choose 1 theme to develop into a project.
Work is marked by class teachers and moderated by AQA during a visit to the centre. Visits normally take place in June of year 13.	

You can find the AQA specification here; [AQA | A-level | Art and Design | Specification at a glance](#)

What you should be doing as an independent learner in your four hours of independent study per week

Weekly:	• Independent practice: You will be guided by your teacher to complete individualised targets related to your Art project. Independent practice can be completed in the Art department in the 6th form Art study area in D14 or in the 6th form Photography IT room in D12.
Fortnightly:	• Reviewing and refining: Review of recent lessons and work. Improving individual pieces and refining the quality of your work in books. Reviewing your project and consolidating what you have done so far, planning how to develop your ideas further. Researching new artists, techniques and processes. Learning key terminology. • Independent Study Folder (ISF): this will be checked fortnightly by your tutor and logged.
Half termly:	• Consolidation and self-assessment: Looking back at what you have studied, experimented and explored so far in your project, self-assessing your work against the assessment objectives and identifying targets to improve. Seeking support and guidance on how to improve skills i.e., teacher support, online tutorials etc.

In addition to those provided for specific tasks by your teacher, resources include:

TEAMS: Individual folders to store digital work and research, reading/research list; knowledge organisers; lesson PowerPoints and reference materials; teacher targets and formal feedback.

Recommended sites for independent research – see separate list in Teams.

Independent learning overview

Two hours directed by each of your teachers (subject to change):

	Year 12
07.09.26	Enrolment week
14.09.26	Intro to the course
21.09.26	ALL: 30-image micro-shoot within the local area; select 8 and annotate choices. PHOTO: repeat one subject using 3 different exposure/composition decisions and record settings. ART: produce 4 rapid observational / compositional drawings from own photographs; alter crop and scale.
28.09.26	ALL: complete a broad Swanage contact sheet and highlight 12-20 images with potential. Add concise notes on what each could lead to. PHOTO: make a 10-12 image first edit with technical/visual rationale. ART: select 6-8 source photographs and create 4 crop/shape/texture studies from them.
05.10.26	ALL: reshoot one Swanage idea locally using a deliberate technical strategy and create a before/after contact sheet. PHOTO: produce a 6-image mini-series with consistent visual logic and technical annotations. ART: digitally manipulate 3 sources to exaggerate shape, tonal contrast or fragmentation, then use one as the basis of a drawing.
12.10.26	ALL: photograph/scan best tests and create a comparison page: what changed, why, what to repeat. PHOTO: create a small coherent cyanotype sequence from one motif or location lens. ART: combine cyanotype with drawing/collage/physical intervention to produce 2-3 hybrid studies.
19.10.26	ALL: select best print tests, photograph them accurately, annotate technical cause/effect and next action. PHOTO: build a photographic stencil/screen-print variation from a selected image sequence. ART: develop a lino or hybrid relief/screen study that visibly transforms the source rather than copies it.
26.10.26	Half term
02.11.26	ALL: refine storyboard and export a 15-30 second moving-image study. PHOTO: prioritise photographic pacing, crop, sequence and transition. ART: animate physical work, scans or drawn/printed elements; test stop-frame or layered movement if useful.
09.11.26	ALL: complete 2 concise practitioner studies and 2 practical responses. Develop 3 shortlisted proposals as thumbnails/storyboards. PHOTO: locate one practitioner whose use of photographic sequence/display/moving image directly challenges your current approach. ART: locate one practitioner working in print/drawing/mixed-media/place who could materially change your process.
16.11.26	ALL: complete targeted second-stage primary research and upload / mount / organise it before next week. PHOTO: shoot a tightly controlled new series designed around one visual rule or technical intention. ART: collect new photographic sources specifically for drawing/print transformation; complete 2-4 direct observational studies where useful.
23.11.26	ALL: complete at least one substantial development chain outside directed lesson time and document it clearly. PHOTO: edit and compare sequences; test physical/digital presentation and a second moving-image iteration. ART: push one motif through at least two material transformations, e.g. photo → lino → overprint/drawing or photo → cyanotype → mixed media.
30.11.26	ALL: photograph mock-ups and write a concise compare/contrast decision: Version A vs B; chosen direction; exact changes for next week. PHOTO: test final print/output settings and produce a near-final sequence edit. ART: produce a near-final proof / scale test and identify production requirements for a resolved series or piece.
07.12.26	ALL: complete one final technical test that directly addresses critique. Prepare all source files/matrices/materials for production. PHOTO: lock sequence and storyboard/timeline; finalise export and print specifications. ART: complete final proof, matrix/cut or composition plan and prepare surfaces/materials at final scale.
14.12.26	ALL: continue production to an agreed milestone; maintain file backups and bring work/materials ready for the final week. PHOTO: export near-final moving image and make final print/output checks on intended display device/paper. ART: complete the majority of physical outcome(s) and document work accurately before final assembly.
21.12.26	Christmas holidays
28.12.26	Christmas holidays
04.01.27	ALL: finalise digital backup / portfolio documentation and complete a short “next investigation” reflection. PHOTO: retain master high-resolution stills and final video export plus contact sheet showing final edit. ART: photograph final physical work professionally and retain scans/photos of print/drawing stages alongside any moving-image file.

11.01.27	Individualised targets linked to project
18.01.27	Individualised targets linked to project
25.01.27	Individualised targets linked to project
01.02.27	Work experience
08.02.27	Individualised targets linked to project
15.02.27	Half term
22.02.27	Individualised targets linked to project
01.03.27	Individualised targets linked to project
08.03.27	Individualised targets linked to project
15.03.27	Individualised targets linked to project
22.03.27	Evaluation task
29.03.27	Easter holidays
05.04.27	Easter holidays
12.04.27	Personal Investigation Project begins (Component 1)
19.04.27	Independent research task linked to project theme
26.04.27	Independent research task linked to project theme
03.05.27	Written analysis of artists' work
10.05.27	Written analysis of artists' work
17.05.27	Independent photography assignment
24.05.27	Independent photography assignment
31.05.27	Half term
07.06.27	Individualised targets linked to project
14.06.27	Individualised targets linked to project
21.06.27	Individualised targets linked to project
28.06.27	Trial exam
05.07.27	Evaluation
12.07.27	Consolidation task
19.07.27	Individualised targets linked to project

	Year 13
07.09.26	Enrolment week
14.09.26	Intro to year 13 – SWOT analysis
21.09.26	Audit tasks linked to review PI project
28.09.26	Audit tasks linked to review PI project
05.10.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
12.10.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
19.10.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
26.10.26	Half term
02.11.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
09.11.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
16.11.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
23.11.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
30.11.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
07.12.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
14.12.26	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
21.12.26	Christmas holidays
28.12.26	Christmas holidays
04.01.27	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
11.01.27	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
18.01.27	Individualised targets linked to Personal Investigation project
25.01.27	Evaluation task
01.02.27	AQA Externally-set assignment given out.
08.02.27	Component 2 starts
15.02.27	Half term
22.02.27	Independent research task linked to project theme
01.03.27	Written analysis of artists' work
08.03.27	Individualised targets linked to project
15.03.27	Individualised targets linked to project

22.03.27	Individualised targets linked to project
29.03.27	Easter holidays
05.04.27	Easter holidays
12.04.27	Individualised targets linked to project
19.04.27	Individualised targets linked to project
26.04.27	15-hour exam
03.05.27	
10.05.27	Course ends
17.05.27	
24.05.27	
31.05.27	Half term
07.06.27	
14.06.27	
21.06.27	
28.06.27	
05.07.27	
12.07.27	
19.07.27	