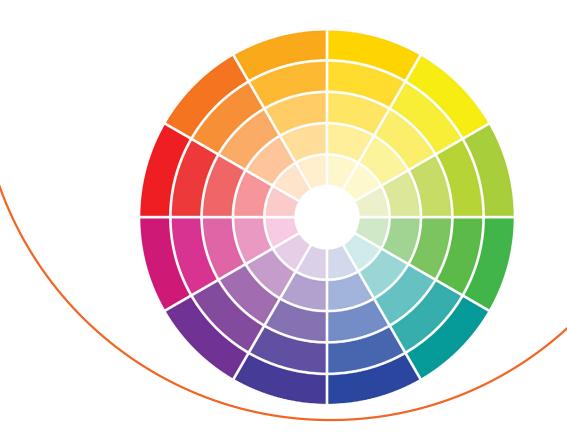# Guidance on the Administration and Online Submission of Art & Design

Cambridge O Level
Art & Design 6090

Use this guidance for exams in 2026.
Exams are available in the June and November series.

This syllabus is not available to private candidates.

These instructions are for teachers and exams officers responsible for the administration of Cambridge Art & Design.

This document should be read in conjunction with the syllabus and information published on the samples database: www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples

Change to method of submission from 2026

This document provides guidance on the preparation and submission of work via Submit for Assessment.

From 2026, you must not send hard copies of candidates' work to Cambridge. Instead, you will photograph, scan or organise candidates' work in a digital format for exams officers to upload to Submit for Assessment.

The syllabus specification and assessment objectives have not changed.

You are not required to mark your candidates' work. Both components are externally assessed.

Submit for Assessment is compatible with Windows and macOS operating systems. For more information on file sizes, formats and file naming conventions, see the section on 'Details of Submission Approaches' on page 7.

When should files be uploaded via Submit for Assessment?

Your exams officer must upload your candidates' work via Submit for Assessment according to the submission deadlines below. You should set internal deadlines in order to prepare your candidates' work for photographing, scanning or digital presentation to meet these deadlines.

Component	June submission deadline	November submission deadline
1	30 April	31 October
2	Test to be taken between 1 January 2026–30 April 2026. Work should be submitted as soon as possible after the test and no later than 5 May.	Test to be taken between 1 July 2026–31 October 2026. Work should be submitted as soon as possible after the test and no later than 5 November.

We recommend that work for Component 1: Coursework is completed before candidates start working on Component 2: Externally Set Assignment.

Candidates must produce different work for each component. They should avoid producing work for Component 2 that overlaps with the same theme they have used Component 1.

Preparation of candidates' work for submission via Submit for Assessment

Work can be prepared for submission in one of the following ways:

1 Candidates can continue to work on A2 sheets as outlined in the syllabus document. Please refer to the syllabus document for information on the maximum number of A2 sheets to be submitted. After work is prepared on A2 sheets, it should be photographed or scanned at the end of the course (Component 1: Coursework) or after the timed test (Component 2: Externally Set Assignment). See **Submission Approach 1** for further details.

2 Candidates organise work into a digital format by inserting files, images, photographs or scans of work and text into PowerPoint slides or similar. This can be done throughout the course of study. See **Submission Approach 2** for further details.

Submission Approach 1	Submission Approach 2
Component 1: Coursework	**Component 1: Coursework**
Candidates work in any media. Work is prepared on A2 sheets and photographed or scanned for upload via Submit for Assessment.	Candidates work in any media. This approach provides flexibility, particularly where candidates are using a mixture of traditional and digital techniques.
You are responsible for photographing or scanning the work for Component 1: Coursework. This should be done at the end of the course and before the submission deadline.	Candidates organise work in a digital portfolio by inserting files, images, photographs or scans of work and text into PowerPoint slides or similar. This can be done throughout the course of study. Files are uploaded via Submit for Assessment.
Component 2: Externally Set Assignment	**Component 2: Externally Set Assignment**
Supporting studies: Candidates work in any media. Work is prepared on A2 sheets and photographed or scanned for upload via Submit for Assessment.	Supporting studies: Candidates work in any media. This approach provides flexibility, particularly where candidates are using a mixture of traditional and digital techniques. Candidates organise supporting studies in a digital portfolio by inserting files, images, photographs or scans of work and text into PowerPoint slides or similar throughout the preparation period.
Timed test: Candidates work in any media to produce their final outcome. Work is prepared on A2 sheets and photographed or scanned for upload via Submit for Assessment. You should schedule the test to ensure that you have enough time to carry out this task and to ensure that the exams officer can meet the upload deadline.	Timed test: Candidates work in any media to produce their final outcome. After the timed test, the final outcome is then added to their digital portfolio. You should schedule the test to ensure that you have enough time to carry out this task and to ensure that the exams officer can meet the upload deadline.
Photographing and scanning of the work is not included in the timed test. It is in addition.	Photographing and scanning of the final piece is not included in the timed test. It is in addition.
The work produced for this component must relate to **one** question from the question paper. Candidates should avoid choosing a question from the question paper that is the same as, or similar to, the theme they have already covered in Component 1: Coursework in order to avoid overlap.	The work produced for this component must relate to **one** question from the question paper. Candidates should avoid choosing a question from the question paper that is the same as, or similar to, the theme they have already covered in Component 1: Coursework in order to avoid overlap.

Key points

- Presenting the work in a digital portfolio using **Submission Approach 2** does not mean work has to be created digitally or by using digital drawing software.
- Candidates can use a mixed approach to prepare for submission. For example, Component 1: Coursework could be prepared using **Submission Approach 2** and Component 2: Externally Set Assignment could be prepared using **Submission Approach 1**.

- Give yourself enough time to prepare the work according to these instructions. You may need to set an earlier date for the completion of Component 1: Coursework and schedule an earlier date for the timed test in Component 2: Externally Set Assignment.
- If you are using **Submission Approach 2**, consider setting an internal submission date for your candidates to complete their supporting studies for Component 2: Externally Set Assignment in advance of the date for the timed test. This will allow time to photograph or scan the supporting studies before the timed test.

What are the submission requirements?

If using **Submission Approach 1**, candidates are required to produce a maximum number of A2 sheets as indicated in the following table. Candidates can submit fewer sheets, but they should not produce more than the maximum number of A2 sheets listed. When the work is photographed or scanned or presented in a digital format, the maximum number of A2 sheets is translated to a maximum number of 'screen pages'. **The maximum number of screen pages per candidate per component is 20**.

	Supporting Studies	Final outcome	Submit for Assessment
Component 1: Coursework	Maximum of 4 sheets of A2 (no more than 8 sides of A2)	1 sheet of A2 (no more than 2 sides)	No more than 20 screen pages. You can submit fewer than 20 screen pages.
Component 2: Externally Set Assignment	Maximum of 2 sheets of A2 (no more than 4 sides of A2)	1 sheet of A2 (no more than 2 sides)	No more than 20 screen pages. You can submit fewer than 20 screen pages.

Candidates must not present the same work for both components.

If using **Submission Approach 2**, candidates are required to produce **a maximum of 20 screen pages per component**. Candidates can submit fewer screen pages, but they should not produce more than 20 screen pages.

A screen page refers to a single image, slide, text page or screen produced through programmes such as Microsoft PowerPoint, Word or similar software packages.

Details of Submission Approaches

Submission Approach 1: Hard copy work is photographed or scanned.

Hard copy work is mounted on A2 sheets and photographed or scanned ready for submission via Submit for Assessment.

Guidance on photographing or scanning the work is included in this document.

Present the photographs or scanned images in **one** file for each candidate for each component. The file should include the following, in the order shown:

1   A coversheet
2   final outcome
3   portfolio (for Component 1: Coursework) OR supporting studies (for Component 2: Externally Set Assignment).

See Appendix 1 for an example of **Submission Approach 1**.

Key points

- The coversheet must always be screen page 1, followed by the final outcome.
- You can submit screen pages that show closer detail of the work but do not have to.
- Candidates are not required to annotate their work but annotations can help the examiner to understand their intentions. When annotation is included, it should be legible.
- The work must not be edited by the teacher in any way before submission.
- Ensure that all content is visible and nothing overlaps (one item covering another). If the candidate has prepared hard copy work using flaps, the work under the flap should be photographed or scanned and included in the submission.
- **You should submit one file per candidate per component. The maximum number of screen pages in each file is 20.**

Submission Approach 2: Work is organised and presented in a digital portfolio

Work is organised, presented and/or completed digitally and stored in a digital portfolio. This approach allows candidates to use traditional approaches (e.g. hard copy) or digital approaches (e.g. Photoshop), or both.

Candidates can still use traditional approaches such as drawing, painting, textiles or sculpture. For example, a candidate may photograph a painting they have produced and insert it into their digital portfolio in a PowerPoint slide deck. This can be done at any point in the course. They may or may not choose to add annotation to slides.

Where software is used, screenshots should be included to show how ideas have been developed, e.g. showing the selection of tools and manipulation of imagery. Candidates must use their own imagery and credit all sources used in their research through labelling.

PDF files should not include any interactive elements, such as overlaid comments, digital signatures or form fields. If PDF files contain interactive elements, please follow the instructions provided in the **Administrative Guidance in Using Submit for Assessment** to 'flatten' PDFs to remove the interactive elements. Check the quality of the flattened file before submission. If you attempt to upload PDF files with interactive elements, the exams officer will receive an error message.

See Appendix 2 for an example of **Submission Approach 2**.

Key points

- The coversheet must always be screen page 1, followed by the final outcome.
- You can submit screen pages that show closer detail of the work but do not have to.
- Candidates are not required to annotate their work but annotations can help the examiner to understand their intentions. When annotation is included, it should be legible.
- The work must not be edited by the teacher in any way before submission.
- Ensure that all content is visible and nothing overlaps (one item covering another). If the candidate has prepared hard copy work using flaps, the work under the flap should be photographed or scanned and included in the submission.
- Accepted file formats are: .ppt .pptx .pdf. gslides .pptm .odp. ink .potx .pub
- Do not create interactive pdf files, embed links or zip files.
- **You should submit one file per candidate per component. The maximum number of screen pages in each file is 20.**

Tips for photographing or scanning the work

You can use a mobile phone or a digital camera to photograph hard copy work. You must ensure the images are clear and that any text or detail is visible. Work does not need to be professionally photographed or scanned. However, you are responsible for checking that the quality of the images and text is clear enough for assessment to take place.

Tips for photographing the work:

- Take the image straight on and not at an angle.
- Use a tripod to avoid blurred images.
- Make sure the image is in focus and text is clear.
- Use good artificial lighting which lights the image evenly; avoid glare or shadows.
- Avoid use of a flash which can affect colour and cause lower quality images.
- Ensure the image fills the frame.
- Photograph work against a plain background if blank space is visible.
- Combine images into a single file.
- Accepted file formats for images are: .jpg* .png* .jpeg* .tif* .jfif .gif .heic .psd .dox
- Teachers or technicians should not edit, adjust, filter or crop the photographs before submission.
- Ensure all text and/or detail is legible when zooming in.

Tips for scanning the work:

- Scan the work with multiple passes.
- Import the scanned images into image editing software. Make sure all the images are properly oriented.
- Combine images into a single file.
- Accepted file formats for images are: .jpg* .png* .jpeg* .tif* .jfif .gif .heic .psd .dox
- Teachers or technicians should not edit, adjust, filter or crop scanned images before submission.

What files are accepted?

Whether you choose **Submission Approach 1** or **Submission Approach 2** or a combination of the approaches across both components, submissions must comply with the following file sizes and types.

File types	Accepted formats	Limit
Document	.odt .pdf .rtf .txt .doc .docx .dotx . pages	25 GB
Images	.jpg .png .jpeg .tif .jfif .gif .heic .psd .dox	15 MB
Presentation	.ppt .pptx .pdf .gslides .pptm .odp . ink .potx .pub	25 GB
Web	.html .htm .gdoc .url .exe .key	25 GB

Exams officers or supervisors will upload files via Submit for Assessment. We recommend using the following naming convention:

Series_SyllabusNumber_ComponentNumber_CentreNumber_CandidateNumber_ ComponentSection

- June2026_6090_01_AB123_0081_coursework
- June2026_6090_02_AB123_0081_esa

Additional guidance for Component 2: Externally Set Assignment

Important

It is your responsibility to download the early question paper from the School Support Hub (SSH). You can access the early question paper from the relevant syllabus page. You must ensure that you download the correct question paper for the series you have entered.

Hard copy question papers will not be sent to you. Please refer to the table below which shows when your school will be able to access the early question paper.

	June series	November series
6090/2	1 January 2026	1 July 2026

Question paper

It is your responsibility to ensure that the correct question paper is distributed (printed by the centre or soft copy transmission) to the candidates. The date on the front of the question paper refers to the series entered not the calendar month when they take the examination.

You must distribute the question paper as soon as it is available to enable candidates to prepare for the test.

Scheduling of the Externally Set Assignment

You should schedule the Externally Set Assignment within the following range of dates.

Paper	June Test dates	November Test dates
6090/2	1 January – 30 April	1 July – 31 October

Candidates must complete the test in

- 8 hours in a maximum of three sessions (morning or afternoon) over no more than two weeks.

For example:

Monday 02 April

	Syllabus/component	Code	Duration	Session
OL	Art & Design	6090/2	3 hours	AM

Friday 06 April

	Syllabus/component	Code	Duration	Session
OL	Art & Design	6090/2	3 hours	PM

Thursday 12 April

	Syllabus/component	Code	Duration	Session
OL	Art & Design	6090/2	2 hours	AM

You should aim to schedule the test as early as possible within the range of dates stated above. If any candidates are ill, you can re-schedule the test at a later date, but still within the test dates stated. You do not need permission in order to re-schedule the test within the test dates. Rescheduling within the test date window should not be used to accommodate candidates who fail to attend a session without good reason.

You need to schedule the test early enough to give you enough time to photograph and scan the work in time for the Submit for Assessment deadline for this component.

What do I need to do to prepare for Cambridge O Level Art & Design Component 2: Externally Set Assignment?

The following materials are required to prepare candidates for the test date:

Material	Method of delivery
Question Paper	Available for centres to download from School Support Hub

If you cannot access the School Support Hub on the date specified please contact our Customer Services team at **info@cambridgeinternational.org**

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment has a preparatory period in which candidates produce their supporting studies. The preparatory period begins once you have distributed the question paper to the candidates and ends with the start of the timed test. All tests must be scheduled to end by the date indicated on the question paper.

Candidates must have their supporting studies with them at the start of the timed test as they will need them to complete the test. The supporting studies will be submitted via Submit for Assessment along with the final outcome that is produced during the timed test.

Candidates can work in any size or media during the timed test. All work must be clearly labelled before being photographed, scanned or prepared for submission via Submit for Assessment.

Can candidates use their own laptops or digital devices?

Yes, candidates can use their own laptops or digital devices in the timed test. Their devices must be checked before the exam to ensure they don't have a final copy already stored there. The devices should also be stored between exam sessions so that the candidates do not continue to work on their supporting studies. If this is not possible, we recommend storing candidates' work on a server or hard drive that students cannot access between exam sessions. Candidates are not permitted any mobile devices such as mobile phones.

How many invigilators should there be for each Art & Design Component 2: Externally Set Assignment test?

One invigilator must be present for every 30 candidates. There must always be at least one invigilator who has not been involved in the preparation of any of the candidates for the timed test.

In addition, a suitably experienced supervisor must be present in each test room to deal with any technical difficulties. The supervisor is allowed to have been involved in the preparation of candidates for the test. The supervisor must not be counted as an invigilator.

It is up to the centre to appoint suitable personnel, but the availability of an extra technician in addition to the invigilators and supervisor is encouraged.

Invigilation regulations are detailed in the *Cambridge Handbook*, available to download from **www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficersguide**

Can supervisors or invigilators give candidates any help during the timed test?

Apart from assisting with technical/equipment failure, the invigilators, supervisors or technicians must not give any help to the candidates during the timed test.

What is not included in the time allowed for the timed test?

The following are not included in the time allowance for the test:

- arrangement of still-life groups
- mixing, washing and drying time
- glazing and firing
- rest periods for life models
- casting, mounting and trimming of work
- stretching of screens/preparation of blocks
- photographing, scanning or preparing work ready for upload via Submit for Assessment.

Can candidates communicate with each other during the timed test?

No, candidates must not communicate with each other during the test.

What should happen at the end of the timed test?

If using **Submission Approach 1**, supporting studies must be clearly labelled and presented on up to two sheets of A2. The final outcome must be clearly labelled and presented on one A2 sheet. Both supporting studies and the final outcome should be photographed or scanned and organised into a single digital file of no more than 20 screen pages ready for upload via Submit for Assessment.

If using **Submission Approach 2**, supporting studies will be organised and presented in a digital portfolio ahead of the timed test for use by candidates during the test window. After the test, the final outcome should be photographed, scanned or otherwise prepared and added to the digital portfolio to create a single digital file of no more than 20 screen pages ready for upload via Submit for Assessment.

The work is submitted via Submit for Assessment as soon as possible after completing the timed test.

Do not send hard copy work to Cambridge. Hard copy work should remain secure at the centre.

Safeguarding and inappropriate content

You are responsible for ensuring the suitability of topics and themes that candidates study and you should consider your national and local cultural and social policies. Please note that the Cambridge International safeguarding team will contact your centre for reassurance of the candidate's safety and well-being if there is a concern.

Safeguarding and duty of care extends to our staff and assessors. Any work that they consider offensive will be referred as malpractice. Please refer to the *Cambridge Handbook*.

You should consider the suitability of topics and the candidates' choice of materials.

Please note that some materials are inappropriate.

Inappropriate materials include:

- hypodermic needles
- syringes
- medication
- weapons
- animal skin
- barbed wire
- razor blades.

If you are in any doubt regarding the suitability of materials, a topic or a theme, then you should contact the Customer Services team at **info@cambridgeinternational.org** for advice prior to the commencement of the work.

Appendix 1

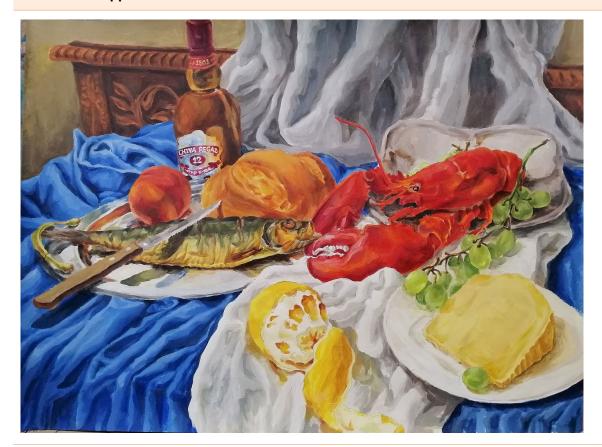**Example of work submitted using Submission Approach 1.**

In this example, the final outcome and first three screen pages of the candidate's portfolio have been provided to demonstrate Submission Approach 1.

Additional screen pages, up to the maximum of 20, could have been included to show closer images of work or annotation, though this is not essential.
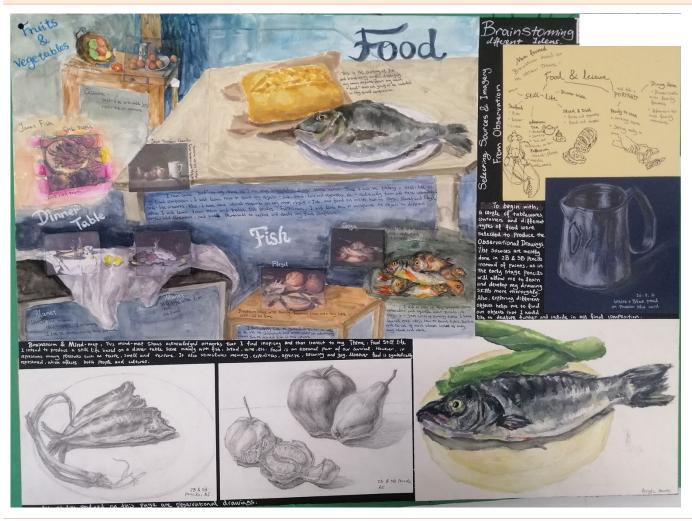
Submission Approach 1: Coversheet	
Exam series	June 2026
Centre number	AB123
Centre name	XXXX centre name
Sylabus and component code	6090/01
Candidate number	0081
Candidate name	XXXX name

Screen Page 1 – This must always be the coversheet

Screen Page 2
Component 1:
Coursework final
outcome

Submission Approach 1: Portfolio

Submission Approach 1: Portfolio

Submission Approach 1: Portfolio

Example of work submitted using Submission Approach 2.

In this example, the final outcome and first three screen pages of the candidate's portfolio have been provided to demonstrate Submission Approach 2. Additional screen pages, up to the maximum of 20, could have been included to show closer images of work or annotation, though this is not essential.

Submission Approach 2: Coversheet

Exam series	June 2026
Centre number	AB123
Centre name	XXXX centre name
Syllabus and component code	6090/01
Candidate number	0081
Candidate name	XXXX name

Screen Page 1 – This must always be the coversheet.

Final Outcome - Acrylic paint on canvas (A2)

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Submission Approach 2: Portfolio

Brainstorm & Mind-map: This mind-map shows acknowledged artworks that I find inspiring and that connect to my

Theme: **Food Still Life** . I intend to produce a still life based on a dinner table scene mainly with fish, bread, wine, fruit and vegetables etc. Food is an essential part of our survival. However, it represents many pleasures such as taste, smell and texture. It also stimulates memory, experiences, appetite, security and joy. Moreover food is symbolically represented, which affects both people and different cultures.

Selecting Sources and Imagery From Observation

To begin with, a couple of tablewares, containers and different types of food were selected to produce the observational drawings. The sources are mostly done in 2B and 3B pencils instead of paints, as in the early stage pencils will allow me to learn and develop my drawing skills more thoroughly. Also, the drawings of exploring different objects and the types of food helps me to find out objects that I would like to further develop and include in my final composition.

Charcoal pastels and oil pastels on brown paper

Experimenting new media – charcoal pastels and oil pastels. The media could easily help to create the translucent or shiny materials of the containers, however not ideal for handling details.

2B & 3B pencils, A5

Acrylic paint on A4 card

2B & 3B pencils, A5

Colour pencils on prussian blue card

2B & 3B pencils A5

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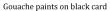
Collecting more Sources and Imagery

More observational drawings have been done to explore more objects, in the meantime experimenting with different media.

Gouache paints on black card

Gouache paints, A4

Gouache is a more flexible media as it is reworkable even after the colour has dried. However after several experiments with the media I found out that I did not like it much, instead I prefer the acrylic paints and its technique of thick layering.

Oil pastels on top of aquarelle oil pastels on black card, A5

Study of garlic 2B&3B pencils and black biro on brown paper

A zoom-in study of the fish's head and tail was done using acrylic paints on canvas. Through a more closed up study of the fish I gained more knowledge on its colour scheme - as I learned that it was not simply just achromatic colours. Furthermore, my brush stroke techniques were improved after experimenting on the use of acrylic paints for the second time. Creating texture was quite challenging.

Soft pastels on brown paper

Soft pastels are great for creating smooth texture and smudgy lines, but again difficult for detailed study.

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School feedback: 'While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.'

Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China