

TQUK Certificate in Graded Examination in Visual Art

Teacher & Centre Handbook

Applicable Year: 2026

Version: v1.7

Updated in accordance with the 2026 HKEAA administrative arrangements.

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1. About TQUK and This Handbook

1.1 What is TQUK?

Training Qualifications UK (TQUK) is a UK awarding organisation regulated and recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). The structure, assessment standards and certificates of this examination are established in accordance with the relevant requirements.

1.2 Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook is intended to help teachers, studios, schools and partner centres understand the latest examination rules and arrange teaching, examination preparation, portfolio preparation and administrative support for students in accordance with the latest Consolidated Candidate Handbook v1.7.

In 2026, HKEAA will administer the on-site practical examination for Grades 1 to 5. This handbook has been updated with the 2026 HKEAA arrangements for registration, fees, Admission Tickets, venues and result/certificate dispatch.

1.3 Intended Users

- Teachers and studio tutors who teach courses related to this examination.
- Schools or partner centres that assist students with registration, portfolio submission and examination arrangements.
- Managers and administrators who need to understand the latest examination specifications, assessment requirements and centre responsibilities.

2. Examination Philosophy and the Role of Teachers

2.1 Examination Philosophy

This examination does not only assess drawing techniques. It also values observation, visual organisation, media control, creative expression, and, for higher-level students, reflection and artistic understanding. Grades 1 to 4 focus mainly on still-life drawing, while Grades 5 to 8 focus mainly on thematic creation.

2.2 Recommendations for Teachers

- Recommended ages are for reference only. Grade selection should be based on a student's consistent performance in observation, composition, media control and overall completion.
- Teachers should encourage students to engage in observational drawing, thematic development and personal expression, rather than relying on formulaic work or repeated imitation.
- Portfolio work and the live examination are equally important. In day-to-day teaching, process photos and stage-by-stage records should be retained to support evidence of originality.

3. Latest Examination Structure, Entry Rules, and Assessment Components

3.1 Three Levels and Eight Grades

The full examination structure consists of three levels and eight grades. In 2026, the HKEAA-administered on-site examination is open for Grades 1 to 5. Arrangements for Grades 6 to 8 are subject to the official website and latest examination notice.

Level	Grade	Recommended Age	Examination Format	Duration	Paper Size
Level 1	Grade 1	5-6	Still-life drawing	75 minutes	390 x 270 mm
Level 1	Grade 2	6-8	Still-life drawing	90 minutes	390 x 270 mm
Level 1	Grade 3	7-9	Still-life drawing	90 minutes	390 x 270 mm
Level 2	Grade 4	8-11	Still-life drawing	120 minutes	390 x 270 mm
Level 2	Grade 5	10-13	Thematic creation	120 minutes	390 x 270 mm
Level 3	Grade 6	11-15	Thematic creation	120 minutes	390 x 270 mm
Level 3	Grade 7	13-17	Thematic creation	180 minutes	540 x 390 mm
Level 3	Grade 8	17 or above	Thematic creation	180 minutes	540 x 390 mm

3.2 Recommended Learning Hours

Grade	Guided Learning Hours	Total Learning Hours
Grade 1	14 hours	24 hours
Grade 2	18 hours	30 hours
Grade 3	24 hours	40 hours
Grade 4	36 hours	70 hours
Grade 5	48 hours	100 hours
Grade 6	60 hours	130 hours
Grade 7	72 hours	160 hours
Grade 8	90 hours	200 hours

"Guided Learning Hours" generally refers to hours of direct teaching, demonstration, explanation and supervised class practice. "Total Learning Hours" includes class learning, home practice, portfolio preparation, mock examinations, revision of work and self-reflection.

3.3 Entry Eligibility and Progression Rules

- The examination is open to candidates aged 5 or above. Candidates aged 6 or below must enter Grade 1.
- Candidates aged 10 or below who wish to enter Level 2 must first have obtained a result from Level 1.
- Grade 5 is the main open-entry grade for the thematic creation group. Grade 6 accepts direct entry, although candidates are generally advised to have reached Grade 5 or an equivalent standard.
- Grade 7 requires Grade 6 as a prerequisite. Grade 8 requires Grade 7 as a prerequisite.
- For the 2026 HKEAA-administered on-site examination, the actual grades open for entry are Grades 1 to 5.

3.4 Assessment Components and Result Grades

- The live examination accounts for 85%, and the portfolio component accounts for 15%. For Grades 1 to 6, the portfolio accounts for 15%.
- For Grades 7 to 8, portfolio works account for 10% and the art criticism essay accounts for 5%.
- Result grades are Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail.

4. Teaching Focus and Preparation Strategies

4.1 Teaching Focus by Stage

- Grades 1 to 3: focus on object recognition, proportion, overlapping relationships, basic colour use and completing the drawing.
- Grades 4 to 5: transition from more complex still-life work to thematic creation, with greater emphasis on light and shade, pictorial layering, idea development and response to theme.
- Grades 6 to 8: focus on thematic development, narrative or conceptual depth, media control, overall completion and personal style.

4.2 Recommendations on Grade Selection and Mock Examinations

- Grade selection should not be based on age alone. Teachers should consider whether a student can complete work of the required difficulty independently within the specified time.
- Mock examinations should follow the official duration, paper size and media rules, so routine training does not drift away from the formal examination format.
- Teaching should avoid training students to repeat one fixed composition in advance or to over-copy demonstration work, as this may weaken their on-site response skills.

5. Live Examination Specifications, Media, and Topic Arrangements

5.1 Media Rules

- Grades 1 to 4 must use one dominant medium in the live examination. Drafting pencils and necessary supporting tools may be used, but the selected medium should remain the primary means of visual expression.
- Grades 5 to 8 may use one or more selected paints and/or drawing tools, and may work in a single medium or mixed media.

- Unless otherwise stated in the latest examination notice, candidates may not use reference images, sketchbooks, notes, mobile phones or smart devices, templates or other pre-prepared visual aids, or fixative spray / adhesive spray inside the examination venue.

5.2 Topic Arrangements

- Grades 1 to 4 are still-life drawing.
- Grades 5 to 6: three official examination topics will be announced in advance, and candidates will choose one topic on the examination day.
- Grade 7: three thematic directions will be announced in advance, and the specific question will be announced on the examination day. Grade 8: the topic will be announced on the examination day.
- Topics or thematic directions announced in advance are for preparation practice only. Candidates may not bring completed drafts, composition drafts, colour plans, reference images, or any pre-prepared creation materials into the examination venue.

5.3 Preparation Notes by Grade

- Grade 1: mainly three objects, focusing on basic shapes, proportion and colour.
- Grade 2: mainly four objects, paying attention to size relationships and overlapping.
- Grade 3: mainly four objects, with clearer structure and an initial sense of perspective.
- Grade 4: handling more complex still-life arrangements, foreground-middle-background layers, and more mature treatment of light, shade and form.
- Grades 5 to 8: train students in thematic response, idea development, atmosphere building, picture integration and personal visual language.

6. Guidance on Portfolio and Art Criticism Essay

6.1 Number of Portfolio Works by Grade

- Grades 1 to 3: the portfolio must include 3 works.
- Grades 4 to 5: the portfolio must include 4 works.
- Grades 6 to 8: the portfolio must include 3 works.

6.2 Information Required for Each Work

- Title, completion date, medium used and dimensions.
- At least 2 and at most 5 process photos.
- Candidate originality declaration; for minors, a parent/guardian declaration must also be provided.
- If submitted through a centre, the centre or teacher should retain checking records and a file-naming rule.

6.3 Portfolio Media and Written Explanation Requirements

- Grades 1 to 3: all 3 works must use the same single dominant medium as, or a medium highly similar to, that used in the examination.
- Grade 4: all 4 works must use the same single dominant medium as, or a medium highly similar to, that used in the examination.
- Grade 5: all 4 works may be created in a single medium or mixed media. Grades 6 to 8: all 3 works may be created in a single medium or mixed media.
- Grades 1 to 4 do not need a short process statement. For Grades 5 to 8, each work must include a short statement. Suggested length: 50-120 words in Chinese or 40-100 words in English.

6.4 Art Criticism Essay for Grades 7 to 8

- Candidates in Grades 7 and 8 must submit an art criticism essay, accounting for 5% of the overall assessment.
- Suggested length: 400-800 Chinese characters or 300-600 words in English.
- The essay may include the creative concept, theme exploration, reasons for media selection, reflections on the creative process, self-evaluation and links to culture or art history.
- Generative AI may not be used to ghostwrite, rewrite in full, generate analytical content, or substantially expand the candidate's ideas.

7. Results, Certificates, and Verification

7.1 Results and Certificate Arrangements

- Examination results will be issued by Universal Visual Arts Assessment Centre within one month after the examination.
- Candidates who achieve Pass or above will receive an official certificate. Certificates will be issued by Universal Visual Arts Assessment Centre approximately two months after the release of results.
- Certificates will show the candidate's name, the grade entered and the result grade, and will carry a unique number for verification purposes.
- Notices regarding the mailing of certificates will be posted on the official website or relevant webpage.

7.2 Recommendations for Teachers and Centres

- Please explain to parents in advance that the result notice and the official certificate are usually not issued on the same day.
- If the centre registers candidates in a batch, it should keep an internal distribution record to ensure that results and certificates are passed to candidates and parents accurately.
- Applicants or candidates who have not received result notifications or certificates should contact Universal Visual Arts Assessment Centre.
- If certificate reissue or verification is needed, it should be handled in accordance with the procedures on the official website or in the latest examination notice.

8. Centre Registration, Administration, and Integrity

8.1 2026 Registration, Dates and Fees

- The 2026 examination date is 24 October 2026.
- The 2026 registration period is from 1 July 2026 to 15 August 2026.
- Online application and required documents are available at www.universalvisualarts.com.
- Candidates aged 18 or above can complete the online application by themselves. Applications for candidates aged under 18 must be submitted by an applicant (parent or guardian) aged 18 or above.
- The examination date, time and venue will be announced upon the issuance of the Admission Ticket. Requests for specific examination dates, times or venues will not be accommodated.

Level	Grade	Suggested Age	Fee in 2026
Level 1	Grade 1	Aged 5-6	HK\$1,550
Level 1	Grade 2	Aged 6-8	HK\$1,550
Level 1	Grade 3	Aged 7-9	HK\$1,660
Level 2	Grade 4	Aged 8-11	HK\$1,780
Level 2	Grade 5	Aged 10-13	HK\$2,040

8.2 Supplementary Fees and Change Applications

- Applications for late entry or change of examination level and grade must be submitted to Universal Visual Arts Assessment Centre on or before 17 August 2026.
- Late entry fee: HK\$538 per candidate.
- Change of examination discipline or grade fee: HK\$349 per candidate.
- All applicable fees must be paid upon approval of the application.

8.3 Registration and Document Checking

- The examination welcomes local Hong Kong, overseas and non-local candidates. Hong Kong candidates must provide Hong Kong Identity Card information at registration; non-Hong Kong candidates must provide valid passport information.
- Minor candidates may be registered by a parent or guardian, but the candidate's name, date of birth and identity information must be entered accurately.
- If a centre handles registrations in a batch, it should verify identity documents, contact details, grade entered and media requirements, and should remind parents and students to comply with the latest notice.
- After the Admission Ticket is received, applicants or candidates should be reminded to check personal particulars immediately. If the Chinese or English name, date of birth or gender is incorrect, Universal Visual

Arts Assessment Centre should be informed in writing, together with a copy of the identification document for amendment.

8.4 Centre Integrity and Malpractice Risks

- Ghost-painting, ghostwriting, fabricated portfolio process photos, submission of work not created by the candidate, or assisting candidates to sit the examination with pre-prepared materials are strictly prohibited.
- Candidate malpractice may result in warning, mark deduction, disqualification, result annulment, or withholding of certificate issue. If a centre is involved in maladministration or assistance in cheating, the organiser may suspend its registration or participation rights.
- Teachers should avoid asking students to directly copy popular online images or to apply fixed templates, and should retain evidence of day-to-day learning in case the source of a work needs to be explained.

8.5 Data and Work Handling

- Personal data of candidates are used by HKEAA and Universal Visual Arts Assessment Centre for delivery of examination and assessment services. Incomplete or inaccurate data may result in the entry not being accepted or related services not being provided.
- Administrative, invigilation, marking and quality-assurance records are generally retained for at least 24 months. Result, certificate and verification records may be retained for longer as required.
- If images of candidates' works are to be used for teaching exemplars, publicity or publication, written consent must be obtained in advance.

9. Pre-examination Guidance and Venue Reminders

9.1 Admission Ticket and Registration

- The Admission Ticket will be issued to applicants by HKEAA by email about two weeks before the examination date, together with related examination information.
- If applicants have not received the Admission Ticket one week before the examination date, they should contact UVAAC by email at info@universalvisualarts.com as soon as possible.
- Candidates must print the Admission Ticket and bring it with a valid identity document on the examination day.
- Candidates are advised to arrive 30-45 minutes before the start of the examination to complete registration procedures.
- If a candidate arrives within 15 minutes of the start time, admission is subject to the decision of the invigilation staff based on the on-site situation; if admitted, no extra time will normally be granted. Candidates arriving more than 15 minutes late will generally not be admitted.

9.2 Examination Venue, Prohibited Items and Safety Reminders

- The examination will generally be held in the HKEAA San Po Kong Assessment Centre or a school hall/classroom. The exact venue will be stated on the Admission Ticket.
- Candidates may not bring reference images, notes, mobile phones, smart watches, tablets, templates, pre-prepared materials, or fixative / adhesive spray for use inside the examination venue.
- If watercolour or poster colour is used, students should be reminded to handle brush water and materials properly and to dispose of waste water in accordance with venue instructions.
- Only candidates are allowed to enter the examination venue. Parents or accompanying persons may not accompany candidates to the floors of the examination venue or remain on the school campus / venue premises.

10. Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration, Appeals, and Child Protection

10.1 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

- Candidates with known learning or physical needs may submit an application for reasonable adjustments, together with supporting documents, at least 21 days before the examination.

- If unforeseen circumstances arise before, after, or on the day of the examination (such as illness, injury, bereavement or venue incidents), an application for special consideration may be submitted within 7 working days after the examination, together with supporting documents.

10.2 Appeals and Complaints

- The deadlines and procedures for score checking, marking review and formal appeals are subject to the official website or annual administrative notice.
- If teachers assist parents in evaluating whether to submit an appeal, this should be based on the original work, portfolio materials and examination records. Teachers should not guarantee that the result will be raised.

10.3 Child Protection

- All staff who come into contact with minor candidates have a duty to maintain a safe, respectful and appropriate examination environment.
- If anyone has concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a minor candidate, they may report them via info@universalvisualarts.com or to on-site staff.

11. Contact and Support

If you have questions about registration, examination arrangements, portfolio requirements, result services or document requirements, please contact the organiser or the relevant registration centre.

Email: info@universalvisualarts.com

Website: www.universalvisualarts.com

This handbook is for reference by teachers and centres. The latest examination rules are subject to the official website, the annual administrative notice and the latest Consolidated Candidate Handbook.