



# CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

## HANDBOOK

This Handbook contains important general information about the Certificate of Achievement and should be read in conjunction with the syllabus you are following or intend to follow.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Certificate of Achievement (CoA) was developed by the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers and has been running since 1989. It is open only to members of Guilds affiliated to the Association.

The purposes of the Certificate are: to preserve and improve craftsmanship and design in weaving, spinning, and dyeing; to provide a means for individual self-development for weavers, spinners, and dyers; and to promote education in these crafts. The Certificate aims to provide a structure within which an individual can undertake a programme of study, practice, and experimentation in their own way and in their own time. It is not a formal qualification but a measurement of individual achievement.

The Certificate of Achievement is offered in the following subjects: Weaving, Tapestry Weaving, Spinning, Natural Dyeing, and Synthetic Dyeing. Each of the subjects will be assessed separately. Candidates are advised to submit work in only one discipline at a time (see 2.1 below). It is assumed that each submission will have taken approximately two years of part-time study and instruction, although candidates may take longer if they wish.

Assessments are held in conjunction with the Association's biennial Summer School and other biennial events such as National Conference. The work submitted for assessment consists of two parts, a portfolio of samples and a project piece, each earning up to 50% of the total mark. Successful candidates will be awarded a certificate with a grade depending on the marks gained. The grades are: Pass, Credit, and Distinction.

**Although the assessment is very important, the most important outcome of the CoA for you is your personal development and your understanding and practice of your chosen discipline.**

### 2.0 REGISTRATION AND ASSESSMENT

**Before you register please read your intended syllabus carefully so as to be sure that the Certificate is right for you.** Each syllabus is challenging and requires substantial commitment.

#### 2.1 REGISTRATION

To register you should complete a registration form and return it to the CoA Co-ordinator with the registration fee. The Registration Form can be downloaded from

wsd.org.uk or obtained by applying direct to the Co-ordinator (see back for addresses).

Your registration will be acknowledged and will be valid for five years (60 calendar months) from the date of receipt. You will be sent an up-to-date Resource List and a list of mentors.

You may register at any time during the year. **Your registration fee will cover you for one syllabus only. If you wish to attempt a second syllabus within the five years, you will have to register separately for that and pay the fee current at that time.** If you wish to continue after the expiry of your registration you may re-register.

On registering you will be asked to indicate in which year you intend to submit your work for assessment. This date is not binding and you may reschedule later.

**If your contact details change at any time, please inform the Co-ordinator, otherwise you may not receive important information.**

## **2.2 ASSESSMENT**

Approximately nine months prior to the next scheduled assessment you will be asked if you intend submitting your work at that assessment. It is very important to be realistic about whether or not you will be ready. The CoA Co-ordinator and others have to make a lot of arrangements beforehand which need to be finalised in good time. This means that if you intend to submit your work then you will be expected to register and pay the assessment fee approximately eight months before the assessment date.

**2.3 PLEASE NOTE THAT BOTH THE CANDIDATE AND THE ASSESSOR ARE ANONYMOUS UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE ASSESSMENT.** Therefore your submission will be identified only by a number which is allocated to you. You must not include in your submission any information or image which might reveal your identity. Do not mention by name any of your tutors since one of them might be your assessor.

## **3.0 GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CANDIDATES**

**In setting out the syllabus it was intended to allow candidates complete freedom of interpretation within the requirements of the syllabus and any stated criteria, and so avoid the constraints inevitable in more formal courses.** It is, therefore, up to you to make sure that the way you work through the syllabus is the one that you will find the most enjoyable, and that will give you the most benefit.

### **3.1 PREPARATION**

**Study your chosen syllabus and other relevant documents carefully.** Decide what you want to gain from the CoA. It may help you to write this down for future reference.

**Make a programme of work.** You can approach the syllabus in whatever order suits you best. Your programme needs to be realistic about the amount of time you can spend on the CoA. Remember that you can take longer than two years to complete your work if this suits you better.

**Identify those areas in the syllabus that you can work at on your own and those for which you will need tuition.**

**Consider costs.** These may include materials, equipment, books, tuition, travel, and the costs of getting your work to the assessment. Expense may be reduced by sharing purchases and tuition, buying used books and equipment, and by borrowing books and equipment.

### **3.2 SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND HELP**

Candidates are expected to study and research widely in their chosen subject, taking advantage of resources such as books, periodicals, exhibitions, internet sites and other opportunities to see examples of good practice in order to become familiar with the high standards of work that can be achieved. Make use of as many sources of information, help, and inspiration as you can.

#### **Your Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers**

Guilds are full of people with vast experience and expertise, and who are amazingly generous in the help they will give you. Do not be shy about asking.

#### **Mentors**

You are strongly recommended to find a mentor, who will be able to guide and encourage you. The list of mentors in your discipline will be sent to you on registration.

#### **Tutors**

There are many practitioners in our skills who run courses in their homes or studios or who will teach at Guild workshops. Some advertise in *The Journal*, while a great number may be found through the Association's Speakers' List.

#### **Fellow CoA Candidates**

Once you have registered you will have the opportunity to contact other candidates in order to share ideas, discuss problems, and get feedback.

#### **The CoA Team**

The Co-ordinator and the CoA Advisors are available to help where necessary. They can be contacted through the Co-ordinator.

#### **Books and Periodicals**

Books are essential, both for specific techniques and for background in historical and current practice. Periodicals, such as *The Journal for Weavers, Spinners and Dyers*, and *Selvedge*, will keep you up to date and provide useful information about suppliers and courses. The syllabus-specific resource lists give more details. Many useful books and periodicals can be borrowed from your Guild library or from the Association library. At present, almost any book can be requested through the public library system.

#### **Museums, galleries, exhibitions, textile-related events, country shows, art college degree shows, and local heritage talks and events.**

Here you can find a wealth of information and inspiration, and at the events you can meet like-minded people.

## **The Internet**

This enables you to gather information, find suppliers, keep up with current developments, and make virtual visits to collections and exhibitions which you may not be able to visit in person. You can also find the websites of practitioners, textile and craft groups, how-to articles, and video demonstrations of techniques.

## **Your own experience**

You are advised to keep and record all your samples as you work through the syllabus. A representative selection of these should be included in your preliminary work folder. Recording your decisions for rejecting or accepting a sample for your portfolio helps your understanding. You may find it useful to keep a journal and refer back to it periodically.

### **3.3 EQUIPMENT**

The syllabus does not specify what equipment you should or should not use. So long as what you are doing is clearly hand-weaving, hand-spinning, or hand-dyeing, you may use whatever equipment will serve your purpose.

### **3.4 WORK IN PROGRESS**

#### **Achievement**

The CoA is a personal journey through a broad and demanding syllabus. Within the framework of the syllabus you are free to interpret and respond creatively to the requirements. From your first attempts at unfamiliar techniques and early struggles with design to your final portfolio and project piece you will grow in skills, understanding and confidence. You will encounter problems and find solutions. This should be reflected in your records and in any brief personal statement you may wish to make as part of your submission.

#### **Design**

Design begins with the intention to create an artefact, which might be purely functional or purely aesthetic, or combine both use and beauty. The designer takes into account the function and form of the intended object when choosing the appropriate materials and techniques with which to create it. While the motivation for creating, for example, a cushion, might be functional, the inspiration for its texture and appearance might come from seeing a 'cushion' of moss in a sunlit wood.

It is important to record fully your design process in your notes, from the initial idea and inspiration, through the development of the design, including experimental samples, sketches (however rough), photographs, and other appropriate records.

#### **Technique**

This includes the method(s) used to create the artefact from start to finish. Technique is the way in which you turn your design into reality. You need to know and understand which technique(s) will give you the finished artefact you have in mind. You may have to do several sample pieces for the final piece of work to show what techniques were rejected and why, and what were selected and why.

#### **Record-keeping**

It is important to establish an effective record-keeping system from the start. Details of what information you need to record will be found in each syllabus. Records need to be clear so that you can recall and, if necessary, repeat what you did, and so that

other people, especially the assessor, can understand what you did. If you have a computer then you can use software to create suitable templates and tables. All entries should be dated using a format such as DD-MM-YYYY or other UK format. Your records will form part of your submission.

### References

Keep a list of the books, periodicals, internet sites, exhibitions and other opportunities that you have found useful. This can be attached to your portfolio as an appendix.

### Presentation

In order for your work to be assessed, it must be presented in a form which enables the assessor to see and evaluate what you have done. Each syllabus gives specific instructions in the mounting of samples and other requirements. Samples must be easy to handle and examine. Please do not put samples or swatches in plastic pockets or similar enclosures as it makes extra work for the assessor. Your notes must be easily related to the samples to which they refer. Printed notes (word-processed or typed in a plain font such as Times Roman or Arial) are preferable to hand-written ones. It is best to play safe with white or pale neutral shades for mounting samples. The presentation does not have to be elaborate or original.

The Portfolio should contain your final samples and relevant notes. Preliminary work should include a representative selection of the samples made during your work towards the final sample, together with relevant notes.

You need to consider how your submission will be packed and transported to the assessment venue, and how it will be displayed. Display space may well be limited to a table, with the possibility of a display board, and a small amount of floor space. If you require additional display equipment, such as a mannequin for a garment, you will have to provide it yourself. If you display a piece on a mannequin or other equipment you must ensure that the assessor can easily remove it for closer examination.

You are advised to consider presentation from early on in your CoA, and to leave plenty of time for any final mounting and writing up.

## 3.5 WHEN THINGS BECOME DIFFICULT...

Most candidates experience times when they feel they have run out of ideas, enthusiasm, or even the will to go on. Sometimes serious adverse circumstances such as health or domestic problems arise. **Whatever the difficulty, the best thing to do is to seek help as soon as possible.** In some cases your mentor, fellow CoA candidates, or Guild members may be the best people to turn to. In others, such as difficult personal circumstances, it would be better to contact the Co-ordinator who will treat everything in strict confidence. Never feel that you must struggle on alone.

**...ASK FOR HELP SOONER RATHER THAN LATER!**

### **3.6 YOUR ASSESSMENT**

#### **What to include in your submission**

In order to give the assessor the best picture of how you have worked for your certificate you should include: a brief personal statement; your plan; your preliminary samples and studies; your portfolio of finished samples with relevant notes; all your work leading up to your project piece; the project piece itself. Only work done during your registration period should be submitted. For the purposes of the assessment the Portfolio and the Project are separate sections; work submitted in one section cannot also be assessed in the other.

#### **Getting your work to the assessment venue**

Assessments take place at the biennial Summer School, and may also take place in conjunction with events such as National Conference. If you can attend the Summer School or other event, or can conveniently travel to the venue to bring your work for setting up, this is the best way. If not, you can arrange for someone else to bring the work, or you can post it to the Co-ordinator or another designated person to bring it for you.

#### **Setting out your work**

At the Assessment venue, the Co-ordinator, or someone acting on their behalf, will introduce you to the room where the assessments will take place, negotiate times when you can have access, and assist as required. It will help you if you make a trial arrangement at home and photograph it to remind you when setting out your work. More detailed information about this will be sent to you when you register for the assessment.

#### **How the assessment is carried out**

The assessors are experienced and active practitioners in the disciplines which they are assessing. They will work behind closed doors to examine and mark your submission, usually reaching a final conclusion and drafting a report on the same day. To aid in consistency of assessments, the moderator takes an overall view of all the submissions.

#### **Getting your results**

Usually the results have been decided by the end of the assessment period and you will hear immediately, either directly at the event or by phone or email. Certificates are usually presented to successful candidates at the Saturday night dinner, or other suitable occasion. If you cannot attend, your certificate will be posted to you. Assessors' reports are also posted or emailed as soon as possible.

#### **The Assessor's decision is final**

Our assessors and moderators are chosen for their experience in the subject(s) and their assessment-related skills. The assessor's decision on marking and recommendation for a certificate is final. If you are concerned about anything in the assessor's report, please contact the Co-ordinator for clarification.

### 3.7 OUTLINE OF MARKING AND GRADING

MARKING	MAXIMUM MARKS ALLOCATED
Portfolio	50
Project piece	50
OVERALL	
Design	40
Technique	40
Record-keeping	10
Presentation	5
Achievement	5

GRADING	RANGE OF MARKS
Pass	40 - 59
Credit	60 - 79
Distinction	80 - 100

**Candidates are expected to complete all parts of the Syllabus and to achieve at least a Pass in both the Portfolio and the Project Piece in order to be awarded the Certificate.**

### 3.8 CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT SHOW

On the Saturday the Summer School is open to visitors who come to see the results of the workshops, the tutors' display of work, and the CoA submissions. Your work will be on display under your own name and with the grade you have achieved. At other events, arrangements will be made for the CoA Show. It is good if you can be there for at least some of the time to talk to visitors. Your work may be photographed for CoA records, publication in *The Journal*, and by visitors for personal use.

### 3.9 AFTER THE ASSESSMENT

You will be invited to write a short piece about your CoA for *The Journal*. If you can keep your submission intact it will be useful later. You might wish to talk to your Guild about your CoA, or choose to become a mentor. Your work might be displayed at the National Exhibition or Conference or at a local event. Past candidates are the best ambassadors for the CoA.

## 4.0 THE CoA TEAM

The CoA Team consists of: the Co-ordinator, the Deputy Co-ordinator, and other volunteers responsible for various aspects of running the CoA. In addition there are the CoA Advisors, the Mentors, the Assessors, and the Moderators. There is no formal structure.

**The Co-ordinator**, assisted by the Deputy and other helpers, is responsible for the administration of the CoA, for recruiting and maintaining contact with other members of the team, for dealing with queries, and for publicising the CoA. The Co-ordinator or the Deputy will usually be available to respond quickly to candidates and potential candidates.

**Mentors** are active practitioners in their discipline(s) and usually have some experience of the CoA. The mentor's task is to support the candidate by listening, discussing ideas, looking at samples and notes, suggesting sources of information and help, and generally being encouraging. Please note that the mentor's role does not include tuition or counselling.

**Assessors** are experienced and active practitioners in their discipline, or disciplines, who have the ability to examine work in detail and evaluate it within the framework of the syllabus and the marking scheme. They are expected to respect the candidate's interpretation of the syllabus and to offer constructive criticism in their reports. Assessors remain anonymous before, during and after the assessment.

**Moderators** are experienced and active practitioners in most or all of the CoA disciplines and have the ability to examine all the submissions at the assessment in sufficient detail to obtain an overview. With this, the moderator is able to support the assessors and help them to make consistent marking and grading judgements.

**The CoA Advisors** are active and experienced practitioners in their discipline(s) who are available to deal with queries when necessary.

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

### CoA Co-ordinator:

[certificate@wsd.org.uk](mailto:certificate@wsd.org.uk)

Heather Seddon, 15 Asby Road, Asby, Workington, Cumbria CA14 4RR

01946 861515

**AGWSD website** [www.wsd.org.uk](http://www.wsd.org.uk)

**Association Web Information Point:** details from your Guild secretary

## OTHER CoA DOCUMENTS THAT YOU WILL NEED

- **SYLLABUS**
- **REGISTRATION FORM**

This can be downloaded from the AGWSD website or the Association Web Information Point or can be requested from the Co-ordinator.

- **RESOURCE LIST**
- **LIST OF MENTORS**

These will be sent to you by the Co-ordinator when you have registered.