

# The Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society

Certificate of  
**Calligraphy**



## WHAT IS THE CLAS CERTIFICATE OF CALLIGRAPHY?

The CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy is a first level assessment and certification for those who are starting out in calligraphy and for those who would like their calligraphy assessed against national standards.

## DO I HAVE TO HAVE SEVERAL YEARS' EXPERIENCE?

No. The CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy is for beginners who have been learning for only a few months, as well as those who are more experienced and would like their work assessed.

## DO I HAVE TO BE STUDYING WITH A TUTOR?

No, you can send in your work on your own, although it does help if you have a good tutor who can give you guidance and support. Tutors can also send in class or group sets in one envelope, as long as each candidate's work is clearly marked. (In this instance it is perfectly acceptable to send either individual cheques or one cheque for the whole group.)

## WHAT DO I GET FROM IT?

The CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy gives you an opportunity to have your work looked at and assessed by those who are skilled in helping both new and more experienced calligraphers. They will study your lettering and suggest points to encourage you in your enjoyment of calligraphy. These comments are written on the Assessment Form, and will be sent to you when your work is returned. You will also receive the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy Certificate.

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

It costs £10\* for each entry. This covers assessing and commenting on your work and also the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy Certificate. (\*£15 for non-EEC countries – to cover return postage costs.)

## WHEN DO I SEND IN MY WORK?

Send in your work at:

- the end of December or
- the end of March or
- the end of June.

## WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

A CLAS Teaching Fellow or CLAS Accredited Tutor will assess your work and award marks and will also write down points to encourage you.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

## WHAT WILL BE LOOKED AT?

Five aspects of your calligraphy will be looked at:

### A · CONSTRUCTION OF LETTERS — HOW WELL YOU WRITE YOUR LETTERS

This includes having your pen nib at the correct angle for the writing style, well-constructed serifs, good, strong joins to the separate strokes.

### B · PROPORTION AND WEIGHT OF LETTERS

Included in this section is whether your letters are the correct x-height for the alphabet you have chosen, and whether the ascenders and descenders go up and down to the appropriate lengths.

### C · CONSISTENCY OF FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

Here the assessor will be looking to see whether your letters in the o family have similar shapes, whether the arches for the letters n, m, r, h, p, and b have similar arch formations, whether the diagonals of v, w and y correspond and so on.

### D · SPACING AND EVENNESS OF TEXTURE

At this level, the assessors will want to see that your letter-forms look even in texture on the page, not clumped together and bunched, or with large spaces between some letters and not others. Also they will want to see that the spaces between words are about the same as the width of the letter o of that alphabet style.

### E · MARGINS AND USE OF SPACE

Calligraphy needs room to breathe, so before you start writing ensure that you leave good margins all round. Then plan your pieces so that the lettering does not start at the very top left-hand corner and finish tightly at the bottom right. You should allow sufficient space between the lines so that ascenders and descenders do not clash but also so that your lettering has those good margins.

## IS THERE A PASS OR FAIL?

No. There is no pass or fail. Everyone who sends in work will get the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy. In addition:

If your mark is between:

55–65% then your work is commended

66–75% then your work is awarded a merit

76%+ then your work is awarded a distinction.

## WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

1 · Decide on the alphabet style that you do best from this list:

Foundational (or Round) Hand

Formal Italic

Angled Pen Uncial

Flat Pen Uncial

Gothic Black Letter

Copperplate

Pen-written Roman Capitals

Pen-written plain Italic Capitals

A chosen script which is based on an historical manuscript or study\*\*

(\*\*in which case you will need to send in a photocopy of the manuscript you used for your study)

Then write out the following on 3 separate A3-sized pieces of paper (A3 is approximately 42 by 30 cm, or 16 by 12 inches). (Please see the **Tips** section for a note about pens, paper and ink).

A · A complete alphabet in your chosen style written with a large nib, such as a Manuscript or a William Mitchell 1.5 nib, or a nib which has a tip of 2.5 mm or 1/10 inch wide. For Copperplate the x-height should be a minimum of 8 mm or about 1/3 inch high.

B · Eight lines of your own choice of continuous prose in that large nib as detailed in A.

C · Eight lines of your own choice of continuous prose in a small nib, such as a Manuscript or a William Mitchell size 3 nib, or a nib which has a tip of 1 mm or 1/20 inch. For Copperplate the x-height should be no more than 5 mm or about 1/5 inch high.

2 · Write your name and address in BLOCK CAPITALS on the back of each of the three pieces of paper.

3 · Complete the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy Entry Form on the back of this leaflet; photocopy it so that you always have one for the next time you want to make an entry.

4 · Write a cheque, Postal Order or International Money Order (if no UK Bank Account) for £10\* made payable to **CLAS**.

5 · Enclose a self-addressed sticky or self-adhesive label (which will cover the address on the envelope) with your Entry Form .

6 · Enclose also a stamped addressed postcard with the words *Work Received* written on it if you want to know that your work has arrived safely (no other acknowledgement will be given).

**NB Please do not use paper clips, staples or sticky tape to attach your papers together; these make the Administrator's and Assessor's jobs more difficult.**

7 · Put your three sheets of paper, Entry Form, self-addressed label, cheque/Postal Order/International Money Order into an A3-sized card-backed envelope (this will be used to return your work), and send it to the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy Administrator whose address is on the Entry Form at the back of this leaflet.

## WILL I GET MY WORK BACK?

Yes. All work is returned to you at the end of the Assessment process. This can take more than 8 weeks so please be patient. Your work is first registered by the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy Administrator who sends it off to the Assessor. The Assessor studies your work carefully, awards marks and makes comments



for the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy to be moderated. Once this is done the entries are returned to the Assessor who completes the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy Certificates. Finally, it all goes back to the Administrator who records your mark on the CLAS database before returning everything to you.

**CAN I MAKE MORE THAN ONE ENTRY?**

Yes, of course. You can make as many entries as you wish. You can send in entries for different writing styles so that you will have a range of CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy Certificates, or you can look to improving your mark in one writing style. Each entry will cost you just £10\*. (\*£15 for non-EEC countries.)

**Tips – read this through before you start**

Although a calligraphy felt tip pen is acceptable for practice, the tip is not really fine enough to make beautifully crisp letter-forms. The thinner the edge of your pen, the sharper your letters will be. To get the highest mark possible for you, choose a metal calligraphy nib. Use also a dense calligraphy ink such as Chinese ink, or use calligraphy gouache or even ordinary gouache. Dilute a little gouache (5 mm or ¼ inch squeezed from the tube into a saucer) with water until it is the consistency of thin, runny cream, and then feed it into your pen for writing.

Layout paper is good, too, for practice, but is not suitable for having your work assessed for the *CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy*. Another type of paper to avoid, as the surface is too shiny for good letters, is ‘pretend’ parchment paper. This is ideal for printing certificates, but it is very difficult to get crisp letter-forms on it. Select a reasonable quality smooth paper, such as cartridge or a hot press (HP) paper, which is about 160 gsm or more in weight (twice as heavy as photocopying paper). You should be able to get more suitable paper like this from artshops.

If you would like information about good papers to use and useful books, please send a stamped addressed envelope to the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy Administrator (address on the Entry Form). There is also a helpful leaflet with more tips about the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy which you can ask for as well.

NB No liability can be accepted for any work damaged during transit, to or from its destination and, while all reasonable care will be taken, no liability can be accepted for any work while it is in the hands of the organisers or their agents.

CLAS records names and addresses on a database, this information is confidential to CLAS and will not be passed on to any other organisation or company.

A charity registered with the Charity Commission No. 1046526.



# ASSESSMENT FORM

(COPY)

Name

Chosen alphabet style

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	Construction of letters										
B	Proportion and weight of letters										
C	Consistency of family characteristics										
D	Spacing and evenness of texture										
E	Margins and use of space										

Total  
(Marks out of 50)

Percentage  
(Marks out of 100) ▶

Commended (C) (over 55%)  
Merit (M) (over 65%)  
Distinction (D) (over 75%)

CLAS hopes that these comments will help you to continue your enjoyment of calligraphy:

On behalf of CLAS

Date



# Certificate of Calligraphy Entry Form



Name .....  
Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS and underline your surname/family name.

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

Name of Tutor (if applicable) .....

I am sending in work for the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy in:

Please tick one ✓

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Foundational Hand   | <input type="radio"/> Formal Italic                     |
| <input type="radio"/> Angled Pen Uncial   | <input type="radio"/> Flat Pen Uncial                   |
| <input type="radio"/> Gothic Black Letter   | <input type="radio"/> Copperplate                       |
| <input type="radio"/> Pen-written Roman Capitals  | <input type="radio"/> Pen-written plain Italic Capitals |
| <input type="radio"/> A chosen script which is based on an historical manuscript or study**<br>(**please also enclose a photocopy of the manuscript/exemplar you used for your study) |   |

Check to make sure you have enclosed the following:

- Three A3 (approximately) sheets with the following:
  - A The complete alphabet in your chosen writing style ticked above
  - B Eight lines of prose in the same writing style in a large nib (see overleaf)
  - C Eight lines of prose in the same writing style in a smaller nib (see overleaf)**Write your name and address on the back of each sheet of paper.**
- A cheque, Postal Order or International Money Order (if not drawn on a UK bank) for £10 (\*£15 for non-EEC countries) made out to **CLAS**.
- A self-addressed sticky or self-adhesive label.
- A stamped addressed postcard with the words *Work Received* written on it if you want to know that your work has been received (no other acknowledgement will be given).
- This entry form, completed, which you should now sign.

**I certify that the lettering I am enclosing has all been written by me.**

Signed ..... Date .....

**Now send all this in a card-backed A3 envelope to:**

Michelle Goulder, Certificate of Calligraphy Administrator,  
CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy, 4 Strympole Way,  
Highfields, Caldecote, Cambs CB23 7ZJ.

**Contact details:** telephone: 01954 212856  
e-mail: certificate@clas.co.uk



The Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society (CLAS) was formed to encourage all enthusiasts and practitioners in their enjoyment of letters and lettering. The Society has special responsibility for the education of all those interested in calligraphy and the lettering arts, and promotes achievement and the search for excellence.

CLAS is an active society and works hard on behalf of its own members and the lettering world in general. It publishes a magazine five times a year with articles about letters and lettering, manuscripts, calligraphy, and calligraphers and letterers. It also includes information about courses, exhibitions and events linked to calligraphy and lettering.

The annual Festival of Calligraphy is organised by CLAS each year, bringing together students who are keen to learn and improve, with the best qualified tutors, with a variety of skills, from all over the world.

There are CLAS Study Days, CLAS Certificates of Competence in a variety of writing styles and skills, Education and Tutors' Conferences, special training days for Tutors and the annual CLAS Regional Meeting in various locations in the British Isles.

The Society initiated and administers the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy as well as the CLAS National Diploma in Calligraphy at the three levels of Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced.

CLAS has a Ladder of Progress which charts the progression of beginners to CLAS Fellows, of which the CLAS Certificate of Calligraphy is the first step.

The CLAS website has details of all our activities, including examples of calligraphy. There is also information on the website on how to become a member of CLAS.

The Society especially welcomes those just starting out in calligraphy as well as those at every level of competence, including practitioners working at the very highest levels of excellence.

 [www.clas.co.uk](http://www.clas.co.uk)

The Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society  
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Please photocopy this form as many times as you need to