



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Art and Design
Level(s)	Intermediate 2

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

This year saw the largest submission of candidates at this level since the introduction of National Qualifications. Numbers may reduce significantly over the next two years with the implementation of the new National 4 and 5 courses.

In the majority of submissions, the quality of candidates' work was, as we have come to expect over the past several years, very good indeed.

Once again the Expressive Units were of exceptional quality in a considerable number of entries. Markers commented that the continual improvement in the quality of the Design submissions had, for some reason, stalled, with too many candidates producing Design work of much inferior quality to that being produced in their Expressive units.

Still life was the most popular topic in the Expressive area, though there was evidence of more work being submitted in Portraiture than in previous years. The Built Environment and Natural Environment Units were also much in evidence.

Candidates attempted a wide range of projects in the Design area. These included Graphics, Fashion, Jewellery and Product. The majority were well done, but too many centres submitted candidate work that failed to address the Design process.

The Visual Arts paper was again an appropriate challenge for candidates at this level. Overall performance was slightly down on previous years.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Expressive

Candidates continue to display exceptional skills in their use of materials and control of media — this includes watercolour, colour pencil and pastel — allowing them to produce Expressive work of the highest quality.

Excellent pencil, pen and colour pencil drawing from first hand sources was evident in a number of folios.

It was noted that there is a move away from what could be termed traditional Still life objects and compositions. This choice of exciting subject matter and interesting and unusual arrangements in Still Life is to the advantage of the candidate.

Development sheets at this level showed a wide range of exciting approaches. These included several developed compositions as a print, monochrome study, pen and ink study as well as paint and coloured pencil. This element continues to show clearer candidate understanding of what is required on this sheet.

Design

Candidates are gaining good marks in their Design Units for full Research and Investigation sheets that are usually well presented and relevant to their Design Brief.

It was noted that there were some beautiful, simple but effective Units on lighting Design.

Some centres made very creative use of cheap materials, eg paper used in jewellery outcomes. There were also some excellent pieces of Design using cut paper. Excellent ways of using cling film and PVA glue to make 3D forms were also recorded.

It was noted that a 'house style' well done can be of benefit to the candidate and meet all the requirements of the Design Unit

Areas which candidates found demanding

Expressive

Most centres now have the Expressive Unit well understood by their pupils. However, some still make unrealistic demands on them. Not all candidates cope with more challenging subject matter such as Portraiture or Figure Composition.

Themes such as Portraiture or Still Life do not give enough direction to develop ideas, and folios can end up looking disparate.

Some candidates had difficulties using paint in their final outcome. It is not a requirement that the final piece is completed in this medium.

Design

It was noted in Markers' reports that the performance of candidates in the Design area this year was poorer than in previous years. This has to be seen as disappointing as it was noted that over the past few years the gap between Expressive Units and Design Units was closing.

A number of points were mentioned in the Markers reports:

- ◆ Some Design Briefs are badly written, lacking detail, not understood or not filled in.
- ◆ Some Design Briefs are over-ambitious/unrealistic/quirky — Design a football Stadium, Design a Wedding Dress, or Design a pair of speedos for Tom Daley ...
- ◆ Some briefs don't give enough direction or encourage derivative responses, eg Cover Design for Games and CDs where the candidate only looks at existing products for inspiration. This makes it difficult to give a creative and original response.
- ◆ In Graphics a number of candidates have no understanding of layout or the appropriate use of fonts on a CD, DVD or book cover.
- ◆ In many cases there is no development process in the candidate's work, with ideas being poorly communicated with little consideration in the use of appropriate materials.
- ◆ Fashion design or dress design can be over-ambitious for candidates with limited dressmaking skills. Often it is a series of coloured sketches of an outfit — no consideration of construction or fastenings.

- ◆ Quite a few candidates present a range of ideas and then simply select one for the solution with no or very minor development work in the process.
- ◆ A lot of messy jewellery: bits of twisted wire and beads with no real design.
- ◆ Some fashion outcomes were customised garments. While this can be done creatively, in most cases it wasn't, for example a skirt sewn on to a lacy top, and bearing no relation to the design ideas.

Question Paper

The Markers' Reports on the performance of candidates was mixed. Some felt that performance was slightly better than last year, while others noted that in their opinion it was poorer.

The average mark was down from 25.6 in 2012 to 24.3 in 2013.

- ◆ Question 7a was generally poorly answered by candidates.
- ◆ The other area where it was recorded that candidates performed poorly was in their response to 8b. A number of pupils discussed the work of two designers but did not compare similar objects as was asked in the question.

The above points may have contributed to the lower percentage performance mark this year.

The question paper goes through several significant checks before it is produced. It is always the intention to make the paper accessible but challenging for pupils. This year's question paper met all the criteria demanded by SQA.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

The use of inappropriate material in some candidates' work was mentioned in last year's report. It is disappointing to report that there was a slight increase in the number of units that were reported to the Qualifications Manager as being of concern.

We are concerned that a few centres think it acceptable for candidates to include images of self-harming, suicide and child abuse in their candidates' work. These topics may form part of a Social Education programme in school, but with the extensive choice available to all pupils in the Design area these topics can be avoided.

Centres must be aware of what can be classed as inappropriate units of work. In Design it is unacceptable to have tasteless images that are certified as 18 on Research and Investigation sheets when none of the candidates being presented are of that age. Of more concern though is the number of pupils who appear in photographs in possession of imitation weapons and have images of willing hostages as part of their research.

In the Design Unit the Research and Investigation sheet should contain a full exploration of the candidate's chosen Theme and Market Research in connection with this. It is also appropriate to explore or deconstruct materials and include them on this sheet.

In the Visual Arts paper it is important that candidates write about the works of their chosen Artists and Designers using appropriate Art and Design terminology. It is not a historical or biographical essay that is required. Candidates gain very few marks for purely historical or biographical information.

**Statistical information: update on Courses
Intermediate 2**

Number of resulted entries in 2012	7126
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	7217
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 200				
A	50.7%	50.7%	3656	150
B	25.7%	76.4%	1856	130
C	14.8%	91.2%	1068	110
D	4.1%	95.2%	293	100
No award	4.8%	100.0%	344	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.