



Course Report 2015

Subject	Art & Design
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors 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 assessment and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Portfolio

The Portfolio effectively assessed candidates' ability to integrate and apply practical Art and Design skills in response to an Expressive Art and Design task. This was achieved by candidates selecting a piece of earlier development work and using this as creative stimuli to develop and produce one Expressive Art outcome and one Design solution. Candidates were also required to evaluate their work. The Portfolio assessment differentiated effectively between candidates of different abilities and levels of understanding.

Most centres had understood the assessment requirements, and the majority of candidates appeared to have been well directed through the assessment task. Fewer centres included irrelevant Unit work, and presentations were more streamlined and coherent generally. Most candidates demonstrated attainment at this level.

Candidates seem to have responded positively to the freedom offered by the Course assessment and submitted work in many different formats to suit their own particular approaches. Expressive outcomes ranged from smaller than A3 to A1 size. Some candidates made use of the maximum number of sheets (equivalent to 3 x A2), while many opted not to use the maximum allocation. Some candidates incorporated evaluations into their submission by including annotation throughout, while others produced a piece of extended writing. Markers were able to apply the marking criteria to the full range of different formats submitted. Candidates who met the assessment criteria in a highly effective way were able to access the top marks range regardless of the presentation format selected.

Portfolios were diverse in content and approach, with a range of Expressive Art and Design areas covered. In Expressive Art, still life and portraiture continue to be the most popular genres. There were some good examples of landscape inspired by Scottish painters and there was more evidence, in general, of the influence of various expressive artists influencing candidates' work. There were also some interesting experimental and thematic approaches which candidates had engaged with in a personal and imaginative way.

Most Expressive Art Portfolios involved 2-D processes, such as painting and print-making, although a few centres submitted 3-D work. In Design Portfolios, graphics, jewellery and fashion design continue to be popular areas. There were a few architectural design submissions, and product design was more popular this year, particularly lighting design. Surface pattern/textile design continues to grow in popularity.

Component 2: Question paper

The question paper assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of Art and Design practice, and their ability to critically analyse and respond to examples of Art and Design work. Candidates appeared to engage well with the paper. Section 1, Expressive Art Studies, and Section 2, Design Studies, were attempted equally well by candidates. The mandatory questions 1 and 7 were marginally better attempted than the optional questions. A wide range of artists and designers were selected for discussion. Of the optional

questions, 3 and 6 were most popular in Expressive Art Studies and 8, 9 and 12 in Design Studies.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Portfolio

The standard of submissions was generally good. It was noted that there were fewer submissions in the top marks range this year and also fewer 'off the scale' Portfolios. However, some Portfolios were exceptional, beyond the standard expected at this level. The majority of candidates were able to produce work of the quality required and most met the assessment criteria for this level. As was the case last year, a number of candidates did not demonstrate the creativity and skill required at National 5 level.

Design continues to be weaker than Expressive in general. In some candidates' submissions there was a large discrepancy in marks awarded between the Design and Expressive Portfolios.

Most candidates submitted evaluations for their Expressive Art and Design Portfolios. Some candidates' attainment was affected by poor quality evaluations, which were descriptive rather than evaluative.

Component 2: Question paper

The question paper generated a wide range of marks from candidates and discriminated between candidates with different levels of understanding. Well-prepared candidates who demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of Art and Design practice were able to gain marks in the upper range. However, performance was not as strong as last year and many candidates appeared to find the question paper challenging, particularly the optional questions. A number of candidates struggled to answer the questions effectively and to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding expected at this level.

Most candidates were able to complete all four questions within the time allocated. The vast majority of candidates understood the format of the examination, and selected questions appropriately. On the whole, candidates realised the need to answer the questions set, although a number appeared to misunderstand basic Art and Design terminology.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Portfolio

In the Expressive Portfolio, most candidates performed well. There was evidence of good drawing ability and a variety of media and techniques, such as painting, mixed media, collage, printmaking and various drawing techniques.

Where personal choice was evident, this often communicated a high level of engagement. In the Expressive Portfolio, candidates were often inspired by their studies of artists. A clear

line of enquiry, often connected to examples of artists' works from their Unit work, was evident in many excellent presentations. This often led to interesting themes and topics being explored.

Most successful Expressive Art Portfolios included the starting point from the Unit, and this was clearly identified. A small selection of relevant contextual material, such as an example of an artist's work, while it was not awarded marks, was helpful to markers in understanding a candidate's intentions. This was particularly beneficial in more experimental approaches. Candidates were generally well directed in the Expressive Portfolio.

Some centres also directed candidates very effectively in the Design Portfolio, providing a clear starting point in the form of a selected idea from the Unit, along with well selected and informative contextual material. Design briefs which were well constructed and clearly written, identifying relevant design issues, gave candidates good direction. There were excellent examples of tightly focused development showing one clear line of enquiry with thorough consideration of design issues.

Design Portfolios showing good experimentation with materials and/or techniques in development demonstrated the candidate's creativity. In graphic design, candidates tended to perform well when they generated their own original imagery and lettering in combination with ICT techniques. There were some very inventive examples of 3-D design using recycled objects and other low-cost materials. Candidates who followed a clear and focused process, and produced work of the required quality, were rewarded. Candidates who had recorded their 3-D development in a series of annotated photographs were generally able to communicate their thoughts and demonstrate their problem-solving ability effectively.

Where candidates had made appropriate choices and worked with suitable materials and techniques, there were examples of excellent Expressive final pieces and very well constructed Design solutions.

Evaluations that were succinct and well focused on the candidate's original intentions could be very effective. There were excellent evaluations where candidates reflected realistically and insightfully on the success of their Portfolios. The best examples demonstrated a good understanding of Art and Design terminology. In a number of cases a highly effective evaluation impacted positively on a candidate's overall mark.

Component 2: Question paper

Most candidates performed reasonably well in the mandatory questions and were able to apply their knowledge and understanding of specific art works and designs, responding to all aspects of questions 1 and 7. Responses to the mandatory questions showed personalisation and choice in the selection of Expressive Art works and Design works. Some candidates appeared to have first-hand knowledge of their selected art works; these candidates tended to answer enthusiastically and demonstrated a high level of insight and understanding. There were also good answers seen in response to all of the optional questions.

Where candidates had been well prepared and had developed a good understanding of Expressive Art and Design practice and terminology, they tended to cope well with the

paper. Some candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of this aspect of the Course. The best responses addressed all aspects of each question effectively, whether candidates wrote structured essay-style answers or used sub-headings to help organise their responses. A few candidates made very effective use of annotated illustrations. Successful candidates demonstrated good understanding of the terminology used in the questions and were able to fully develop and justify their comments to gain marks.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Portfolio

It would appear that candidates find Design more challenging generally. Design Portfolios are often significantly poorer than Expressive Portfolios. This is usually found to be the case across a centre rather than in individual candidates' submissions.

Some candidates are continuing to submit a substantial amount of irrelevant Unit work which cannot be awarded marks. At times, the maximum number of sheets was submitted when a streamlined approach would have been more effective in showing a candidate's development process. Inclusion of work merely to fill space can lead to Portfolios that lack coherence and are difficult to follow. Again, this tended to relate to centre approaches rather than to individual candidates.

A selected Unit development idea is still not being identified as a starting point in a significant number of Portfolios. This can present difficulties for markers who have to award marks for how effectively this starting point has been developed.

When candidates did not make their intentions clear, it was difficult to judge how well they had fulfilled the task. While most candidates submitted a Design brief, some did not. Unrealistic briefs could also present candidates with problems. Similarly, some candidates did not provide a theme or title for their Expressive Portfolio. It should be noted that 'Still Life' or 'Portrait', for example, are not themes or titles and do not give the candidate much direction.

Some candidates appeared to struggle with development and presented a number of disparate ideas rather than a single line of enquiry. A few centres presented work in Intermediate 2 format, with a sheet of investigation material and two lines of development. In these cases, only the development work that was relevant to the final outcome could be awarded marks.

Candidates involved in 3-D Design sometimes did not engage at all with 3-D processes, techniques or materials in their development, and this usually resulted these candidates exploring the possibilities afforded by the brief in a very limited way. These candidates often struggled to develop effective solutions.

In 3-D Expressive Portfolios, candidates sometimes found it difficult to produce effective and relevant development work. Instead of development work, some candidates submitted photographs of their final piece at various stages of construction.

Working on an inappropriate scale or with unsuitable materials and techniques was an issue for some candidates. In their Expressive final pieces, some candidates found it very challenging to work on a larger scale, with work becoming less refined.

In Design, candidates sometimes chose to work in areas where they appeared to have very limited experience, skill or understanding of the issues involved. For example, some candidates working in the area of fashion produced fashion illustrations, showing little understanding of related design issues, rather than fully realised solutions. In surface pattern/textile design, a number of candidates demonstrated a limited understanding of this design area. Development was often formulaic and relied on ICT. These simplistic processes gave candidates limited opportunities for effective development, with little evidence of individual decision-making, problem-solving and selection being demonstrated. Graphic design involving pre-existing 'borrowed' images could also be lacking in originality and limit candidates' creativity.

In graphics and surface pattern Design Portfolios, candidates sometimes presented a scaled-up version of a development, which did not show further refinement in the realisation of the final Design solution. In the realisation of their 3-D Design solutions, some candidates struggled with inappropriate materials.

Evaluation was challenging for a number of candidates with comments being descriptive and narrative in nature. A small number of centres are still making use of the Intermediate 2 template which does not match the assessment criteria for the National 5 Course.

Poorly presented work could make Portfolios confusing and difficult to 'read' at times.

Very formulaic and heavily-directed centre approaches, which may be appropriate for some candidates, could limit the more able candidates at times.

Some candidates struggled to produce work that met the standard in terms of quality, and these candidates would have been more appropriately presented at National 4 level.

Component 2: Question paper

Many responses showed a lack of depth and candidates often struggled to display the knowledge and understanding required at National 5 level. Numerous answers given were descriptive with very little attempt at justification or explanation.

In the mandatory questions, some candidates ignored the content of the question and appeared to give a rote learned response. A minority of candidates struggled with these questions in general, confusing artists and designers and demonstrating a lack of knowledge and understanding.

Some candidates included substantial amounts of biographical and historical information that did not relate to the question asked. A few candidates failed to recall the names of artists or designers or the titles of works, or confused Expressive Art and Design.

Terminology was misunderstood by a significant number of candidates. For example, 'tone' was often taken to mean 'mood'. Some struggled with the terms 'function' and 'media

handling'. Many candidates wrote about sources of inspiration instead of visual impact, or did not relate the inspiration to the visual impact in any way.

In response to the optional questions in the Expressive Art Studies section, a number of candidates responded in a narrative way, telling a story about the work, rather than applying their knowledge of Expressive Art terminology.

At the end of each question, candidates are directed to give two justified opinions on a specific aspect. Often candidates repeated earlier points.

A few candidates attempted the entire paper, or more than one optional question from each section. These candidates' marks tended to be very poor.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Portfolio

Teachers/Lecturers should ensure that candidates have access to the instructions for the Course assessment. It is also recommended that marking criteria are shared with candidates so that they have a clear understanding of the expectations.

Candidates should be fully prepared before beginning the Course assessment, and should have demonstrated that they are able to produce Expressive and Design work at this level before proceeding with their Portfolio.

As candidates generally appear to be less confident and skillful in Design, centres could devote more time to building up candidates' understanding and ability in this area.

In selecting themes and briefs, centres should bear in mind the age of their candidates and choose age appropriate topics.

It is important that the selected developments from each Unit are included and labelled so that the candidate's starting points for their Portfolio are clearly identified. These need not be the original pieces of work (photographs or photocopies will suffice).

A Design brief should be included in the Design Portfolio. This should be realistic for the candidate and give direction on key issues. Design briefs should allow scope for creativity and avoid areas/topics where candidates are likely to produce derivative, preconceived ideas.

It is recommended that candidates include their title/theme on their Expressive Portfolio, as this will give the marker a useful insight into their intentions and will also help to keep the candidate focused.

Unit work that is included should be carefully selected to inform the process and communicate the candidate's intentions, and not merely used as a 'space-filler'. Useful

contextual material may include inspirational art work and sources of design inspiration, for example.

The Portfolio should include only one line of Expressive and Design development. These should be the specific lines of enquiry which lead to the final Expressive piece and Design solution.

Candidates should be encouraged to fully explore their Expressive themes and selected approaches. They should also consider the creative opportunities presented by their Design brief. In their development, they should demonstrate evidence of the journey towards their final outcomes, visually documenting their thought processes, decisions, adaptations and refinements.

Candidates should avoid space-filling with images that do not add anything to the creative process. Centres should note that submitting numerous photographs of a candidate's Design solution at different stages of construction, and from various angles, is no substitute for development work. Likewise, ICT should be used as a tool to develop and refine, rather than to produce indiscriminate, repetitive versions of an idea that do not demonstrate creativity and experimentation.

Formulaic approaches may limit more able candidates. Candidates should be offered an appropriate degree of personal choice and scope to demonstrate creativity so that they can meet the assessment criteria. However, this must be balanced with practicality; it is not recommended that candidates are given so much latitude that they select approaches, or attempt to work in areas, where they have little or no skill, or that the centre cannot support.

Candidates are required to produce refined and fully realised Design solutions. It should be noted that these need not rely on expensive materials, and centres should consider budget limitations when developing suitable design briefs; often candidates can show a high level of creativity in response to constraints. This may involve having to use one particular low-cost material, or perhaps incorporate recycled materials.

Not all candidates work well on a large scale in Expressive Art, while other candidates find smaller scale work does not suit their style. Avoid 'one size fits all' approaches.

Candidates who are intending to produce 3-D outcomes in Expressive Art and/or Design would be well advised to engage with 3-D development to refine their ideas and skills before embarking on the production of their outcomes.

Candidates need not submit their 3-D outcomes, but should ensure that photographs of the work show the item clearly and from different angles.

In 2-D Design Portfolios, teachers/lecturers should encourage candidates to further develop and improve their chosen development idea. Production of a solution that is a scaled-up direct copy of a development does not demonstrate further refinement.

In presenting their work for external assessment, candidates should aim for clarity so that their development process can be easily followed. Irrelevant work should not be included, and there is no requirement to use the maximum 3 x A2 sheet allocation. Labelling and

annotation can help guide markers through the work. A number of different formats are acceptable, but it is worth noting that sheets taped horizontally can sometimes be difficult to view, as they often fold in on themselves when hung for marking.

Candidates' evaluations need not be lengthy. The best evaluations are often short and to the point. Teachers/lecturers should develop candidates' evaluation skills and ensure that they are focused on meeting the assessment criteria. Evaluations should reflect on the success of the Portfolio and consist of well-justified opinions that demonstrate an understanding of related issues, rather than comments that are merely descriptive.

When presenting Portfolios, candidates should avoid layering work and should not print evaluations double-sided. Each piece of work should occupy its own space.

Component 2: Question paper

It should be noted that the genre approach of the Intermediate 2 question paper does not apply in National 5. While 'people, places and objects' will be represented in Expressive Art Studies, there is no guarantee that this will be in the form of a traditional still life or portrait, for instance. For this reason, teachers/lecturers should avoid directing candidates to answer 'the still life question' or 'the natural environment question', for example.

Teachers/lecturers should ensure that candidates are familiar with basic Art & Design terminology so that they can understand the paper content and respond accordingly. Specimen question papers and past papers can be accessed on the SQA website to help candidates understand the format and types of questions likely to be asked.

It is recommended that candidates do not rely on prepared answers in response to the mandatory questions, as this often results in them writing content that is unrelated to the question and which cannot be awarded marks. Candidates should be encouraged to focus on the questions and avoid writing biographical information, unless they can relate it, in some way, to the question asked.

When responding to the optional Expressive Art questions, candidates should write in Art and Design terms and avoid giving narrative responses, such as telling a story about what might be happening in the work, unless this can be directly related to an aspect of the question, such as mood/atmosphere or choice of subject matter, for example.

Candidates would benefit from studying exam technique, particularly how to respond effectively to the questions that is set. It should be noted that to gain a mark, candidates need to provide a fully justified comment in response to an aspect of the question. All aspects of the question need to be answered in this way to access full marks.

The last part of each question is meant to be challenging. It involves giving two justified opinions on a specific aspect, without repeating earlier points. While some candidates may find this difficult, they can be advised on how to extend responses to answer this part of the question effectively.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	9104
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	10150
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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	36.2%	36.2%	3672	140
B	27.5%	63.7%	2794	120
C	21.3%	85.0%	2165	100
D	6.4%	91.5%	654	90
No award	8.5%	-	865	-

The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.