



**National Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2012**

**Art and Design**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

# National Qualifications (NQ) Units

## Titles/levels of NQ Units verified

DV37 12	Art and Design: Expressive (Higher)
DV38 12	Art and Design: Design (Higher)
DV37 11	Art and Design: Expressive (Intermediate 2)
DV38 11	Art and Design: Design (Intermediate 2)

## General comments

Of the centres visited in January/February 2012, samplings at both Higher and Intermediate 2 were viewed and most centres were concordant with verification at this stage of the Course. Most centres featured a balanced representation of Higher and Intermediate 2 folios where the majority were presenting far more candidates than those sampled.

In some centres, however, only nine, seven, three and two candidates respectively were featured. As in previous years, in some centres there were no S4 Standard Grade presentations. Several centres had not yet committed to ranking candidates as either Higher or Intermediate 2 level when verification took place, and were awaiting written prelim results in order to determine the more appropriate level for borderline candidates.

Most centres were presenting candidates at both Higher and Intermediate 2 level. Of the centres visited, four had only Higher presentations; one had only Intermediate 2 presentations.

Verifiers reported that, across centres, staff had a sound understanding of Course guidelines and national standards.

Overall, centres were accepted as having successfully levelled the incomplete evidence of candidates. In some cases, however, candidates were internally assessed at Intermediate 2 level, when in fact their folio evidence was more reflective of Intermediate 1; similarly, there were a few cases where Intermediate 2 level candidates had been internally assessed as Higher.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

As previously stated, the majority of centres demonstrated sound understanding of national standards. Centres were also familiar with and using SQA's Understanding Standards material. Many centres had modified, amended, adapted and personalised original SQA Higher Still implementation documents, tailoring resources that fulfilled established requirements.

Verifiers referred to strong visual displays of previously externally accessed coursework throughout departments, which set expectations of high standards and were motivational to candidates. Invariably, and certainly where best practice was seen, staff worked collectively as a team to plan, construct, deliver and assess all stages of both *Design Activity* and *Expressive Activity* Unit work in a standardised and cohesive way. Interestingly, where there was still a presiding, specialist principal teacher in post to direct proceedings, this was particularly tight. Departmental record keeping and assessment documentation showed clear monitoring, tracking, and marking schemes in most centres.

### **Evidence Requirements**

At both Higher and Intermediate 2, and in *Design Activity* and *Expressive Activity*, practical work evidence showed that candidates were being directed according to prescribed Outcomes. In most centres, one teacher had responsibility for all aspects of coursework with their own class group.

In most centres the practical Units were being delivered simultaneously, therefore incomplete *Design Activity* and *Expressive Activity* work was sampled. Some centres were undertaking design work first and this was virtually complete, with expressive work barely begun. Some centres were delivering the Units consecutively but with expressive work done first, with little design work in evidence at the verification stage.

### **Administration of assessments**

Although in some centres numerous candidates were internally assessed as borderline at the verification stage, staff generally demonstrated an understanding of development needs, next steps, and Unit component requirements and deadlines. Where a candidate had not yet been placed at a level, this was intended to motivate and encourage them to inspire to Higher. Indeed, some centres select borderline candidates into the sampling in order to clarify and reinforce remediation measures or folio enhancements needed.

An increasing number of centres now have non-specialist faculty heads overseeing Art and Design subject staff, which necessitates regular, ongoing lessons, with internal assessment activity conducted as a collegiate exercise within departments. Many centres showed comprehensive use of effective task sheets and thorough and meaningful checklists to guide internal verification during the term. Where space allowed, interim folio work was spread or hung for staff team marking to standardise assessment.

### **Areas of good practice**

Verifiers commented that there was most concordance with national standards in centres that exhibited effective and ongoing mutual support among staff. The provision of a clear, well-defined design brief that allows for personal exploration, yet guides the candidate through each stage of the problem solving process, is seen as pivotal. Again, textile/fashion design was the most popular this year, followed by graphic design, jewellery design then product design. Architecture featured only in a few centres and none had undertaken landscape design.

The best practice featured robust investigation and research, with a good balance of both design area and theme of inspiration, using quality visuals whether photographic, electronic or drawn. Development is, annually, seen as the weakest stage of design Units where there are shortfalls.

The best work in this area addressed the importance of considering the human form when designing an item for wear, the importance of linking imagery with font when considering graphic layout, and the importance of refining, fine-tuning and morphing a favourite idea over and above other options so that this is clearly more developed towards a solution. Some ingenious trials, roughs and samples were seen in the development stage, with candidates clearly engaged in the highly creative use of craft materials. Despite universal budget constraints, exciting use of media was seen at this stage at both levels.

*Expressive Activity*, interestingly, featured more portraiture than still life this year. The latter was the second most popular area, followed by built environment and landscape equally, then a small amount of figure composition and fantasy and imagination. At both levels there were strong examples that showed candidates had keenly engaged with themes of personal interest and significance.

Some exquisite analytical drawings were seen, followed by well-considered experiments in media handling, compositional options and colour exploration. Development stages were clearly linked with yet different from previous research, and not simply more of the same. Some solutions and final Outcomes had been started but few were completed and did not feature in the verification sample. Again, the best work at both levels reflected not only the practical skills of candidates, but also clear and strong direction of teaching staff.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Verifiers expressed concern that, in several centres, design briefs were either missing, offered too much choice, or directed candidates to undertake two or more activities towards several solutions. In such cases, it was difficult for candidates to identify the constraints and to access relevant guidance that would lead them through the problem solving process.

Investigations featuring a wallpapered mood board which obscured the area and theme, or consisted of time-consuming and irrelevant analytical drawing, would have benefited by being much tighter, with better editing of content. Poorer examples of development were those omitting the human form when featuring/considering design for a wearable item. Likewise, designing for a 3D Outcome should include consideration of 3D materials and trials.

Weaker graphic Units lacked clear consideration of layout options and the vital link between font and imagery. The use of Photoshop is a commendable way to present trails and roughs for consideration, but not simply as a means of showcasing candidates' skills in computer work where no actual design activity is taking place. Solutions where each considered possibility has been equally developed, and either/any could be selected as a final piece, miss the important need to further refine and develop one option, making it clear which one leads to the solution.

In weaker development sheets it was not clear which idea would lead to the final piece. *Expressive Activity*, at both levels, suffered where the candidate had assembled unrelated drawings which were then added on to on the development sheet. Also problematic were stronger analytical studies shown as developments, while looser expressive and experimental pieces featured among investigations. It is self-penalising when the order of presentation is thus confused.

Candidates are also disadvantaged when there is clearly an overuse of a particular medium, no matter how skilfully worked. A selection of diverse yet appropriate media would benefit this stage by showing more robust consideration.

Another concern is where a candidate presents only two pieces of consideration, with one then being repeated and then enlarged as a final piece. No matter how beautifully executed these examples are, they do not show breadth or depth of development.

Across all centres, it was acknowledged that the timing of the verification visits allowed remediation time where weaknesses were seen. Verifiers again commented on the preparedness and welcoming ethos within the centres visited.