



**National Qualifications 2011  
Internal Assessment Report  
Art & Design**

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

# Standard Grade

## Titles/levels of Standard Grade qualifications verified

Art & Design (Foundation, General and Credit)

Design Unit Completed

### General comments

Of the centres visited in May 2011, the majority were judged to be concordant. At centres where no grades 5 or 6 were presented for Design activity, the sampling was made up to 12 by using the prescribed SQA formula. However, almost all centres presented more candidates than required for the sampling of 12, with three centres only presenting seven, five and one candidate respectively.

Where notable discrepancies were highlighted, these were invariably between lower end Credit and upper end General levels. In such cases, Verifiers tended to find that some candidates assessed as Credit were in fact, General. It was judged that in these centres, assessment had lacked rigour or clarity and folios marked as 2 by the centre were assessed as 3 during the verification visit. Despite such differences, these centres remained within the cut-off point and were concordant. Centre staff fully accepted the outcome of verification.

Only two centres were found to be so discordant in their internal assessments that these could not be Accepted and therefore a full review of grades had to be conducted.

Overall, Verifiers concluded that centres visited across the country showed evidence of a sound understanding of national standards.

### Administration of assessment

The majority of completed Design Units sampled featured a selection of candidates from throughout a department rather than simply from one teaching group. Verifiers noted that in most cases there was clearly a consistency of approach and good liaison between teaching staff.

There was evidence of standardised, strategic planning of internal assessment as well as Course content, pace and delivery. In all cases, staff had responsibility for all aspects of Course work with their own class group.

It was common practice for staff to conduct team meetings and cross-departmental reviews of folios at key points throughout the term, and staff were familiar with and using grade related criteria for delivery and assessment in most cases.

### Areas of good practice/areas for improvement

Verifiers reported seeing a great deal of good practice, particularly where candidates had scope for personal engagement with well-drafted design briefs that guided and directed yet allowed for individual interpretation.

Again, graphics and product design were the most popular, followed by textiles then jewellery design. The strongest folios showed sound investigation and research into both

theme and context; and from this, robust development which featured imaginative consideration of ideas and creative experimentation with appropriate materials towards well-refined solutions.

A high degree of skill in the handling of craft media in both the development and in the execution of strong solutions was seen. In graphics, candidates had clearly understood the vital links between imagery and text and, where used, computer imagery was relevant and appropriate.

In product, textile or jewellery design, the scale, function and relationship to the human form was considered important in developments. Again, the NQ format for evaluation was seen in many centres and a well-constructed questionnaire style led candidates to properly discuss, review and appraise their working stages without the risk of simplistic, diary accounts.

Despite wide reductions in budgets, many centres still featured quality use of what materials they had.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Less concern was raised this year with regard to vague, ill-defined design briefs, as most were 'tighter'. However, there is still room for improvement as some centres could still edit and adapt these to better direct their candidates.

Weaker investigation and research stages were those where the theme was perhaps clear but context was scant or missing, thus failing to relate work to any design area at the outset.

In several centres, a huge number of sheets featured for both investigation and development stages. Apart from considerations of time and cost, it was felt that the sheer volume of work produced, regardless of editing, tended to camouflage a candidate's strongest work and even compromise their overall Unit grade. Several of these folios could have gained improved grades had more time and focus been given to the use of tighter approaches. Also, some candidates producing a large number of sheets for each stage were seen by centres as deserving a better grade for internal assessments due to volume alone rather than the quality of work produced.

Either way, the production of a great number of mounted sheets was felt to be counterproductive in terms of candidate experience or performance. They often included repetitious padding, so more prescriptive guidelines on folio work and presentation sheets would be of benefit in terms of time constraints, budget considerations and folio presentation.

During the development stage it was observed that several folios featuring 3-D solutions were singularly lacking in any 3-D trials and samples in the development and consideration stage. Use of some appropriate materials and techniques here could have greatly enhanced problem solving, as would reference to the human form when dealing with a product, textile or jewellery design brief involving an item for use or wear.

A notable observation was where a candidate had considered two or three ideas equally at the development stage then simply picked one of these to be the end-solution, without the necessary further fleshing-out or refinement of a favoured option. This failed to show adequate depth to problem solving. In such cases, the verification exercise raised awareness about the importance of developing one idea much further than others so that it morphed and led into a final solution without the latter being suddenly born out of any one of several options.

Some weaker solutions were those seen where a mask or a hat had simply been portrayed as a finished portrait poster, despite candidates having followed a textile design brief for an item for wear. A 2-D end-solution in these cases did not seem appropriate or sufficiently challenging when candidates could have attempted to execute 3-D trials and outcomes. Evaluations were generally sound across all ability levels seen, although poorer examples comprised of scant one-liners or bland records of events, and these could have been extended to feature more thorough review and appraisal of the working stages.

# National Qualifications (NQ) Awards

## Titles/levels of NQ Awards verified

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

## General comments

Centres visited in January and February 2011 were, overall, concordant in the verification of internal assessments. The majority were presenting more than their sampling of 12 candidates; although five small centres visited all had less than 12 being presented. Most featured a balanced representation of Higher and Intermediate 2 folios, with a small number submitting Higher only. Again, a significant number of Intermediate 2 candidates were S4, no longer doing Standard Grade. At the time of these external verification visits, several centres had not committed fully to ranking candidates in terms of Higher or Intermediate 2 level as results of imminent prelims could further aid in the more accurate allocation of levels. Despite this, most centres were able to place the more obvious examples while reserving judgement on the less clear-cut. Across the centres visited, most showed evidence of understanding and working to national standards. Where discrepancies occurred, these tended to be where a candidate levelled at Higher was verified as being Intermediate 2, according to folio evidence seen. Occasionally, candidates assessed as Intermediate 2 were felt, in fact, to be more in line with Intermediate 1. In a very few instances, a centre was found to have been harsh in the assessment of the occasional Intermediate 2 folio which verification found to be fulfilling the criteria for Higher. This tended to be due to concerns over poor written work, but as the practical elements were strong, the possibility of bi-level awards was discussed.

## Course Arrangements documents, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Throughout the centres, most had amended, adapted, extended or otherwise personalised original 'Higher Still' NAB materials or similar. Many were aware of, and actively referring to, SQA's Understanding Standards resources. Also, many Art & Design departments featured mounted displays of high quality, successful candidate work from the previous session or two in order to exemplify and promote good quality and strong standards. Evidence seen by Verifiers in documentation and in discussion with staff addressed marking schemes, Course plans, and monitoring and tracking of progress and attainment. Team marking and ongoing liaison facilitated benchmarking and standardisation exercises among staff, the majority of whom demonstrated sound awareness and understanding of Unit specifications and criteria.

## Evidence Requirements

It was found that Unit requirements were clearly understood and being adhered to and followed in most centres, in both design and in expressive activity. Over two-thirds of centres were delivering both Units simultaneously, usually with one teacher responsible for all Course content with their own class group. Samplings, therefore, tended to feature incomplete work from both folios. Where Units were being done consecutively, most were

Design first, followed by Expressive, so the latter was barely begun. Very few centres had undertaken Expressive Units first with no Design started. Within both levels, candidates were being directed according to prescribed learning outcomes.

### **Administration of assessments**

Of the centres visited this year, much fewer featured split- or team-teaching. Again, the most concordant centres had placed candidates within the appropriate level, albeit provisionally in some cases. The clear benefits of team- and cross-marking, mixed folio reviews at specific junctures in the term, as well as regular ongoing liaison on Course content, progress and pace were evident. Internal assessment involved close teamwork among staff and was seen as a shared responsibility. With an increase in non-subject faculty heads having replaced principal teachers of Art & Design in some centres, staff undertook internal assessment activities as a collegiate group.

Random sampling of folios, interim reviews of stages of Unit work, often wall mounted for discussion, was fairly common practice where physical space allowed.

Many centres had well-drafted checklists or task sheets to aid candidates' planning and pace of activity as well as teachers' records to log stages of progress and levels of attainment.

### **Areas of good practice/areas for improvement**

Effective and robust communication and peer support among staff in many centres was identified as being a key factor among those most concordant with national standards.

As ever, the provision of good quality design briefs that led candidates through meaningful problem solving while engaging their enthusiasm, as well as expressive themes and topics that addressed candidates' skills and interests, were fundamental to success. Textile design was the most popular area this year, followed by graphics, product, and then jewellery. Interestingly, several architecture briefs were seen, which has not really been the case for some time.

Expressive activity again featured still-life as the most popular area, followed by portraiture, landscape, figure composition, and then fantasy. Candidates had been directed towards options that stimulated enthusiasm and maximised their strengths. At Higher level especially, high degrees of skill were seen in both practical activities. In some cases, budget cuts had encouraged even more imaginative use of recycling of reclaimed materials in the execution of lovely craft samples and solutions.

Investigations were robust, featuring both theme and context, while developments showed clear reference to the human form when producing items for wear. In the graphics area, strong folios showed good links and interdependence between imagery and lettering and any use of electronic image manipulation was relevant and selective.

Expressive work showed strong analytical, investigative drawing then good development, with breadth and depth, including skilled media handling and consideration of scale, colour, perspective and composition. At both levels, the best work showed not only candidates' skill but also clear, strong guidance from presenting staff.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

At both levels, it was felt that some design briefs tended to be slack in that they offered too many alternative options with little guidance or constraint to help focus the candidate. Tighter choices and some restraints would have improved these. Some candidates, especially at

Intermediate 2 level, worked from the same class brief to ease the management of Unit delivery in terms of time, materials and folio monitoring. This in itself was not seen as poor practice, but it demands all the more that the brief be well constructed.

At Higher level, weaker folios featured design investigation that either avoided reference to context or else over-focused on it by omitting sufficient thematic content.

Developments, at both levels, sometimes avoided any links or references to the human form in the areas of textiles or jewellery. Incorporating some heads or figures, even in the simplest of mannequin sketches, would have acknowledged the vital importance of anatomical scale and wearability. Graphic themes showing little or no understanding of the essential links and co-dependency of text with imagery would have been much improved had this been addressed in developments. Other clear weaknesses in the design development stage mentioned by Verifiers was the scenario whereby two or three equally worked and considered options are rendered, with none being further morphed and developed as a favoured idea leading to the solution. Instead, the solution was simply selected from one of these examples, any one of which could do. There was therefore no evidence of problem solving, where the candidate should have fleshed-out and refined one of these ideas and thus evolved towards the solution.

At both levels of expressive activity, some candidates had disadvantaged themselves by merging or blurring the very distinctly separate investigation and development stages.

Also, when the expressive development sheet comprises only two pieces of work, this prevents the candidate from engaging with proper consideration and experimentation with media handling, scale, colour, compositional studies or thumbnail sketches; and again, is self-penalising. More breadth and depth of development towards a final outcome would improve this and indeed the timing of visits allowed opportunity for remediation.