



**National Qualifications 2013
Internal Assessment Report
Art and Design**

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

National Courses

Titles/levels of National Courses verified:

Intermediate 2: Level 11: Art & Design
Expressive Activity (DV37) and Design Activity (DV38)

Higher: Level 12: Art & Design
Expressive Activity (DV37) and Design Activity (DV38)

General comments

Of 35 centres visited in January/February 2013, all but one had their incomplete evidence internal recommendations Accepted. Samplings featured both Higher and Intermediate 2 levels, with the majority of incomplete practical coursework reflecting national standards at that stage of internal Unit assessment. Most centres seen were presenting far more than the 12 candidates sampled. In only two centres did samplings feature only Intermediate 2 and no Higher work. Again, as in recent years, many folios seen at Intermediate 2 were by S4 candidates no longer doing Standard Grade. Some centres had not yet placed candidates at either level, awaiting prelim results to determine more accurate assessment. The majority of centres were, again, delivering Expressive and Design work concurrently so incomplete work from both Units was seen. Where Units were taught end-on, consecutively, it was unusual this year to see Expressive work begun first, as Design activity tends to be the preferred option for the first of consecutive Units. Where internal and Verifier assessment varied, it was principally due to some Intermediate 2 candidates having been levelled at Higher, when, in line with national standards, evidence reflected Intermediate 2. Likewise, some Intermediate 2 candidates' folio evidence was considered during the visit to be more Intermediate 1 according to levels of attainment viewed.

Overall, however, 34 of the 35 centres seen were Accepted as having a realistic understanding of national standards.

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

Many Verifiers praised the use of benchmark examples of strong, previously assessed SQA work by former candidates being used as motivational wall displays within departments. These aided internal assessment as exemplars and were inspirational to the current cohort. In centres promoting good practice, Art & Design staff were clearly working as a team in the planning, resourcing, delivering, internal verification and assessment in a regular, ongoing, cohesive way. Where there was still a specialist principal teacher in post, administration was invariably found to be standardised and thorough. Although extensive paperwork did not feature during the verification exercise, where this was seen, recordkeeping showed clear tracking, monitoring and marking schemes in most centres.

Evidence Requirements

In both Expressive and Design activity across both levels, practical work evidence showed that prescribed Outcomes were being addressed and met. In most cases, one teacher had sole responsibility for all elements and aspects of coursework with their own class group. Where staff shared teaching sections, it tended to be due to timetabling constraints rather than preference. With both Units happening in tandem at most centres, Expressive and Design folios were usually well into the development stage. In two centres, Expressive Units were all but completed, with virtually no design work yet begun.

Administration of assessments

Although most centres had, by the verification stage, placed candidates at either level, some had fairly borderline candidates, as yet unlevelled. Generally, in such cases, it was intended to motivate the candidate by keeping options open at that stage, or to await prelim results giving a clearer picture of overall level. Some centres included borderline candidates into the sampling selection in order to clarify remediation requirements or discuss alternative strategies. However, it is the task of External Verifiers to review a centre's own interim internal assessments, rather than join staff in undertaking this.

Many centres showed thorough, robust and effective documentation, with meaningful and informative notes of ongoing monitoring and assessment. Close liaison and communication was especially necessary in centres where a non-specialist faculty head presided over the department.

Areas of good practice

In viewing Design folios, virtually all Verifiers commented on the fundamental importance and necessity of a clear, well-defined design brief as being pivotal in guiding the process successfully. This facilitates the exploration of each candidate's own personal interests and strengths, while providing sufficient restrictions and constraints to direct each stage of the problem-solving process within established parameters. Again, textile design was by far the most popular area this year, followed by graphics and jewellery being equally the next most common area of choice. Product design and architecture featured much less, with no Verifier reporting having seen interior design in samplings.

Best practice consisted of breadth and depth in the investigation and research stages, addressing both the design area and the theme of reference. Well edited, quality visuals avoided padding-out a mood board, but rather, set the scene and context, giving a rich lead into developments. The development stage was strong in cases where font linked to imagery in graphic design; the human figure was considered when designing for an item of wear, thinking in the round and using 3D trials and samples featured when designing 3D products. Intended purpose, function and working parts were all considered in the best work seen, across levels and abilities. Importantly, the obvious further development, fine tuning and fleshing-out of a preferred idea being further worked towards a solution showed

far more meaningful and rigorous development than when a candidate simply opted for one of two or three equally worked possibilities as the intended solution. It was heartening, as several Verifiers reported, to see many beautiful examples, across levels and ability, of highly imaginative and creative use of recycled materials and craft media. Despite considerable budget constraints, good teaching had encouraged and enabled candidates to weave magic from the most insignificant, inexpensive items.

Expressive activity showed that the most popular areas were reversed this year, with still-life once more the most commonly viewed, and portraiture almost equally popular. Some distance behind was built environment, then landscape. Fantasy was seen in only two centres. Where Units were strongest, candidates had engaged with themes and references that were clearly of personal interest, showing strengths and enthusiasm. Analytical drawing as a means of investigation celebrated skill in media handling, followed by robust consideration, experimentation and development with colour, content, scale, and compositional alternatives. Again, strong teaching was seen, as well as the creative and practical skills of candidates.

Specific areas for improvement

Several Verifiers noted with concern that the design briefs in some centres were too open-ended and vague, or worse, non-existent. With no focus, restriction or constraint, some design activity was self-penalising. A much better drafted brief at the outset would have guided and directed the candidate, greatly improving folio work. Where investigation featured poorly edited, irrelevant or obscure imagery, or padding with repetitious material, research appeared either cluttered or scant. Meaningful, cohesive visuals would have clarified and enriched this stage. In design developments, graphic design ignoring the interdependence of font and imagery would have been greatly improved by acknowledging this vital link. Also, addressing the human form when designing any item for wear, and thinking in the round with 3D sketches, trials and samples during product design are all integral to the problem-solving process; as is the further refinement of a favoured idea towards an intended solution, rather than a solution suddenly being derived from one of several, equally developed options.

In Expressive activity, featuring unrelated analytical studies lacks cohesion to a theme or area and can appear disjointed or vague. In some cases a real blurring of investigation and development was seen, which, again, penalises candidates as these stages are very distinctly separate. Likewise, when large development pieces feature on the sheet, they occupy precious space needed to show a greater variety of alternatives, thus considerations look underdeveloped.