



**National Qualifications 2013
Internal Assessment Report
Graphic Communication**

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:

Graphic Communication (Higher)
Thematic Presentation Course Work

General comments

Centres generally demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements of the national standards and instruments of assessment but there is evidence that this common understanding is diminishing. This year, 24 centres were Not Accepted from a sample list of 54.:

Of the 24 Not Accepted centres:

- ◆ 10 had assessment errors only
- ◆ 11 had arithmetic errors only
- ◆ 3 had both assessment errors and arithmetic errors

Centres are reminded that internal assessments and internal assessment clerical procedures must be carried out in accordance with SQA guidance. In addition, internal moderation of assessments should be in place and rigorous.

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

It is clear that, while most centres demonstrate a sound understanding of the current assessment standards, many centres are not conversant with the detail included in the assessment guidelines. It is also evident that some centres did not reflect in the marks allocated, candidates' non-compliance with the prescribed content of the Thematic Presentation.

Where Not Accepted decisions occur, the reasons relate to a lack of compliance with the assessment guidelines and this is often compounded when the internal assessor does not identify omissions or errors in content. The following reasons have appeared this year, including:

- ◆ extensive use of tracing when preparing preliminary sketches
- ◆ extensive use of drawing instruments when creating freehand sketches
- ◆ retrospective completion of preliminary sketches
- ◆ retrospective completion of preliminary planning items
- ◆ incorrect projection methods used in orthographic production drawings
- ◆ the use of wire frame features on orthographic CAD work
- ◆ poor application of British Standards conventions

- ◆ not submitting line pictorials in favour of rendered pictorial views in production drawings
- ◆ not including assembled pictorials

Any one of the above content errors is costly in terms of marks. Some will result in **no marks** being awarded. **Freehand sketching** is a manual process that enables the candidate to demonstrate skills in generating shape, form, proportion and detail. **Tracing** from an outline is an entirely different process and does not demonstrate any of the aforementioned skills.

When several such content errors appear in a single sample and the assessor has not taken note of this when carrying out internal assessments, it is almost bound to cause disagreement and lead to a Not Accepted decision. This year saw a greater than normal incidence of these assessment issues.

Arithmetic errors in the completion of the Student Record Marks Sheet was much more common this year. Eleven centres in total miscalculated the arithmetic total on their student record and consequently incurred a Not Accepted decision and a Hold put on their assessments. Centres are reminded to ensure internal verification procedures are rigorous.

Evidence Requirements

There is a broad understanding of the Evidence Requirements. The number and types of evidence are commonly satisfied. It is the fine detail within each item that some centres do not have a sound understanding of.

For example, orthographic drawings are always included. The detail within these drawings: use of standards, line types, dimension types, labelling, title blocks etc are often missing or poorly done.

The appropriate degree of difficulty is another factor in determining the assessment. The choice of theme or product is crucial in allowing enough scope to gain maximum marks at this level.

Administration of assessments

Tracing and retrospective sketching

There was a trend this year whereby evidence of manual work (freehand sketching of orthographic views or pictorial views) was present and often complex but was created without the normal construction work, which may indicate tracings or retrospectively produced work. In a number of cases this year, a centre awarded no marks at all for the work. The assumption is that tracing has been identified by the centre and marks deducted at source.

A good approach would be for centres to include a note which explains the assessor's decision, for example, if they have identified tracing.

Interpretation of assessment criteria

In several areas of the Thematic Presentation the guidelines specify clear and unambiguous instructions to guide assessment and content:

'Orthographic sketches must contain three dimensioned and related views.'

The instruction is generally applied correctly by the candidate and assessed appropriately by the centre.

When the assessment guidelines are of a more subjective nature:

'The graphic item should be creative and show effective use of design elements and principles.'

Internal assessment can be straightforward when the creative layout is strong. Creative design work is almost always obvious. The candidate's input, creativity and DTP skills are evident and application of the national standard in assessment is, almost always, correctly applied. In centres where the creative input is not as strong, the quality of layout is weak and the assessment of layout can be problematic. There is a correlation between the quality of the layout skills and the accuracy of assessment. Exemplification is available to support understanding, and can be found on the secure area of SQA's website.

Areas of good practice

Preliminary graphics

Centres in which sketching skills are emphasised benefit from strong work and therefore high marks in the preliminary graphics section. This emphasis on quality can carry through the entire preliminary graphics section and it appears to have a positive impact on other areas of the Thematic Presentation. Improving freehand sketching skills may help 'develop the eye' of the candidate and perhaps builds the confidence of the candidate to a degree that recognising good quality and acquiring skills in other areas, CAD and DTP, is more readily achieved.

Production drawings

The use of 3D CAD software has replaced 2D CAD in many centres; only two centres submitted 2D CAD work for verification. In both cases the quality and complexity of 2D CAD was very good.

The complexity of 3D modelling is often excellent. A variety of modelling techniques are used and problem solving skills are evident.

The inclusion of technical detail (6 marks) is perhaps easier to achieve using 3D CAD; sections, enlarged views and exploded views are all commonplace and generally well done.

Promotional graphics

The use of *bona fide* DTP packages has become the norm. This allows the use of DTP features such as: full cropping, text wrap, flow text, transparencies, bleeds and drop shadows. The complexity and quality of work produced in this area is strong in only a small number of centres. Where it is strong, the creativity of the layout work has visual impact and the skill with which DTP features are used adds complexity to the document.

Centres are reminded of the need to encourage a creative approach with the use of DTP features. Using this approach at the thumbnails and visuals stages makes DTP layout more creative, more successful and more appropriate to the task.

Specific areas for improvement

Preliminary graphics

Centres are reminded that retrospectively traced outlines to generate 'freehand sketches' cannot be awarded marks. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the skills in an appropriate order. This was the most common source of disagreement and Not Accepted decisions at verification.

Freehand sketching is a manual process that enables the candidate to demonstrate skills in generating shape, form, proportion and detail. **Tracing** from an outline is an entirely different process and does not demonstrate any of the aforementioned skills.

Dimensions are often added to non-critical features to the detriment of the sketch. Dimensions should be applied to component sketches and not to assemblies.

Production drawings

3D Modelling is now used, almost exclusively, as the software of choice in this area.

CAD work, even when complex in form and components, is often poorly detailed. The candidate's input is required to establish the appropriate drawing standard and projection method and to apply centre lines, hidden detail and dimensioning correctly. A substantial portion of the marks are provided for the input in these areas and, unfortunately, many candidates do not achieve them. Ambiguity can occur when internal assessments don't reflect this limited candidate input.

Centres can improve content and detail by encouraging candidates to set up the drawing standards section of their CAD package prior to commencing this work.

Technical detail such as enlarged views and sections are often poorly chosen or placed; they should add clarity to the finished drawing.

Hidden detail should also be used appropriately; it can often obscure important features or clutter the drawing. It should not be applied to pictorial drawings.

Centres are reminded that pictorial CAD work should not be rendered and should be presented without colour fills or shading of any kind.

Pictorial line drawings may be fully assembled or exploded but it is suggested that, if an exploded pictorial drawing is produced it should be submitted along with the fully assembled line drawing. A pictorial **component** drawing is unlikely to be complex enough to gain high marks; an assembly is recommended.

Promotional graphics

The use of excessively large font sizes in body copy is a major issue in DTP assessment. Selecting appropriate font styles and sizes is part of the challenge in this area.

In general, DTP skills across the verification samples were limited. Only a few centres made good use of features such as: bleeds, transparencies, text wrap, flow text, crops, pull quotes and drop shadows.

The quality of pre-production and imported images is often very poor. Centres often allow candidates to use inappropriate file types such as JPEG for exporting images. TIFF or bitmap files are the recommended formats for this purpose. Poor quality images are detrimental to the work and, in extreme cases, can affect assessment and affect the marks awarded. Common problems include: low resolution renders, poor cropping of images, poor selection of materials and light sources when lighting 3D models.

Manual issues include poor folding, cutting and trimming. Centres are reminded that folded brochures should always be folded and not simply submitted flat.

The process of generating creative layouts is poorly done, and candidate input is often very limited.