



**National Qualifications 2014
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:

NQ Graphic Communication (Higher)
Thematic Presentation Course Assessment Component

General comments

The application of national assessment standards has improved this year and those centres that were Not Accepted at verification last session and were selected again did markedly better at verification this year.

The results of verification were as follows:

- ◆ Centres sampled 57
- ◆ Not Accepted 14

Of the 14 Not Accepted centres:

- ◆ five had assessment errors only
- ◆ six were arithmetic errors only
- ◆ three had both assessment errors and arithmetic errors

The reasons for this improvement may be that teachers are better prepared for assessment or that with the implementation of the new Curriculum for Excellence Courses there has been a renewed focus on internal verification across all levels. Whatever the reason, the trend is a pleasing one and perhaps augurs well for the transition to the new Course at this level.

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

It is felt that centres are becoming more familiar with the assessment guidelines as these are applied accurately (within the verification tolerance) by more centres. However, the Thematic Presentation is a complex task with 13 assessable components and a great deal of fine detail in the application of assessment; it is this detail that some centres fail to take account of.

Example

Thumbnail design layouts are always included in the sample and these must be carefully annotated to attract high marks. The quality and content of the annotations is vital in arriving at a mark. It is, unfortunately, sometimes found that the annotations are weak and with little relevance. The assessor's mark often fails to take account of the quality and relevance of the annotations.

The message to centres is that the **detail is important**, to the extent that this detail is described very carefully in the assessment guide. It is perhaps the most common cause of a Not Accepted verification result and it occurs right across the Thematic Presentation folio.

Student record

The student record is a compulsory part of the verification sample and is required to confirm assessments.

Most centres provided student records and some produced student records which were very detailed and well presented. This invariably supported the verification process by highlighting the candidate's input and method of production. It also gave candidates an experience which will help prepare them well for the more detailed version of the process of explaining their 3D CAD modelling methods in the Advanced Higher Course. The use of annotated screen capture images was more common this year and invariably supported successful verification.

Arithmetic errors

While most centres tally the arithmetic totals accurately, there were some instances where errors were made.

Nine centres miscalculated the arithmetic total on their student record and consequently incurred a Not Accepted decision and a Hold put on their assessments until checks were made by the centres and confirmation of corrections provided. Improvement in internal verification procedures would help establish suitable internal quality checks.

Evidence Requirements

The title of this component of Course assessment is the Thematic Presentation. The principle to be applied in this section of the Course is that candidates will select a theme and build a set of connected graphics (demonstrating their skills in all areas) around this theme. Adherence to the chosen theme is compulsory throughout the presentation. Some centres included promotional layouts that either did not fall into this thematic category or formed a very tenuous link to the theme. Centres are advised that this can lead to a Not Accepted decision at verification as the marks awarded are invalid.

Generally, the type and styles of evidence submitted is well established. Evidence presented for verification, in the main:

- ◆ conformed to a theme
- ◆ was guided by the Course Arrangements
- ◆ was tied into the assessment guidelines

Administration of assessments

Internal verification

There was more evidence of internal verification procedures. Centres included details of how they managed this and highlighted the evidence on their assessment flyleaf or by other means.

Interpretation of assessment criteria

The allocation of marks can be straightforward when the quality and complexity of the work is very good or very poor. When the mark allocation is 6 marks and the work falls in between very good and very poor the allocation of marks is more challenging. The 'fair'/'Unit standard', assessment approach comes into effect and proves helpful at verification when the team considers accuracy in the middle of the assessment area:

- ◆ Does it meet Unit standard?
- ◆ Is it a little better than Unit standard?
- ◆ Is it poorer than Unit standard?

Arriving at a mark can be much more straight forward and more accurate when this method is applied.

Areas of good practice

Preliminary Graphics

Centres that submit very strong candidate work in this area are relatively few in number but the skills imparted are completely obvious and speak volumes about the quality of learning and teaching in those centres. The understanding and use of proportion, line quality, perspective, and freehand techniques always stands out and must be increasingly useful to candidates when they work in this and other subjects in the course of their learning at school and beyond.

Production Drawings

CAD drawings now represent the strongest part of the Thematic Presentation. It is clear that centres have emphasised 3D modelling skills and the work produced by candidates is occasionally very complex and often excellent in its execution. This augurs well for the implementation of the new Course where credit is given (marks awarded) for 3D modelling skills. It can also make the step-up to the next (Advanced Higher) level much less of a challenge for candidates.

Technical detail continues to be successfully done. The most common forms of technical detail; sections, enlarged views, exploded views, detail views, auxiliary views and details of moving parts are generally well done.

Promotional Graphics

CAD illustration has developed and improved in this year's sample. The quality of rendered 3D models is often good and occasionally excellent. The use of

materials, light sources and surfaces has grown and the impact on promotional layouts (in some centres) is significant.

With regards to DTP layout; a few centres produced work that was complex and demonstrated a high quality of creative layout skills.

Specific areas for improvement

Preliminary Graphics

'Freehand' Sketching

Tracing and retrospective sketching is still a live issue. We are still finding evidence of tracing from some centres. Centres are reminded of the following:

- ◆ Freehand sketching demonstrates the candidate's skills in creating line sketches that exhibit the understanding and application of shape, form, proportion and line quality. Tracings do not demonstrate these skills.
- ◆ Tracing is not accepted as evidence in preliminary sketching.
- ◆ Manual sketching must always be carried out before production drawings are produced.
- ◆ Planning using retrospective methods is not accepted in preliminary work and this practice is always identified at verification.
- ◆ The majority of Not Accepted decisions this year involved tracing or retrospective work issues.

Please read the assessment guidelines carefully before starting the Course and give your candidates the best advice; in-keeping with the spirit and the principles of the Course.

Using the full range of marks

Some centres are reluctant to use the full range of marks when making assessments. There are instances where some centres choose to award 5 from 6 marks when the evidence points to an award of full marks. When this occurs several times across a folio it can significantly lower the mark attained and diminish the achievement of the candidates. Centres are encouraged to award the full range of marks when the work meets the assessment criteria.

Promotional Graphics

The quality and complexity of work in this discipline continues to be the least effectively tackled section in the Thematic Presentation.

Candidates often appear to be going through the motions of producing thumbnails and visuals in the preliminary section and preparing DTP layouts without developing the layout and or any perceptible understanding of the appropriate use of font styles and sizes, colour schemes or DTP layout techniques. The understanding and application of design elements and principles and the creative opportunities offered by DTP features such as grid structure, cropping, transparency, drop shadow, bleed, etc are seldom apparent.

The most common issues that require attention in centres include:

- ◆ the use of excessively large font sizes in body copy
- ◆ the selection of appropriate font styles (typeface)
- ◆ the use of too many colours; creating a confusing colour palette
- ◆ legibility issues in the body text
- ◆ poor layout techniques
- ◆ lack of accurate alignment
- ◆ lack of grid structure
- ◆ folded leaflets and brochures that do not fold accurately