



**Standard Grade 2013
Internal Assessment Report
Art and Design**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Standard Grade qualifications in this subject.

Standard Grade

Titles/levels of Standard Grade qualifications verified:

Art & Design: Internally assessed, completed design activity.

General comments

All 20 centres visited in May 2013 were found to be concordant, with internal grade estimates meeting national standards overall. While a minority of centres featured fewer than 12 candidates in their sampling, most were presenting far more. Where Foundation level candidates at either grade 5 or 6 did not feature, the centre had preselected appropriate alternatives to substitute for these, according to SQA guidelines on applying the set formula.

In most cases, internal estimate grades for the completed Design Unit were found to be fair and realistic, in accordance with national standards. Invariably, most discrepancies were between lower Credit and upper General, with a blurring of the two. Here, Verifiers judged that candidates with evidence of grade 3 quality work had been internally graded, somewhat leniently, as 2. However, such instances and other differences did not present sufficient variation to trigger any reviews of grading, despite a few samplings reaching six points of difference between centre and Verifier assessment. Unusually, at one centre, the internal grading of strong quality folios was deemed to have been harsh, so the Verifier adjusted several candidates up to grade 1 Credit, in line with national standards.

Overall, Verifiers reported that centres had applied fair, appropriate and realistic assessments.

Administration of assessments

Candidates from different teaching groups were sampled in most centres. In all cases, full responsibility for the delivery of all three Units of the SG Course was with one teacher, so verification usually featured several teachers' involvement with candidate samples.

Overall, it was found that most staff had overseen Design Unit delivery with rigour, displaying sound understanding of Unit Grade Related Criteria. In centres where there had been close liaison between colleagues in the planning, resourcing, teaching and internal assessment of design work, folio evidence was thorough and cohesive across the range of abilities. Again this year, as in recent sessions, graphics and product design were equally the most popular areas, followed closely by textiles then jewellery. Architecture and interior design barely featured.

Areas of good practice

Verifiers reported seeing good practice in many centres. Pivotal to successful undertaking of the problem-solving design activity was a clear, focused brief.

Where these included set constraints and restrictions to guide candidates, work was noted to be strongest. Effective briefs set tight parameters yet allowed candidates to work to their own interests and strengths. Investigation and research in the strongest folios, featured relevant images on both the design area of the brief and the theme of reference, thus a balance of contextual and thematic content was addressed.

In developments, strong examples were viewed when candidates had been encouraged to consider the vital links between font and imagery during graphic design, the importance of referring to the human form when designing an item for wear and how 3D product design requires the candidate to consider things in the round, with 3D samples and trials featuring as part of this stage. Some lovely specimens and trials were seen in the development stage of many Units and exciting and imaginative manipulation of craft materials led to beautifully executed final solutions. With virtually all centres having adopted an NQ-style of evaluation form, candidates of all abilities were usually guided and directed through meaningful and well-considered appraisal of all three stages of their design activity, rather than responding in essay format as if completing a diary of events.

Specific areas for improvement

Given the importance of a well-structured, meaningful brief at the onset of design activity, several Verifiers recorded concern over vague, open-ended briefs being commonly issued, typically when issued as a teacher's individual class brief, rather than when issued as a whole department brief. Tighter quality control over class briefs meeting departmental criteria, rather than being devised by individual staff and going unchecked, would improve this. Of greater concern was when practical design work had been undertaken with no brief at all having been issued to, or discussed with, candidates. Also, on rare occasions where briefs were over-complex, candidates had effectively been asked to undertake two or even three mini-Units, with no scope for breadth or depth in the study of one design area. Investigation and research that made no reference to either the design area or else the theme of reference lacked content and should have addressed both of these aspects.

Development is the area of problem solving where candidates tend to be most challenged or compromised in showing sequential consideration and morphing of ideas in evolving towards a solution. Where several ideas appear equally developed to the same stage, with none being refined and worked up further towards a solution, there can be a lack of depth and rigour as a solution simply picked from a few ideas has not been properly considered and evolved.

Also, in developments, reference to design issues, form and function, set by the brief should be addressed, as outlined above under 'Areas of good practice'. The NQ-style evaluation now in common use with SG evaluation, as mentioned above, ensures that all levels of candidate have greater opportunity to properly reflect on their working processes, and few areas of weakness were noted with this final stage of the Unit.