



Course report 2022

Subject	Art and Design
Level	National 5

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any appeals.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022	10095
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	44.4	Cumulative percentage	44.4	Number of candidates	4480	Minimum mark required	175
B	Percentage	28.7	Cumulative percentage	73.1	Number of candidates	2900	Minimum mark required	150
C	Percentage	18.0	Cumulative percentage	91.1	Number of candidates	1820	Minimum mark required	125
D	Percentage	7.0	Cumulative percentage	98.1	Number of candidates	700	Minimum mark required	100
No award	Percentage	1.9	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	190	Minimum mark required	N/A

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in appendix 1 of this report.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the statistics page of [SQA's website](#).

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Performance in the question paper was stronger than in previous years. Most questions performed as expected, with an improved performance in the mandatory questions. The wording of the mandatory questions was reviewed after the 2019 diet to improve accessibility for candidates at this level.

The portfolio assessments performed as expected. Performance in the portfolios was in line with previous years. Performance in the design portfolio was slightly stronger this year, which was encouraging to see.

Question paper

Modifications for the question paper meant that candidates chose to respond to either Section 1 — Expressive Art Studies or Section 2 — Design Studies. Most candidates chose to respond to Section 1.

Feedback from the marking team, centres and candidates indicated that the paper was positively received and fair in terms of course coverage and overall level of demand. The question paper generated a wide range of marks from candidates and effectively differentiated between candidates with different levels of understanding. Most candidates were able to complete two questions within the time allocated. Most candidates appeared to have been well prepared, understood the format of the examination and selected questions appropriately.

In response to the mandatory questions, candidates selected a range of works by historical and contemporary artists and designers. Markers commented that fewer contemporary artists and designers were selected than in previous years. In expressive art studies, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Audrey Flack, Frida Kahlo, Chuck Close, Wayne Thiebaud and Ralph Goings continue to be popular. In design studies, works by Alphonse Mucha, A M Cassandre, Saul Bass, Paula Scher and Charles Rennie Mackintosh were popular choices.

As has been the case in previous years, the responses to mandatory questions 1 and 7 were better attempted than the optional questions. Performance was stronger than in previous years in response to 1(b) and 7(b).

The optional questions that proved most popular in section 1 were:

- ◆ Question 2 — West Coast Love Affair by Hope Gangloff
- ◆ Question 4 — The Lady of Shalott by John William Waterhouse
- ◆ Question 5 — The Moon, Skye by Gordon Wilson

In section 2, the most popular questions were:

- ◆ Question 8 — Smoothie Safari drink carton by Luke Thompson
- ◆ Question 9 — Carna folding wheelchair by Kazuo Kawasaki

The marking team reported that, in general, candidates had attempted the questions more effectively than in previous years. Section 2 was marginally better attempted than Section 1.

Expressive portfolio

Most expressive portfolios demonstrated the skills and understanding required at this level. Many high-quality submissions were evident, and it was noted that this was consistent with submissions from previous years.

Still life continues to be the most popular genre at this level. There was an increase in portraiture submissions. Landscape and built environment decreased in popularity this year, although the submissions were often very well attempted. Fantasy and imagination was rarely seen. A wide range of interesting themes encouraged personalisation and choice. Some exciting expressive approaches and handling of media were evident, as well as more realistic interpretations, which were very successful.

There were very few submissions of 3D work in expressive art and most candidates worked in 2D processes. Painting, and coloured and tonal pencil work were the most popular choices of media, and there were some exciting examples of mixed media and print-making. Some candidates chose to work in a diverse range of media in their portfolio, with many focusing on a more limited selection. There was an increase in the number of candidates choosing to investigate one material in depth. Most candidates worked in colour, but some took a monochromatic approach.

Design portfolio

Although design portfolios were not as strong as expressive, with fewer submissions in the top mark range, overall, the performance was improved compared with previous years. Most portfolios met the assessment requirements at this level.

2D design continues to grow in popularity, with graphic design and repeat pattern portfolios being the most popular. In 3D design, body adornment and headpieces continue to be popular options. Product design and architecture were less popular, although most of these submissions were very well attempted.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

The marking team saw very good responses to all questions. The highest performing candidates demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding and were able to manage their time effectively to make focused, justified comments in response to the questions asked.

In response to the mandatory questions, most candidates were able to apply some knowledge and understanding of specific art and design works. Well-prepared candidates, who demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of art and design practice, were able to access the full range of marks. These candidates applied relevant factual information to the question asked. Some candidates showed very good knowledge of subject matter and compositional methods, as well as good understanding of how artists had created texture, either through tactile surface effects or a realistic impression of texture. Some candidates opted to write an essay-style response, while many used the prompts from the questions as sub-headings, which helped to keep their responses focused.

Most candidates responded very effectively to part (b) of the mandatory questions and were able to correctly identify two influences and give clear descriptions of how the influences identified could be seen in the artist's and designer's work. Markers commented that revisions to the wording of the questions and marking instructions for part (b) of the mandatory questions made marks more accessible for candidates.

Optional questions were well attempted by candidates who had a good knowledge and understanding of expressive art and design concepts. These candidates understood the question prompts and were able to apply art and design terminology effectively to make justified comments.

Expressive portfolio

Most candidates were able to access the 10 marks available for having highly relevant investigative research appropriate to the theme and showed a clear understanding of the creative process.

The strongest portfolios had a strong link to their theme, showing one clear line of enquiry exploring at least two compositions. This work often considered viewpoint, framing, cropping and changes of scale.

When technology was used it was effective in most cases, with some observation studies showing high levels of skill. Most candidates, when using technology, developed ideas, and considered composition through colour, style and texture to enhance creativity before beginning the final piece.

In highly effective portfolios, experimentation with materials and techniques was focused and well considered. Most candidates clearly played to their strengths and demonstrated their personal preferences throughout the portfolio in terms of theme, media choice and handling,

and techniques. Most candidates demonstrated an appropriate level of skill throughout the portfolio. Some portfolios were outstanding and showed skill beyond the level required.

A strong theme clearly identified early in the process allowed candidates to engage with their chosen subject matter in a personal and focused manner. It was positive that many portfolios followed the guidance, with candidates able to access the full range of marks by submitting the minimum amounts included in the guidance. This streamlined approach proved very successful for candidates as it showed a clear line of enquiry and focus. Most candidates who chose this approach were able to access marks in the highest range for process.

Many final pieces were finished with skill and control, showing excellent visual impact and the culmination of the expressive process. Most candidates made informed and appropriate decisions in terms of the media and scale of their artwork.

In the most effective evaluations, candidates reflected on the success and areas for improvement in their portfolio and clearly considered the effectiveness of their decisions and any next steps throughout the process. Candidates expressed their opinions with justified reasons using appropriate art terminology while making clear references to their theme.

Design portfolio

Candidates were able to respond effectively to well-constructed, realistic design briefs. Most candidates produced appropriate investigative research, including their source of inspiration and examples of relevant market research. Candidates were consistently achieving marks in the highest marks range.

The most effective design portfolios were clearly laid out and focused, containing only relevant work in relation to the design brief. In most portfolios, development linked well visually with the investigative research material, providing continuity.

Some candidates demonstrated a high level of skill in using materials and techniques. This included good use of paper manipulation and modelling to solve design problems, high-quality drawings of 3D outcomes to describe development and design solutions, skilful handling of low-cost and recycled materials, and effective and meaningful use of technology in many graphics, textiles and architecture portfolios.

The most successful portfolios considered functionality as well as aesthetics. Context in relation to the design solution was clearly considered in most of these portfolios.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

The question paper continues to present a challenge for some candidates at this level.

Some candidates wrote simplistic responses without attempting to justify their comments. At times, comments were general and lacking in detail. A few candidates could not recall the names of their selected artists or designers, or tended to confuse them. In the mandatory questions, some candidates gave a rote-learned response that did not answer the prompts

within the question. Some stated the names of their artists and designers but were unable to name the works.

Basic art and design terms that candidates struggled with this year included:

- ◆ Composition — understanding could be very limited, with candidates giving a description of subject matter.
- ◆ Style — candidates often confused this with mood and atmosphere in expressive art, for example, ‘a happy style’; and with sources of inspiration in design, for example, ‘a sea-life style’.
- ◆ Texture — this was often misunderstood, with candidates struggling to discuss the perceived surface quality of a work of art.
- ◆ Target audience — candidates often made speculative comments on target market or audience that lacked understanding of the designers they had studied.

In response to the mandatory questions 1 and 7, some candidates gave speculative responses, sometimes containing factually incorrect information. At times, the selected artworks or designs did not offer much scope to answer the question effectively for a candidate at this level.

In response to question 1(a), some candidates showed a limited understanding of how their selected artists had created texture. Some made statements about surface quality but didn’t relate this to the artwork studied. When responding to question 7(a), many candidates lacked understanding of the target market or audience for their selected design, making speculative comments such as ‘for the catwalk’ or ‘for older people’ without justification. In responding to which design was most appealing, some candidates made repetitive comments that had already been discussed in response to the prompts.

Some candidates who attempted question 3 — Boxing by Robert Doisneau demonstrated little or no understanding of tone, confusing it with mood and atmosphere and referring to a ‘gloomy tone’ or a ‘threatening tone’. Likewise, some candidates attempting question 5 — The Moon, Skye by Gordon Wilson demonstrated very little knowledge and understanding of style.

Expressive portfolio

A few centres adopted a ‘house style’ where all candidates followed exactly the same process, using identical materials and techniques, often with very similar subject matter. This ‘one size fits all’ approach can result in candidates working with materials and techniques that do not suit them, or provide little opportunity for the candidates to demonstrate personal choice and creativity.

At times, candidates selected subject matter that was too demanding for their personal skill level, such as a variety of still-life objects with difficult perspective, or portraiture. This tended to highlight their weaknesses.

A few final pieces were less resolved than earlier development studies, with many candidates struggling to achieve a comparable level of finish in a larger scale final piece.

Some evaluations contained only descriptive comment regarding the subject matter, process and techniques used. These candidates appeared to find it difficult to reflect on the various steps and decisions made, and the success, or otherwise, of the work.

Design portfolio

A few centres adopted a 'house style'. In these cases, all candidates followed exactly the same process, using similar approaches, materials and techniques. As with expressive portfolios, this can limit the candidate's opportunities to demonstrate personal choice, creativity and skill.

Some design briefs were very focused on aesthetic issues, and did not always give candidates an opportunity to consider functionality or target market. Other briefs were very open-ended.

In some cases, design briefs were very ambitious for this level. These briefs required more than one solution, such as a set of postage stamps or a pattern being applied to multiple products, rather than one single design solution.

Some portfolios showed a confusing process, lacking visual continuity. At times, portfolios lacked a clear process and did not always show important steps leading to the solution. In some cases, the development steps were very repetitive and did not show adequate development and refinement of the idea.

Problem-solving was lacking in some portfolios, with very little consideration of functionality. For example, in graphic design, some candidates showed limited consideration of lettering and layout.

A few hand-drawn graphic design portfolios were negatively impacted by candidates attempting to use technology in the design solution with limited skill.

Development in repeat pattern portfolios could be limited. Occasionally, development consisted of showing the same pattern in several colourways with little or no progression. At other times repeat patterns lost focus because of overuse of technology, creating a pattern that lost visual continuity with the starting point.

In body adornment and fashion, there was sometimes little or no consideration of wearability. In product design, there was sometimes little evidence that candidates had considered practical issues, such as how to integrate a light source into a lighting design. In architecture, some candidates did not explore layout and use of space, with the overall appearance of the design sometimes being the only consideration.

Some candidates had difficulties because they selected materials for design tasks that were not fit for purpose.

Some evaluations contained only descriptive comment regarding the design brief, process, approaches and techniques used. These candidates appeared to find it challenging to reflect on the various steps and decisions made, and the success, or otherwise, of the work.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Candidates should be familiar with the art and design terminology that they may encounter in the question paper. The course specification contains a list of terms that gives further detail on how candidates could interpret and develop these terms in their responses.

- ◆ Candidates should have opportunities to develop their exam technique so that they can answer effectively and manage their time in the examination.
- ◆ Teachers, lecturers and candidates can access specimen question papers, past papers and marking instructions on the SQA website to help them understand the level of response required and how the question paper is marked. Examples of candidate responses and commentaries are also available on the Understanding Standards website.
- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to select artworks or designs for which adequate information is available. It should be noted that questions 1 and 7 test knowledge and understanding of artworks and designs previously studied, and responses should be factually correct and not speculative.
- ◆ In response to parts 1(b) and 7(b), candidates must identify two specific influences on the work of the selected artist or designer and describe how the influences can be seen in any of the selected artist's or designer's work.
- ◆ Centres should recommend special arrangements for candidates whose handwriting is such that it may disadvantage them in a written examination.

Expressive portfolio

- ◆ Centres should give candidates the 'Instructions for candidates' section of the expressive coursework assessment task.
- ◆ While it is practical for centres to place some limitations on candidates at this level, very formulaic approaches should be avoided. Candidates should have some scope for personalisation and choice.
- ◆ Portfolios should not include more work than is necessary at the investigative research and development stages. A succinct and focused approach is often more effective, and less time-consuming for the candidate.
- ◆ Centres are encouraged to reference the current portfolio guidance, focusing on the streamlined approach of two investigation studies, two development studies and one final piece, as this amount of work allows candidates to access the full range of marks.
- ◆ Themes should be included on the first sheet of the expressive portfolio.
- ◆ Centres should discourage candidates from tracing or colouring over photocopies, as this is self-penalising and does not allow them to demonstrate appropriate skills.
- ◆ Including repetitive compositions from similar angles can limit potential in the development stage. Instead, candidates should explore viewpoint, scale and framing when developing their idea.
- ◆ There is no requirement to produce a painting as a final piece if a candidate's strength and preference is in using dry media. Likewise, there is no need for a candidate to work

in colour if their strength is in working with tone. It is not necessary for a candidate to produce an A2 final piece if they are not confident working on this scale. Some candidates will prefer to work on a larger scale, but this should be a personal choice.

- ◆ Portfolios should include only one line of development. Work that has no connection to the final piece should not be included as this can have an impact on the mark awarded for process.
- ◆ Candidates are not required to submit 3D outcomes, but should provide clear, well-lit photographs that show the piece from different angles.
- ◆ Candidates should produce their evaluation independently. They must not use questions or prompts, or refer to example evaluations.
- ◆ Candidates must not change the font size in the evaluation template. Evaluations for each portfolio must not exceed the one A4 page provided.
- ◆ Teachers and lecturers should check that the correct evaluation has been attached to the front of the first sheet, and the completed flysheet is attached to the back of the portfolio.
- ◆ Examples of candidate expressive portfolios and commentaries are available on the Understanding Standards website.

Design portfolio

- ◆ Centres should give candidates the 'Instructions for candidates' section of the design coursework assessment tasks.
- ◆ While it is practical for centres to place some limitations on candidates at this level, very formulaic approaches should be avoided. Candidates should have some scope for personalisation and choice.
- ◆ Portfolios should not include more work than is necessary at the investigative and market research, and development stages. A succinct and focused approach is often more effective and less time-consuming for the candidate.
- ◆ Centres are encouraged to reference the current portfolio guidance, focusing on the streamlined approach, as the recommended amount of work allows candidates to access the full range of marks.
- ◆ Design briefs should be included on the first sheet of the portfolio.
- ◆ Design briefs should be realistic and achievable, and give clear direction to candidates. They should ask them to consider important functional issues as well as aesthetic issues. For example, candidates could consider readability and clear communication of a message in graphic design. In jewellery design, they could consider practical issues such as balance, weight and fastenings. Design briefs should also encourage candidates to consider their target market. Centres can provide briefs or design brief templates for candidates.
- ◆ Expressive drawing is not a requirement in the design portfolio. Drawing for design can have an important place, but this is often a different type of drawing that is used to explore shape, form or pattern. Sometimes candidates produce expressive drawings in their investigative research. Often, these could be replaced with found images without impacting the creative process.
- ◆ In graphic design, candidates should consider layout and how lettering will integrate with their imagery.

- ◆ Colour is an important element in repeat pattern design, but it should be used with consideration. Centres should also encourage candidates to consider motif development, layout, different types of repeat and scale.
- ◆ Candidates working in 3D areas should engage with 3D development to refine their ideas, techniques and skills before starting the production of their design solutions.
- ◆ Candidates should avoid 'wallpapering' in portfolios. For example, the development should not include numerous photographs of a sculpture or design solution at different stages of construction.
- ◆ Portfolios should include only one line of development. Candidates should not include work that has no connection to the design solution, as this can have an impact on the mark awarded for process.
- ◆ Candidates should make their line of development clear. They can use labelling or arrows if required.
- ◆ Candidates are not required to submit 3D outcomes, but should provide clear, well-lit photographs that show the piece from different angles.
- ◆ Candidates should produce their evaluation independently. They must not use questions or prompts, or refer to example evaluations.
- ◆ Candidates should not change the font size in the evaluation template. Evaluations for each portfolio must not exceed the one A4 page provided.
- ◆ Teachers and lecturers should check that the correct evaluation has been attached to the front of the first sheet, and the completed flysheet is attached to the back of the portfolio.
- ◆ Examples of design portfolios and commentaries can be accessed on SQA's secure site.

Appendix 1: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level. Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures including assessment modifications and revision support, was introduced to support candidates as they returned to formal national exams and other forms of external assessment. This was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, SQA adopted a more generous approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses than it would do in a normal exam year, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams have done so in very different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2022. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2022 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the [National Qualifications 2022 Awarding—Methodology Report](#).