Course Report 2017

Subject	Art and Design
Level	Higher

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. It 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.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: Question paper

The question paper performed as expected and was well received by candidates, centres and markers. Feedback indicated that the question paper was fair and accessible for candidates in terms of coverage and overall level of demand. The majority of candidates showed a better understanding of the demands of the paper and most completed the four required questions.

The questions that proved most popular were: Section 1: Expressive Art Studies Question 2 and Question 4 and Section 2: Design Studies Question 5 and Question 8.

There was no major difference in candidate performance between the Section 1: Expressive Arts Studies and Section 2: Design Studies.

Questions 1, 2, 5, and 6: Part (b) of these questions, which is designed to be a discriminator, continues to be challenging for many candidates.

Component 2: Portfolio

Candidates' response to the coursework assessment task was generally as expected, and the task proved to be fair and accessible for candidates in terms of coverage and overall level of demand. The demands of the Design Portfolio were addressed more successfully by candidates than previously, and the work displayed a better understanding of the portfolio requirements. This was evident in both the Further Development and the Evaluation. However, some candidates found making evaluative rather than descriptive comments challenging.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Section 1: Expressive Art Studies
Question 1 and Question 2

Part (a):   This part of the questions was answered particularly well by candidates, showing their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding to unseen images. Most linked their comments succinctly to the given prompts. Responses to Question 1(a) allowed for personal interpretation of the artist's

intentions, with many candidates referring to the painting's title to help inform their responses. Question 2(a) provoked responses that were especially insightful and candidates eloquently described their personal and emotional interpretation of the imagery.

Part (b):   This part of the questions was tackled well by candidates who made reference to and explained the third prompt by combining and building on points they had made in part (a) of their answer. Good exam preparation had allowed these candidates to access the full range of marks.

Question 3 and Question 4

Part (a):   Many candidates took the opportunity to use appropriate art terminology to display their knowledge of the work as well as a variety of both historical and contemporary artists. It was encouraging to see more evidence of candidates studying the work of pre-1750artists. Many candidates enthusiastically discussed their chosen art works, showing their in-depth knowledge and understanding of the artist's intentions with reference to one or both of the given prompts.

Candidates who elected to discuss only one artwork very often did so in a meaningful and comprehensive manner while carefully relating points made to one or both of the prompts. Candidates who chose to select a number of differing works that came from the same genre were able to make meaningful and insightful responses.

Part (b):   Many candidates took the opportunity to show their understanding of the factors that had influenced the art works they had discussed in part (a). Candidates who made the link clear between the art works discussed in part (a) and part (b) were able to access the full range of available marks. Those candidates who had selected to discuss one, or a limited number of art works, gave relevant and appropriate explanations of the influencing factors.

Section 2: Design Studies

Question 5 and Question 6

Part (a):   This part of the questions was answered particularly well by candidates, showing their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding to unseen images. Most linked their comments succinctly to the given prompts. Responses to Question 5(a) showed that candidates understood the intentions of the designers, and many used the information in the legend to help inform their answers. Understanding of the functional qualities of the materials used was evident. In Question 6(a) those candidates who understood the meaning of the prompts and were able to describe evidence of them in the image, were able to access the full range of marks. Responses to Question 6(a) from many candidates imaginatively described the possible sources of inspiration used by the designer.

Part (b): This part of the questions was tackled well by candidates who made reference to, and explained, the third prompt by combining and building on points they had made in part (a) of their answer. Good exam preparation had allowed these candidates to access the full range of marks.

Question 7 and Question 8

Part (a): Many candidates took the opportunity to use appropriate design terminology to display their knowledge of the work and a variety of designers. It was encouraging to see a little more evidence of candidates studying the work of pre-1900 designers. Many candidates enthusiastically discussed their chosen design works showing their in-depth knowledge and understanding of the designer's intentions with reference to one or both of the given prompts.

Candidates who elected to discuss only one artwork very often did so in a meaningful and comprehensive manner, while carefully relating all points made to one or both of the prompts. Candidates who chose to select a number of differing works that came from the same design area were able to make meaningful and insightful responses.

Part (b): This part of the questions gave an opportunity for most candidates to show their understanding of the factors that had influenced the design works they had discussed in part (a). Candidates who made the link clear between the design works discussed in part (a) and part (b) were able to access the full range of available marks. Those candidates who had elected to discuss one, or a limited number of design works, gave relevant and appropriate explanations of the influencing factors.

Component 2: Portfolio

Expressive portfolio

The scope and quality of work produced for the majority of Expressive portfolios continued to be a credit to candidates of all abilities. Markers saw a significant number of folios that displayed confident and creative use of media and techniques. Work tackled covered every genre, but the majority of candidates opted for still life or portraiture. However, within those genres, the work was extremely varied and showed clear personal engagement.

Identification of a personal theme and a clear creative starting point helped markers understand the candidate's intentions while supporting candidates successfully through the stages of Further Development and Final Pieces. Some candidates referenced the work of an artist in their starting point, and in the majority of cases this was used in a positive and creative way, avoiding pastiche.

Approaches varied from the more traditional painting, pastel work and coloured pencil work, to the more experimental techniques, particularly with mixed media. Markers saw evidence of candidates communicating their creative intentions by displaying the skill and confidence to experiment with a wide range of media such as montage, collage, low relief and mixed media. The Further Development stage proved to be an opportunity for candidates to refine

their development idea in terms of composition, lighting, mood and atmosphere, etc. Final Pieces were in the majority of cases successful, and in many cases outstanding.

Many candidates effectively completed their Evaluations by giving well-considered, evaluative comments on their work. Good guidance from centres on the specified requirements for the Evaluation had allowed these candidates to access the full range of marks.

Design Portfolio

Markers noted a much better understanding of the requirements of the Design portfolio. Design Briefs were mostly manageable and personalised for candidates, giving them a better chance of success. Those candidates who had an obvious creative staring point as well as a succinct design brief were able to show their intentions clearly to the markers. The design process was more in evidence as regards candidates carefully addressing aesthetics, function and design considerations in the Further Development and Design Solution. Although most design areas were tackled, Body Decoration/Jewellery and Fashion/Costume proved to be the most popular. Markers noted less evidence of Graphics, Product and Architecture, although many candidates who tackled these areas were successful. Some candidates referenced the work of a designer in their starting point and in the majority of cases this was used in a positive and creative way and avoided pastiche.

At the Further Development stage, approaches varied from those candidates who worked only in 2D to those who engaged in 3D experimentation. Candidates who were tackling a 3D design area — for example, body decoration, fashion or product — benefitted greatly from engaging in 3D work at the Further Development and/or Design Solution stage. Markers saw evidence of some candidates having the skill and confidence to experiment with a wide range of media and techniques, such as paper/card construction, embroidery and weaving, ceramics and Photoshop when communicating their creative intentions. The Further Development stage proved to be an opportunity for candidates to refine their development idea in terms of the design considerations identified in the design brief. Final Pieces were in the majority of cases effective.

Candidates, generally, effectively completed their Evaluations by giving well-considered evaluative comments on their work. Good guidance from centres on the specified requirements for the Evaluation had allowed these candidates to access the full range of marks.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Generally, there appeared to be an increase in candidates answering questions and/or parts of questions out of sequence. With Questions 3, 4, 7 and 8, part (b) was often answered first, then part (a). Also, parts of questions for Section 2: Design Studies were answered in between parts of questions for Section 1: Expressive Art Studies. The answer to part (a) was often to be found in later pages of the candidate's response. Candidates in the majority of cases did not benefit from taking this approach to the question paper, and centres should

discourage this practice. The main reasons for this were: candidates omitted to make the necessary links between Questions 3, 4, 7 and 8, parts (a) and (b) and therefore could not access the full range of marks; candidates often became confused regarding which question/prompt they were responding to; candidates seemed more likely to write too much for part (b) of answers at the expense of part (a); and/or candidates ran out of time to complete the paper.

Time management was an issue for some candidates. Too much time was spent on some answers and their responses were too protracted. These candidates reached full marks for a question but went onto write, at times, another 1-3 pages.

Questions 1, 2, 5 and 6: part (a)

Although many candidates responded very well to these questions, there were a significant number who showed misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the prompts. It was concerning to find that candidates did not understand what was meant by familiar prompts such as *use of materials* and *texture*. Candidates described the materials but not the *use of materials.* A significant number of candidates did not use words that described the *texture* seen in the image.

Questions 1, 2, 5 and 6: part (b)

This aspect of the question paper, which is designed to be a discriminator, continues to be challenging for a lot of candidates. Many candidates did not understand how to tackle this part of the question and proceeded to list more points that were relevant to part (a) of the question. Candidates who had been well prepared by centres for this aspect of the paper were able to access the full range of marks.

Questions 3, 4, 7, and 8 part (a)

Candidates responded reasonably well to this part of the paper in both Expressive Art Studies and Design Studies. However, many candidates struggled to focus their responses on the prompts in their selected question(s). As with Questions 1, 2, 5, and 6, a significant number of candidates revealed misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the prompts. It was concerning to find that candidates did not understand what was meant by prompts such as *scale, texture, viewpoint, working methods* and *use of materials.* Despite electing to discuss *scale,* for example, many candidates proceeded to discuss composition. When discussing *viewpoint*, many candidates referred to the perceived views or opinions of the artist. *Working methods* was confused with use of media. *Use of materials* (ie: *how* the materials are used) was confused with choice of materials (ie: *why* the materials are used). Candidates who were familiar with the definition of prompts and were well prepared by centres for this aspect of the paper were able to access the full range of marks.

Component 2: Portfolio

Evidence seen in both the Expressive and Design portfolios confirmed that candidates and centres have a much better understanding of what is required and are now submitting edited work that clearly shows candidates' intentions. However, there were still some instances of centres sending excessive, irrelevant and repetitive work. The lack of a creative Starting

Point or a Design Brief in some folios led to difficulties when it came to applying the Marking Instructions and allocating marks.

In Expressive portfolios, most candidates had selected a theme/stimulus that was suited to their skill level. However, in a small number of cases a theme more appropriate to the candidate's abilities would have been advisable. A small number of candidates struggled with their chosen media, although most used media in a competent way as appropriate to their ability level.

At the Further Development stage, some candidates showed little refinement of their idea in regards to, for example, composition, lighting, viewpoint, use of media etc, and instead submitted what appeared to be early stages of development. Final Pieces were often very competent and had obviously taken candidates a great deal of time to complete. Some of these candidates, however, would have benefitted from spending a bit more time on the Further Development stage to access the full range of marks.

In Design portfolios, there were still a significant number of candidates whose chances of success were compromised by design briefs that were unrealistic and overly demanding for their ability level. This led to a number of candidates tackling techniques and processes that were far beyond their capabilities.

At the Further Development stage, many candidates did not show further refinement and development of their idea in function and aesthetics, and instead submitted what appeared to be early stages of development. Although they communicated the aesthetic qualities of their design idea reasonably well, candidates often showed little or no understanding of design considerations such as safety, weight, balance, wearability, the needs of the target market etc. Lack of attention to the functional aspects of their designs did not allow them to access the full range of marks. In many cases candidates did not engage with 3D work even though they had elected to work in a 3D design area. Although markers did see evidence of good 3D work, many candidates did not have the basic 3D construction skills to realise their idea effectively.

There was a marked improvement in both Expressive and Design Evaluations, with the majority of centres using the SQA Evaluation template. Many candidates still submitted Evaluations that were a descriptive narrative rather than an evaluation of the creative process they had followed. Candidates who addressed the specified requirements of the Evaluation in a succinct and focused way were able to access the full range of marks.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

The support and encouragement that most centres give candidates is to be commended. Candidates should continue to be offered the opportunity to engage in personalised study of the work and practice of artists and designers. Integrating this with the candidate's own practical work will lead to more meaningful and relevant knowledge and understanding. Support with exam technique is essential for all candidates throughout the course, as appropriate selection of optional questions, structuring of responses and time management will help candidates respond effectively to the question paper.

Centres must give guidance to candidates on approaches to structuring the combined aspect of Questions 1, 2, 5, and 6 part (b). It cannot be presumed that candidates understand the importance of linking their combined descriptions to the third prompt.

Centres should also ensure that candidates understand how to establish the link between Questions 3, 4, 7, and 8 parts (a) and (b). Emphasis should be placed on the requirement to discuss art and design works — **not** artists and designers. It should be made clear to candidates that in part (b) of these questions, biographical information will **not** attract marks unless it helps explain a factor(s) that influenced the work discussed in part (a).

When selecting questions, candidates should be made fully aware of the importance of the command words *describe, discuss and explain*. It is also vital that centres use the Question Paper Brief to ensure that candidates are prepared to respond to unseen prompts in the questions. Centres must ensure that candidates are familiar with the meaning of possible prompts in an art and design context and are able to apply this knowledge to art and design work(s). Use of the Question Paper Brief, the Specimen Question Paper and Past Papers will support centres with this aspect of the Course.

Component 2: Portfolio

At the start of the course, centres should ensure that candidates have the skills, knowledge and understanding to engage in study at this level. Candidates should fully understand the demands of the Portfolio Assessment Task and be issued with Appendix 1: Instructions for Candidates. This information will support them at each stage of the process. Centres should ensure that candidates show engagement with all aspects of the assessment criteria.

The sharper focus on content seen in the Portfolio was welcomed by markers, as it showed a better understanding of the course requirements. Expressive portfolios continued to show strong personal engagement in the choice of theme/stimulus and subject matter, and this is to be encouraged. The quality of work produced by many candidates showed increasing confidence and creativity in the choice of contexts as well as the experimental use of media,

techniques and technology. Centres should continue to encourage candidates to explore and develop these new approaches and methodologies.

Starting Point/Original Idea

For both the Expressive and Design folios, it is essential that candidates include and clearly identify a creative starting point/original idea. The starting point/original idea, comprising edited and limited contextual work from the Units, should be **clearly labelled/indicated, minimal** and **relevant**. The purpose of the starting point/original idea is to make the candidates' intentions clear for markers — it does not attract any marks. For the Expressive folio, an indication of the theme and one small compositional sketch is sufficient. Including the title of the theme at the start of Expressive folios is highly recommended. Avoid using themes such as 'still life' or 'portraiture' as these are too broad and do not communicate the candidate's intentions. For the Design folio, a succinct, summarised Design Brief and a small design sketch effectively puts the work in context for markers.

Candidates should **not** include Unit work in the Portfolio unless it is to establish a starting point/original idea for the further development. Unit work is not required, does not gain marks, and can hinder the marking process.

Further Development and Refinement

Drawings, sketches, samples etc that revisit the early stages of unit development should **not** be included.

At the development stage of both the Expressive and Design folios, only **ONE** clear line of **further** and **refined** development of the starting point/original idea should be submitted. There is no advantage to be gained from including several or multiple lines of development, as marks can only be awarded for the further development of one idea that leads to the Final Piece/Solution.

Submitting multiple Final Pieces/Design Solutions does not advantage candidates as only one Final Piece/Solution that relates to the further development can be awarded marks. Centres and candidates must carefully edit and present folios to show the candidate's creative process to best advantage. Centres must ensure that work that is submitted clearly addresses the assessment requirements.

Submission of Expressive and Design folios

The presentation of work should clearly communicate the candidate's intentions to the marker. Avoid overcrowding the folio with unnecessary, repetitive images and also avoid layering of work. Any further development work should be totally relevant, and should clearly link to the Final Piece/Solution. Further Development work should show refinement of the candidate's idea. Although a personal approach to the format and presentation of work is encouraged, for the marking process, centres should ensure that the chosen method can be easily viewed by markers and displays candidates' work effectively. All work should be securely attached to the backing sheets.

It is worth noting that very few portfolios benefit visually from being mounted horizontally. Also, the weight of sheets attached horizontally rather than vertically can be a problem as work is more liable to tear and be damaged when hung.

Centres must adhere to the maximum number of sheets — three A2 sheets per folio, but also be mindful that there is no requirement to fill the maximum number of sheets.

Although submission of 3D work is welcomed, there is no necessity to do this. However, if photographs are submitted in lieu of 3D work, centres must ensure that they are of good quality and adequately convey the 3D qualities of the item to best advantage.

Evaluation

For session 2017–18, Evaluations must be completed for Expressive and Design portfolios on the SQA template and attached to the first sheet of each of the portfolios. Evaluations should not overlap any work. Centres should encourage candidates to 'review and reflect' when evaluating their work, and avoid description of processes and techniques. In the Evaluation there is no requirement to discuss unit work or the work of artists and designers — this information does not gain any marks.

Candidates would benefit greatly from guidance on writing and structuring evaluative comments as this would allow them to access the full range of marks. They should also engage with all aspects of the assessment requirements as this will provide relevant focus for the content of their Evaluations. If Evaluations are handwritten, candidates and centres should ensure that they are legible.

Whilst it was pleasing to see that the conditions of assessment for coursework were adhered to in the majority of centres, there were a small number of examples where this may not have been the case. Following feedback from teachers, we have strengthened the conditions of assessment criteria for National 5 subjects and will do so for Higher and Advanced Higher. The criteria are published clearly on our website and in course materials and must be adhered to. SQA takes very seriously its obligation to ensure fairness and equity for all candidates in all qualifications through consistent application of assessment conditions and investigates all cases alerted to us where conditions may not have been met.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2016	5500

Number of resulted entries in 2017	5369

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	30.7%	30.7%	1649	154
B	29.2%	59.9%	1569	132
C	24.3%	84.2%	1303	110
D	8.0%	92.2%	431	99
No award	7.8%	-	417	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

♦ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

♦ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

♦ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

♦ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.

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