



## Course Report 2015

Subject	Art & Design
Level	(new) 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 examinations. 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 and marking instructions for the examination.

# Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

## Component 1: Portfolio

The Portfolio assesses learners' ability to integrate and apply practical art and design skills. Candidates selected earlier development work from the Units and used this as a starting point to further develop two ideas, one idea leading to an Expressive outcome and evaluation, and the second idea leading to a Design outcome and evaluation.

In this first year of the new Higher Course assessment, most centres had understood the assessment requirements, and candidates appeared to have been well directed.

Both the Expressive and the Design folios demonstrated a wide range of approaches and contexts. Work was submitted in a variety of formats and sizes from A4 to A1. Most candidates made use of the 3 x A2 or equivalent maximum size restrictions. However, some submitted more work than was needed, and in some instances far exceeding the maximum number of sheets.

Markers found sheets joined in a row horizontally difficult to view due to the weight of attachments. Issues caused by this format often held up the marking process, and in most cases no advantage was gained for the candidates. Candidates who demonstrated that they had met the assessment criteria in a highly effective way were able to access the top marks range.

Evaluations were tackled in a variety of ways, with the most popular being a piece of extended writing at the end of the submission. Some candidates integrated evaluative annotations throughout the work, and others adopted a combination of both approaches. Markers were able to apply the marking criteria to all formats.

In Expressive folios, portraiture and still life were the most popular genres, followed by natural and built environment. There was some evidence of figure composition or fantasy. A significant majority of the work was 2D, with few centres submitting 3D pieces.

In Design, fashion/costume, body adornment/jewellery and graphics proved to be the most popular areas. Product and architecture were also in evidence. Little 3D work was submitted, with the majority of centres submitting photographs in lieu of 3D work.

## Component 2: Question paper

The question paper assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of art and design work and practice, and their understanding of the social, cultural and other factors that influence artist's/artists' and designer's/designers' work and practice. Candidates appeared to cope well with most aspects of the paper, and the majority completed all four questions within the time limit, with many candidates requiring an extra answer booklet.

The work of a wide range of artists and designers was discussed, with the majority being from the 19th and 20th centuries. It was encouraging to see some candidates refer to artists

and designers from earlier eras and from different cultures. Expressive Art Studies and Design Studies were attempted equally well by candidates. In Expressive Art Studies Q2 and Q3 were the most popular, and in Design Studies Q6 and Q8.

A significant number of candidates had difficulty with part (b) of Q3, Q4, Q7, and Q8. They failed to link the social, cultural and other factors to the art/design work they had discussed in part (a) of the question. Their answers focused on general factors that influenced the artists and designers.

Markers found many submissions extremely difficult to read due to poor handwriting and untidy crossing out. Some candidates paid little attention to the lines on the answer booklet and were leaving large gaps between words and paragraphs, meaning that they had to use a second answer booklet.

There was an error in the Question paper; Question 3 read as 'sources of information' rather than 'sources of inspiration'. This error was taken into account during the marking and grading process to ensure that no candidate was disadvantaged.

Candidates at all levels were affected by wording and question structure in Q3, Q4, Q7 and Q8. The grade boundary was adjusted to take account of this and we have reviewed the wording and structure of these questions for 2016. Please see the republished Specimen and Exemplar Question Papers on our website.

## **Section 2: Comments on candidate performance**

### **Component 1: Portfolio**

Overall the standard of work was high, with some portfolios far exceeding the level of sophistication expected at Higher level. The majority of candidates had been entered at the correct level.

A wide variety of themes and approaches were adopted, confirming personalisation and choice. Many candidates selected themes that were clearly of deep personal interest, and this led to very insightful and thought-provoking folios.

Diverse media and techniques were employed, ranging from the traditional to the experimental such as printing, photo-montage and mixed media. There was also strong evidence of candidates creatively using their knowledge of artists and designers as a catalyst for their work. Many of these folios were particularly exciting, and displayed interesting experimentation with visual elements, techniques and media.

In general, Expressive folios were stronger than those in Design, due to the clearer focus on further development of a single idea. Still life and portraiture continue to be the most popular genres in Expressive folios, followed by natural and built environment. Fantasy and figure composition were rarely tackled.

In Design folios, graphic design, fashion and body adornment folios proved successful for most candidates, followed by product. Surface decoration in fashion/costume folios was less evident and, as a result, there was more engagement with 3D issues and considerations.

Most centres adhered to the assessment requirement of submitting only further development and final pieces. However, some centres continued to submit work in the previously acceptable format of 3 x A2 sheets — Investigation, Development and Outcome. Many centres also included Unit work throughout the folios. This did not advantage candidates, as Unit work could not be awarded marks. In some cases centres submitted more than the maximum amount of work, but this was not of benefit to the candidates as the majority of the work was from the Unit and could not be awarded marks.

Candidates who successfully addressed the assessment criteria for the Evaluation were rewarded for this, and marks gained here often offset weaknesses in other areas of the Expressive or Design process.

## **Component 2: Question paper**

The question paper generated a wide range of marks and discriminated between candidates with different levels of knowledge and understanding. It was clear that candidates understood the format of certain aspects of the paper. Q1, Q2, Q5 and Q6 were accessible to all candidates and were generally well answered. Candidates often gave well explained and insightful comments and observations. Q3, Q4, Q7 and Q8 were intended to be accessible to all candidates; however the wording and question structure proved more difficult than intended. Candidates who were well prepared accessed the top range of marks.

Lack of exam preparation and technique was evident in many cases, and led to candidates failing to achieve the marks they may have gained otherwise.

## **Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well**

### **Component 1: Portfolio**

The quality and range of folios was generally of a very high standard. There was strong evidence of well-considered development work that led to exciting and personal final pieces. The most successful evaluations were concise and clearly addressed the assessment criteria.

In Expressive folios, there was real evidence of candidates' personal engagement with their selected themes. Candidates who included the title of their theme at the start of the process helped give markers an immediate understanding of their intentions. As well as the more traditional choice of portraiture and still life, a range of genres were successfully tackled. In these other areas, candidates who worked from their own drawings or photographs were the most successful in giving an individualised response. Photography was used effectively to explore composition, atmosphere, lighting and visual elements. Markers also observed a more confident approach to the use of media and techniques, layout and scale. Many candidates showed exceptional skill in painting, printing and mixed media.

In Design, the folios that engaged in considered and refined further development led to strong and successful final pieces. In many cases there was creative use of materials throughout the design process, and recycled and everyday materials continue to be used effectively.

Photography was used by many candidates to good effect, both as a means of recording their progress through the design process, but also as another tool to aid development. In general, candidates who took a 'sketchbook' approach to development produced exciting work that communicated their intentions successfully and had strong visual impact.

Use of 3D modelling at the development stage (often simple paper models) was beneficial to candidates, demonstrating their engagement with 3D issues and functionality. Graphics, fashion/costume and body adornment proved to be the most successful areas, with candidates showing consideration of both aesthetics and function.

## Component 2: Question paper

Most candidates performed well in the image questions ie Q1, Q2, Q5 and Q6. They responded effectively to the prompts and demonstrated a good understanding of art and design practice. Part (b) of these questions differentiates between candidates' ability and gave the more able candidate the opportunity to give well considered combined points.

- ◆ Q1 was tackled by a limited number of candidates and the successful responses demonstrated a good understanding of the qualities inherent in 3D work.
- ◆ Q2 was successfully answered by the majority of candidates, and knowledge of visual elements and art and design terminology was evident.
- ◆ Q5 was answered well by the majority of candidates, though many discussed the poster as though it were an Expressive painting and failed to focus on the design qualities.
- ◆ Q6 led to candidates giving very insightful and empathetic responses as regards the function of the product in developing countries.

The most successful responses to part (a) of Q3, Q4, Q7 and Q8 were those that concentrated on work that directly related to the given prompts. The most successful candidates had selected the work of a limited number of artists/designers and had provided responses that were focused and relevant, demonstrating **good** knowledge and understanding. This was also evident in their responses to part (b) of Q3, Q4, Q7 and Q8. Some candidates made excellent thematic links between their chosen works, such as images of ships, or in fashion design the use of feathers.

The responses took various forms ranging from continuous prose to others that used sub-headings and annotated illustrations. Successful candidates gave focused, structured responses with well presented and justified comments and opinions.

## **Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Component 1: Portfolio**

Some candidates produced good quality artwork, but demonstrated little engagement with further development. Many candidates continued to develop two or more ideas, wasting time that could have been spent on a more focused approach to a single line of enquiry. This approach disadvantaged candidates as only one idea leading to the final piece can be awarded marks. In many cases this also led to limited and unrefined development work. In many cases Unit work was scattered throughout the folio, making it difficult for markers to tease out the assessable further development.

At times for the Expressive folio, candidates selected to work with subject matter or media that was outwith their capabilities. Portraiture, and occasionally still life, posed difficulties for less able candidates. A more considered approach to selection, at an early stage of the process, would have been of benefit to them.

Development of a single idea also posed problems for some candidates. Their work was either very limited or repetitive, demonstrating little consideration of qualities such as composition, lighting, scale or viewpoint. Some final pieces were simply larger versions of an image from the development stage.

In the Design folio, candidates were often disadvantaged by vague and/or overly demanding design briefs. Candidates did not have the skills or knowledge to successfully engage with the design issues and considerations contained in these briefs. Candidates working to the same standard brief did not have the opportunity for personal choice.

Practical skills were often lacking when candidates attempted fashion/costume or body decoration. Some candidates had no understanding of materials, construction techniques, functionality or wearability.

At the development stage, some candidates had included photographs that only gave a visual record of the construction process of the final piece, with no evidence of development. Lack of engagement with 3D work at the development stage often led to poor final pieces as candidates did not fully understand the design issues involved. Candidates were often disadvantaged by poor quality, out-of-focus photographs of their final pieces.

In both Expressive and Design folios, many evaluations and annotations were simply describing what a candidate had produced, and did not fulfil the demands of the assessment criteria. Unhelpful pro-forma/questionnaires were used by many centres, making it difficult or impossible for candidates to address the required criteria.

In a high number of cases, evaluations were disproportionate and unnecessarily lengthy. Much of the content was irrelevant as it focused on the evaluation of Unit work, or the work of artists and designers, and therefore could not be awarded marks.

## **Component 2: Question paper**

Candidates who did not perform well in the question paper had failed to read the questions correctly, or had ignored command words and prompts. Many candidates wrote much more than necessary. At times, responses were repetitive or were not relevant to the question.

The difference in wording of prompts such as 'choice of...' and 'use of...' was not clearly understood by some candidates.

Candidates often disadvantaged themselves by doing Q3 or Q4, and Q7 or Q8 first, and then Q1 or Q2 and Q5 or Q6. Often they were gaining better marks with the image questions but ran out of time to give fully considered answers for the statement questions.

Most candidates performed well in part (a) of Q1, Q2, Q5 and Q6, though in part (b) some candidates failed to make combined points. These responses tended to be either very brief, or they repeated points made in part (a) without making connections between them.

For many candidates, failure to link part (b) with part (a) in Q3, Q4, Q7 and Q8, lost valuable marks. Although many candidates gave factually correct information, marks could not be awarded for extensive responses that discussed general influences on the artist/designer. Marks could only be awarded where a direct link was made with the art/design work discussed in part (a). In many cases part (b) responses were biographical, or referred to work that had not been discussed in part (a).

A small number of candidates discussed the influence their chosen artists/designers had on others. Candidates often made a poor choice when selecting the most appropriate statement question to suit their knowledge base.

Failure to read prompts carefully led to a poorer response. Some candidates often focused on discussing the statement, rather than the prompts. On occasions in both Expressive and Design, there was some confusion as to what a visual element was, for example 'a teapot' was discussed as a visual element.

In Q3, Q4, Q7 and Q8 some candidates' responses were of a poor quality when they referred to art/design work from a wide range of genres/design areas, reading like a list of random observations. Some candidates elected to discuss works that were very similar, such as several still life paintings of roses by Peploe, or suits by Chanel. These responses were repetitive and did not allow candidates to display a range of knowledge and understanding.

## **Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **Component 1: Portfolio**

Teachers/lecturers should ensure that candidates have an understanding of Course requirements and, before proceeding, have demonstrated that they have the necessary skills to produce Expressive and Design work at this level.

Candidates should fully understand the nature of the assessment task, and it is also recommended that assessment criteria are shared with candidates, as this will give them an insight as to what is expected at each stage of the process. Candidates should show engagement with all aspects of the assessment criteria.

It is essential that candidates include and identify clear starting points for their Expressive and Design folios. The starting point (contextual work from the Units), should be clearly labelled, minimal and relevant.

Candidates should consider ways of presenting this to make their intentions clear for markers. The starting point should be carefully considered — one image can often suffice, particularly for the Expressive folio.

Including the title of the theme at the start of Expressive folios is also very helpful for markers. Avoid using themes such as ‘still life’ or ‘portraiture’ as these are too broad and ineffective in encouraging a creative response from candidates.

In Design, a summarised Design Brief effectively puts the work in context for markers. There is no need to write a lengthy statement of intent — a succinct design brief/statement is sufficient.

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

In both Expressive and Design folios, candidates should be aware that the work must only show a single line of development. 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 a single idea that leads to the final piece. Multiple final pieces do not advantage candidates — only the final piece that relates to the further development can be awarded marks.

Teachers/lecturers and candidates must edit and present folios carefully to show the process to best advantage. Candidates should be encouraged to fully develop and explore creative approaches and techniques leading to clear continuity and articulation with the final piece.

The layout of work should clarify the narrative and communicate well with the marker. Avoid overcrowding the folio with unnecessary, repetitive images, and also avoid layering of work.

Encouraging an individual approach will benefit most candidates, and will lead to a more personal engagement with both Expressive and Design folios. Although a personal approach to the format and presentation of work is encouraged, teachers/lecturers should ensure that, for the marking process, the chosen method shows off the candidates’ work to best advantage. There is no need to attempt to fill the maximum number of sheets.

Adhere to the maximum number of sheets — equivalent 3xA2.

Although there is no necessity to submit 3D work, ensure that photographs submitted in lieu of 3D work are of good quality and adequately convey the item to best advantage.

Ensure that work is securely attached/glued to sheets.

Evaluations must be included for both Expressive and Design folios. Ensure that candidates show engagement with all aspects of the assessment criteria. Relevant and evaluative annotations throughout the development process can benefit candidates and help explain their decision making and intentions. Encourage candidates to 'review and reflect' when evaluating their work and to avoid description of processes and techniques. In the evaluation/evaluative annotations, there is no requirement to discuss Unit work or the work of artists and designers — this will not gain any marks.

Ensure handwriting is legible and easy to read, perhaps consider typing. Avoid using white or metallic pens on coloured paper or acetate as this can make comments very difficult to read.

Avoid double-sided evaluations.

## Component 2: Question paper

Teachers/lecturers should ensure that candidates understand how to approach the demands of the question paper. Support with exam technique, structuring of responses and time management will help candidates respond effectively to the questions that are set. Candidates should be made aware of art and design terminology and the importance of prompts and command words when selecting questions.

It is not recommended that candidates have prepared answers, as this often results in them producing responses that do not directly address what is asked in the question. Candidates should be discouraged from attempting parts of questions out of sequence. All questions require a link between parts (a) and parts (b). Questions that are answered in full elicit more successful, structured and coherent responses.

Throughout the coursework, teachers/lecturers should continue to encourage the study of a range of Expressive genres and Design areas that will help candidates respond successfully to Q1, Q2, Q5, and Q6. As preparation for part (b) of these questions, candidates must understand how to structure combined points based on the descriptions they have given in part (a).

Crucially they must be aware of the requirement to link the factors they explain in part (b) to the **art/design work** they have discussed in part (a). In part (b), it should be emphasised to candidates that biographical information is not required unless it helps illustrate factors that influenced the work discussed in part (a).

Please note that Questions 3, 4, 7 and 8 have been revised and reformatted to make their requirements clearer for candidates.

The most significant change is the removal of the statement from part (a) of these questions. Instead of 'selecting artwork(s) that are relevant to the statement', candidates are now asked to 'select one or more artwork(s) that you have studied'.

The requirements of the questions are unchanged. In part (a) candidates still have to discuss the selected artwork(s) in terms of one or more of the prompts provided, and then in part (b)

explain the influence of social and cultural and/or other factors on any of the artwork(s) discussed in part (a).

Future question papers will follow this format, which is exemplified in the republished Specimen and Exemplar Question Papers. These documents are available now on our website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47892.html>. Centres are advised to download copies of these revised documents.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	0
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	4125
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## Statistical information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 220				
A	29.6%	29.6%	1221	140
B	28.8%	58.4%	1189	118
C	27.7%	86.1%	1142	96
D	8.1%	94.2%	335	85
No award	5.8%	-	238	-

For this Course, the intention was to set an assessment with grade boundaries at the notional values of 50% for a Grade C and 70% for a Grade A.

Question 3, 4, 7 and 8 were intended to be accessible to all candidates; however due to wording and question structure they proved more difficult than intended. The main issue was around the (b) part of these questions. This affected candidates at all levels.

The grade boundaries were decreased by 10 marks for Grade A and for Grade C to reflect this.

The wording of the candidate task in the Portfolio component was not sufficiently clear in the Evaluation Section, meaning that candidates were not able to access the full range of marks. This affected candidates at all levels.

The grade boundaries were decreased by 4 marks for Grade A and Grade C to reflect this.

## 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.