



## Course Report 2017

Subject	Art & Design
Level	National 5

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: Portfolio**

The Portfolio assesses candidates' ability to apply Art and Design skills in response to a practical Expressive Art and Design task. The requirements of this task are unchanged from year to year, and the assessment performed as expected. Feedback from the marking team indicated that the assessment had differentiated effectively between candidates of different abilities and levels of understanding.

Most Portfolios demonstrated the skills and understanding expected at National 5 level. Expressive Art continues to be stronger than Design in general, and the marking team noted that the standard of Expressive work this year was particularly high. The standard of Design submissions had generally improved this year.

There was an increase in more concise and streamlined Portfolios, with many candidates choosing not to use the maximum allocation of 3 x A2 sheets or equivalent. Portfolios continue to be submitted in a number of formats.

In Expressive Art, a range of diverse approaches was evident. Still-life and portraiture continue to be the most popular genres, with landscape and the built environment also seen. There were interesting themes which encouraged personalisation and choice. There were very few submissions of 3D work in Expressive Art. Most candidates chose to work in 2D processes, such as painting and print-making, or to use dry media, such as pencil and oil pastel. It was encouraging to see more expressive approaches as well as realistic interpretations.

There was an increase in 2D design, with graphics and textile design being attempted by many candidates. 3D design areas which continue to be popular are jewellery and product design, particularly lighting. Architecture was also attempted by a number of candidates this year.

### **Component 2: Question paper**

The question paper assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of Art and Design practice, and their ability to critically analyse and respond to examples of Art and Design work. The paper performed as expected. 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 discriminated effectively between candidates with different levels of understanding.

The majority of candidates were able to complete all four questions within the time allocated. Most candidates understood the format of the examination and selected questions appropriately.

Performance in the question paper was significantly poorer than in the Portfolio, with many candidates struggling to produce the responses expected at this level. The marking team noted that the question paper was less well attempted than last year and that a significant number of candidates failed to demonstrate a basic level of understanding of Art and Design terminology.

As has been the case in previous years, the mandatory questions 1 and 7 were marginally better attempted than the optional questions.

In response to the mandatory questions candidates selected a range of works by different artists and designers, although this was less diverse than in previous years. Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Cezanne, Pablo Picasso, Samuel Peploe, Anne Redpath, Lucian Freud and Ralph Goings continue to be popular in Expressive Art Studies. In Design Studies, Alphonse Mucha, AM Cassandre, Louis Tiffany, René Lalique, Peter Chang, and Timorous Beasties continue to be popular choices.

Of the optional Expressive Art Studies questions, 4 (*Still Life with Palette* by Roy Lichtenstein) was the most popular, followed by 3 (*Lindsay Michie* by Anne Redpath). Question 2 (*The Emperor Enjoying Himself* by an unknown artist) and question 6 (*Eos, a Favorite Greyhound of Prince Albert* by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer) were reasonably popular. Very few candidates attempted question 5 (*Head of Invention* by Eduardo Paolozzi), which is also reflected in the fact that few centres present 3D work in Expressive Art.

In the Design Studies optional questions, 8 (*Animal Farm* book cover by Jed-Angelo Q), 9 (*Dyson DC59* by James Dyson and Associates) and 11 (wedding jewellery set by an unknown designer) were the most frequently attempted. There were also a large number of responses to question 12 (costume design for *Starlight Express* by John Napier), but fewer responses to the architectural/environmental design question 10 (*Riverside Museum* by Zaha Hadid) were seen.

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

### **Areas in which candidates performed well**

#### **Component 1: Portfolio**

Most candidates performed well in the Expressive Portfolio, and the best submissions showed creativity and imagination. A number of Portfolios were judged to be outstanding and demonstrated skill beyond the level expected.

Many candidates took inspiration from artists which positively influenced the subject matter and style of their work. In these examples, reference to the artist's work helped to inform markers of the candidate's intended approach.

In the most successful Expressive Art Portfolios, a clear starting point was indicated and a single line of development was evident. Developments were relevant to the candidate's

chosen direction and linked well with the final piece. In these examples, candidates made effective choices about the media and scale of their final piece. Many final pieces were highly finished with good visual impact.

Design Portfolios were generally better organised than in previous years. Sheets that had been well laid out with clear labelling, for example 'function', 'aesthetics', 'problem-solving', encouraged candidates to consider all design issues, including function, more effectively.

Well-constructed and achievable design briefs, identifying relevant design issues, gave candidates good direction. Design Portfolios that provided a selected idea from the unit as a starting point made the subsequent line of development clearer. Most candidates appeared to understand the design process and design development was better attempted this year.

There was some very innovative textile design where candidates demonstrated good knowledge of embellishment and construction techniques. Effective sources of inspiration ensured that they could respond in an original and creative way. Candidates produced beautiful hand/machine stitched embroidery samples in their development before making their design solution.

The marking team noted good examples of body adornment and lighting design where candidates had engaged with functionality as well as surface decoration. Architectural solutions which used ICT and model making in the development stage showed an increased level of skill and competence in this area of design.

Candidates generally made successful use of materials and processes, for example using paper manipulation to solve design problems. Technology was often used effectively and meaningfully in graphics, textiles and architecture.

Candidates often showed inventiveness when using low cost, or recycled materials in 3D design. The most effective 3D Design Portfolios included evidence of experimentation with materials and techniques, either through the inclusion of samples, or annotated photographs. Candidates who used 3D exploratory models and techniques effectively tended to show a very good understanding of the design process.

Evaluations where candidates reflected realistically and insightfully on the success of their Portfolios were well rewarded. Highly effective evaluations demonstrated an understanding of Art and Design terminology and made reference to the candidate's expressive theme and the requirements of their design brief.

A significant improvement in the quality of evaluations was noted. Most centres had opted to use the SQA templates, and this appeared to give candidates more effective direction on the requirements at this stage of the process. Evaluations tended to be more succinct, focused and well justified, with many candidates using a structured, bullet point format.

## **Component 2: Question paper**

There were very good responses to all questions. Some candidates opted to write an essay style response, while many used the prompts from the questions as sub-headings, which helped keep their responses focused.

Most candidates attempted to answer the questions that were set, and the marking team noted fewer rote-learned responses or responses which contained unnecessary biographical information.

In the mandatory questions, most candidates were able to apply their knowledge and understanding of specific Art and Design works in response to the questions that were asked. Responses to the mandatory questions showed personalisation and choice in candidates' selection of Art and Design works.

Question 9 (*Dyson DC59* by James Dyson and Associates) was generally well attempted with many candidates showing a good understanding of product design issues.

Effective responses addressed all aspects of each question. Well-prepared candidates who demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Art and Design practice were able to gain marks in the upper range. The most successful candidates were able to fully develop and justify their comments to gain marks.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Component 1: Portfolio**

A minority of centres exceeded the maximum of three A2 sheets or equivalent. This resulted in candidates submitting far more work than was required. A small number of centres submitted irrelevant work from candidates' units.

At times, overly complex, cluttered and poorly presented Portfolios did not clarify the candidate's creative process. This lack of editing made some Portfolios difficult to follow and could disadvantage candidates.

Where no clear starting point and/or theme/design brief were provided, it was difficult to ascertain the candidate's intentions. Portfolios that had unclear starting points often demonstrated a disconnected and confusing line of development.

Candidates were sometimes confused about visual continuity and further refinement. Simply repeating a development study as a final outcome, only on a larger scale, meant that they could not access full marks.

Some candidates were confused between what is considered a development and what is regarded as an additional idea. This could result in Portfolios that lacked a clear and focused single line of development, showing instead numerous different ideas. This approach did not fulfil the requirements of the assessment task — the in-depth exploration of one idea was often very limited in these examples.

Some centres used a pro-forma approach where all candidates had followed exactly the same process with the same range of materials, and often with an identical approach to the final piece. For example, some candidates struggled to work with certain materials and techniques, or to produce a well-refined final expressive piece on an A1 or A2 scale, when

this clearly did not suit their style or level of ability. These approaches often highlighted a candidate's weaknesses rather than developing their strengths.

In general, Design continues to be less well-attempted than Expressive, at times with a significant difference in quality between the two Portfolios. Design Portfolios could appear rushed and unresolved compared with a candidate's Expressive Portfolio.

Design briefs were sometimes lacking in detail or were too open. Design briefs that were too ambitious for this level caused problems for candidates at times. This was a particular problem with some complex architectural briefs.

Problem-solving was poorly considered at times. A number of candidates failed to show an effective understanding of relevant design issues, particularly form and function in 3D design. Many focused only on colour, surface decoration or pattern, and did not consider their concept as a 3D outcome.

In graphic design, some candidates did not fully explore layout and lettering. A number of candidates failed to engage with all of the opportunities afforded by their brief or design area. For example, some repeat pattern Portfolios contained only repetitive colour changes but showed no experimentation with motif development, pattern placement or change of scale.

In jewellery and fashion Portfolios, consideration of functional issues, such as fastenings and wearability, could be lacking.

When weaker candidates attempted to use unsuitable materials, their lack of refinement and skills often resulted in clunky, unsophisticated outcomes. Likewise, difficulties arose when candidates attempted to work in a design area where they had little skill.

Ineffective evaluations tended to include lengthy descriptions of what candidates had done rather than evaluative comments about the success of their work and approaches.

## **Component 2: Question paper**

The question paper continues to be challenging for many candidates at this level. Although most candidates focused on the questions that were set, many responses were very short and lacking in detail. Poor or non-existent justification also affected candidate marks. A number of candidates wrote lengthy, descriptive responses that did not show an understanding of critical analysis.

Poor understanding of Art and Design terminology affected many candidates' performance:

- ◆ *Composition* seemed to be understood only on a very basic level by many who described the arrangement without commenting on the effect of focal point, viewpoint, and perspective, for example.
- ◆ *Media handling and techniques* was not well understood by many candidates.
- ◆ *Mood and atmosphere* often elicited very simplistic responses only relating to colour — for example, bright colours associated with a happy mood and dull colours being connected to a sad mood, without any detailed explanation.

- ◆ *Visual impact* was not well understood by a number of candidates, who tended to describe a source of inspiration or appearance without explaining how this affected visual impact.
- ◆ *Fitness for purpose* was misunderstood by many candidates, who merely described the function of the design.

In the mandatory questions, a small number of candidates confused artists and designers, or failed to recall the names of artists or designers or the titles of works.

Although this was less common than in previous years, some candidates included biographical and historical information without relating these facts to the question that was asked.

Question 7 asked candidates to refer to the *target market/audience* of the designs they had studied. Many candidates gave vague, speculative and/or factually incorrect responses.

A number of candidates made very general comments that could relate to any Art or Design work and which were not specific or detailed enough to gain marks.

Question 8 (*Animal Farm* book cover by Jed-Angelo Q ) was often poorly attempted, and many candidates gave descriptive responses demonstrating little or no understanding of graphic design issues.

At the end of each question, candidates are directed to give an opinion on a specific aspect with two justified reasons. Many candidates did not respond effectively to this part of the question. For example, in response to Question 1, a number of candidates did not explain which of the works they felt to be the most creative, but said which they preferred instead. Many candidates repeated earlier points and failed to gain marks.

The marking team noted that a number of candidates demonstrated poor levels of literacy. A very limited range of vocabulary made it difficult for these candidates to fully express themselves. Illegible handwriting also caused an issue for certain candidates.

## **Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates**

### **Component 1: Portfolio**

Candidate performance in the Portfolio was improved this year. It is clear that most centres already have a good understanding of the requirements of the assessment tasks, and are directing and preparing candidates effectively in this part of the Course assessment. An improved understanding of how to organise and present Portfolios was evident; it was noted that presentations were generally easy to 'read' with good visual continuity and a clear line of development. A great many examples of good practice were seen.

Centres should ensure that all candidates have access to the instructions for the course assessment task instructions.

Very formulaic approaches should be avoided. It is appreciated that centres need to strike a balance between giving clear direction, which all candidates need, and providing a formula. This may suit some candidates but can limit others.

The Portfolio should include only one line of Expressive and Design development. This should be the specific lines of enquiry which lead to the final Expressive piece and Design solution. Any work that has no connection to the final outcomes should not be included.

Candidates who are intending to produce 3D outcomes in Expressive Art and/or Design should engage with 3D development to refine their ideas and skills before starting on the production of their outcomes.

It is recommended that candidates include their title/theme on the first sheet of their Expressive Portfolio.

Tracing or colouring photocopies in the Expressive Portfolio is self-penalising and should be discouraged. Candidates must demonstrate the appropriate skills to gain marks at this level.

It is not necessary for candidates who prefer to work on a smaller scale to produce a large-scale piece of work. Likewise, candidates who have a very expressive style may be more comfortable working on a larger scale final piece.

Design is less well attempted than Expressive Art in general. Centres must try to balance the time spent on each activity to allow candidates to perform effectively in both areas.

Design briefs should support candidates by giving adequate detail on the design issues to be considered. It is helpful to markers if the Design Brief is included on sheet 1 of the Portfolio. All design briefs should direct candidates 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, or practical issues, such as balance, weight and fastenings in jewellery design.

Centres should avoid giving candidates briefs that are too open and overly ambitious, or too closed and simplistic. It is acceptable for centres to provide briefs or design brief templates for candidates. Many design briefs include a source of inspiration to help candidates develop their ideas. When choosing sources of inspiration for design, centres should encourage candidates to be focused and specific. For example, 'passion flowers' or 'orchids' is likely to elicit a more creative response than 'flowers' in general.

Numerous photographs of a candidate's design solution at different stages of construction should not be included within the development. This does not attract any marks. The space would be better used to show experimentation carried out prior to the construction of the solution.

In graphic design and textiles, candidates could show more thorough consideration of scale and layout. Colour is an important element, but should be used with consideration. In graphic design, candidates should also be advised to explore the use of lettering in more depth as this is often poorly considered.



Candidates working on 2D Design Portfolios must demonstrate further refinement when producing final outcomes — a scaled up direct copy of a development will not fulfil the assessment criteria.

Centres need not submit candidates' 3D outcomes, but should ensure that clear, well-lit images showing the piece from different angles are provided.

Prior candidates complete the evaluation, centres should help them to develop their skills in this area. Candidates must complete their evaluations on the mandatory SQA templates for submissions made from 2018.

## **Component 2: Question paper**

As the question paper is less well attempted than the Portfolio, centres could improve candidate performance overall by focusing more on this aspect of the course.

Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the format of the exam and have an idea of the types of questions and diversity of images that may come up. Candidates should have opportunities to develop their exam technique. They could prepare for the question paper by completing practice questions and discussing example responses. Centres and candidates can access the [Specimen Question Paper](#) on the SQA website.

Poor understanding of basic art and design terms affects many candidates' performance. Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with art and design terminology. A list of terms that may be used in the paper is available in the [Course Specification](#).

In preparing for the mandatory questions, centres should advise candidates on suitable artworks and designs which would give them scope to answer the questions effectively. Selecting Art and Design works which contrast in some way, for example in terms of style or functionality, should give candidates more opportunity to answer Questions 1 and 7 effectively as they are less likely to repeat points.

Responses to Questions 1 and 7 should demonstrate that a candidate has studied the works selected. Therefore, comments should not be speculative, but must be factually correct and show knowledge and understanding.

To gain a mark, candidates need to make a fully justified comment in response to each element of the question. All elements of the question need to be answered to access full marks. When marking responses and giving feedback to candidates, teachers/lecturers could make it clear when justifications are lacking.

Centres should recommend special arrangements for candidates whose writing is so illegible that it may disadvantage them in a written examination.

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	9560
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Number of resulted entries in 2017	9369
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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 -				
A	48.4%	48.4%	4534	140
B	26.4%	74.8%	2473	120
C	16.5%	91.3%	1548	100
D	3.8%	95.1%	359	90
No award	4.9%	-	455	-

## 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.