



Course Report 2014

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 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 assessed candidates' ability to integrate and apply practical Art and Design skills. This was achieved by candidates selecting earlier development work and using this as creative stimuli to develop and produce one Expressive Art outcome and one Design solution. With an emphasis on the development process, leading to the production of final outcomes and evaluation, the Portfolio assessment differentiated effectively between candidates of different abilities and levels of understanding.

In this first year of assessment, it was clear that most centres had understood the assessment requirements, and the majority of candidates appeared to have been well directed.

Portfolios were diverse with a range of Expressive Art and Design areas covered. Centres submitted work in many different formats, tailored to suit their candidates' approaches. Expressive outcomes ranged from smaller than A3 to A1 size. Some candidates made use of the maximum number of sheets (equivalent to 3 x A2) and others opted not to use the maximum allocation. In each case, candidates were able to access the top marks range if they demonstrated that the assessment criteria had been met in a highly effective way.

Some candidates incorporated evaluations into their submission by including annotation throughout, while others produced an extended piece of writing at the end of the process. Markers were able to apply the marking criteria to the full range of different formats submitted without difficulty.

Still life and portraiture continue to be popular genres in Expressive Art, and there was also evidence of experimental and thematic approaches from some centres. Candidates who had chosen to submit Expressive Portfolios with thematic approaches were able to combine genres or to explore a particular style. Most expressive Portfolios involved 2-D processes, but a few centres submitted 3-D work. There was evidence that Expressive Art Studies topics studied in previous Unit work had been a strong influence on many candidates' work. Where personal choice was evident, this approach often communicated a high level of engagement.

In Design Portfolios, graphics, jewellery, fashion and textile design were popular areas. There were also some very good quality product design submissions.

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. Candidates appeared to engage well with this paper and most completed all four questions within the time limit. There was a wide range of artists and designers being discussed, with interesting and informative comparisons being made. The variety of artists and designers selected by candidates was refreshing and reflected the diverse range of

approaches seen in candidates' Portfolios. In most cases, candidates' selection of optional questions related to the selected artworks in their responses to question 1 and designs in question 7, but not always. This suggests that some candidates were able to apply their knowledge across a broader range of Art and Design areas, perhaps reflecting teaching approaches in some centres.

Section 1, Expressive Art Studies and Section 2, Design Studies were attempted equally well by candidates. The mandatory questions 1 and 7 were marginally better attempted than the optional questions. Of the optional questions, 2, 4 and 5 were most popular in Expressive Art Studies and 8, 11 and 12 in Design Studies.

Grade Boundary

Question Paper

Questions 1 and 7 were intended to discriminate between candidates, however proved to be easier than intended due to the wording of the marking instructions. This would have affected candidates at the C boundary more than those at the upper boundaries, therefore the C boundary was raised by 2 marks to reflect this, and the A boundary by one mark.

Portfolio

The wording of the candidate task in the Portfolio component was not sufficiently clear in the Evaluation Section meaning that some candidates were not able to access the full range of marks. This was more pronounced in the Expressive folio than the Design folio. The C boundary was lowered by 2 marks to reflect the issue in the Expressive folio, and by 1 mark to reflect the issue in the Design folio.

This had less of an effect at the A boundary, therefore the A boundary was lowered by 1 mark.

The net effect of this was that the C boundary was lowered by one mark and there was no change to boundaries at the higher levels.

We have taken the following action to rectify this for Diet 2015:

Reviewed marking instructions for questions 1 and 7, to increase demand.

Reviewed wording of candidate portfolio task to ensure clarity regarding the requirements for the Evaluation section, and made a minor revision to the related marking instruction. The revised document has been published on the SQA website.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Portfolio

The standard of submissions was generally good. Some Portfolios were exceptional, and a number exceeded the standard expected at this level. Candidates who had adhered to the

assessment instructions and who were able to produce work of the quality required were able to create very thorough and impressive Portfolios.

Design was weaker than Expressive in general, with some submissions showing a considerable discrepancy in quality between the Design and Expressive Portfolios. Some candidates who demonstrated excellent ability and understanding in the Expressive Portfolio struggled to meet National 5 standards in Design.

A number of candidates failed to meet the standard required in the Portfolio and had produced responses which were of an acceptable standard for National 4. A few candidates demonstrated ability at National 5 level in aspects of their Portfolios, particularly in the Expressive outcome, but their overall attainment was affected by poorly understood processes and/or lack of effective evaluation.

Component 2: Question paper

It was clear that most candidates had understood the format of the examination, and the majority seemed well prepared. On the whole, candidates realised the need to make reference to the specific visual and design elements asked about in the question and they were well prepared to adapt their knowledge to suit the questions set.

The question paper generated a wide range of marks from candidates and discriminated between candidates' with different levels of understanding. Well-prepared candidates who had a good knowledge and understanding of Art and Design practice were able to demonstrate this to gain marks in the upper range.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Portfolio

Most candidates performed well in the Expressive Portfolio, and there was evidence of excellent drawing and media-handling. Some candidates had experimented successfully with mixed media, collage and printmaking techniques. Painting was very proficient in many cases.

Where there was evidence of personal choice, candidates appeared to engage more effectively with the creative process. In many Portfolios, artists' and designers' work had clearly influenced the style and techniques used. Where this was done well, it gave candidates' work direction and relevance.

Portfolios were more successful in communicating the candidates' intentions and showing the subsequent line of development where the starting point from the Unit work had been clearly identified. A small selection of relevant contextual material, while it was not awarded marks, could be very helpful to markers in understanding a candidate's objectives; in some cases, this resulted in the Portfolio gaining marks where the marker was able to see more clearly what the candidate was attempting to do, particularly with more experimental approaches.

There were a range of design briefs and opportunities for candidates to produce some very exciting design work. Briefs that were clearly written and identified relevant design issues gave candidates a good starting point.

Candidates working on 3-D design benefitted from experimenting with 3-D construction techniques and materials at the development stage. Candidates who had recorded their 3-D development process in a series of photographs were able to communicate their creative thinking and demonstrate their problem-solving ability very effectively.

Some final 3-D design outcomes were very well made and communicated the solution very effectively; candidates had obviously invested time and care in the construction. The best 2-D outcomes in graphics and surface pattern design demonstrated further refinement and control of media and/or techniques, rather than just printing a development on a bigger scale.

There were some excellent evaluations where candidates reflected very articulately on their creative process and decision-making, and on the success of their final outcomes. Well-prepared candidates produced succinct, yet insightful and personal, justified opinions on their work.

Component 2: Question Paper

Most candidates performed well in the mandatory questions. They were able to apply their knowledge and understanding of specific artworks and designs, responding effectively to all aspects of questions 1 and 7. Generally, responses to the mandatory questions had a good level of detail and showed a personal interest. The range of vocabulary and knowledge of Art terms used and understood by candidates was impressive at times.

Where candidates had been well prepared and had a good understanding of Expressive Art and Design practice and terminology, they coped well with the optional questions. Candidates generally made appropriate choices and were able to demonstrate their understanding of the terms in the question. Markers commented favourably on the range of vocabulary and Art terms used and understood by many candidates.

The best responses addressed all aspects of each question effectively. Some candidates wrote well-structured essay-style answers, while other candidates used sub-headings to help organise their responses. A few candidates made very effective use of annotated illustrations. Successful candidates knew how to interpret the questions effectively and how to stay focused on the question asked. Well-prepared candidates were able to fully develop and justify observations and opinions to gain marks.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Portfolio

The starting point for the development was not identified in many Portfolios. Some Portfolios conveyed a limited ability to follow a single line of development. Presenting the logical,

sequential development of an idea posed a problem for certain candidates. Some Portfolios lacked coherence and at times candidates included more than one line of development. In such cases it could be difficult to determine which development work was pertinent.

Understanding of the development process appeared to be weak in a number of submissions. Some candidates appeared to have submitted a large amount of Unit work with little or no evidence of selection. A number of candidates submitted the maximum amount of sheets, when a more streamlined approach may have been more effective for them. This sometimes led to the inclusion of work of poorer quality and/or irrelevant work to fill the available space, which made the process difficult to follow.

In their Expressive outcome, several candidates found it very challenging to work on a larger scale, with work becoming less, rather than more, refined. In these instances, it was apparent that a larger scale did not suit the candidates' personal style or choice of media.

Design briefs were not submitted for some Portfolios. This made it difficult to understand the candidate's intentions and it also made it more problematic for the candidate to evaluate the success of their design outcome effectively.

Some candidates who were involved in a 3-D design activity did not engage at all with 3-D processes, techniques or materials, and this usually resulted in the design issues being addressed in a very limited way. These candidates did not fully explore the possibilities afforded by the brief and often failed to develop well thought-out and effective solutions.

At times, candidates chose to work in areas where it was clear they had very limited experience, skill or understanding of the issues involved. This was more prevalent in Design Portfolios than in Expressive. For example, some candidates chose to work in fashion or jewellery design but demonstrated no understanding of materials, construction techniques or functional issues, which made it very challenging for them to arrive at an effective solution. These candidates often produced solutions that were merely fashion illustrations, communicating little or no understanding of 3-D form and functionality, or very poorly realised 3-D outcomes.

Surface pattern/textile design was a popular area and was done well in many cases. However, a number of candidates demonstrated a very limited understanding of this design area. Development often followed a formulaic and simplistic process with limited opportunities for effective development. At times, there was little evidence of individual decision-making and selection. Candidates did not always show effective refinement and realisation of the final design solution, instead presenting one of their developments without any further refinement being carried out. This could also be a problem in graphic design Portfolios.

In a minority of submissions candidates did not maintain visual continuity between the work in the development stage and the final outcome, which affected the overall mark.

Evaluation was challenging for a number of candidates. Some did not include an evaluation at all; this occurred more frequently in the Expressive Portfolio. Where candidates had clearly struggled with evaluation, comments were often descriptive and/or very basic for this level.

Some candidates did not produce work that met the standard in terms of quality, and these candidates would have been more appropriately presented at National 4 level.

Component 2: Question paper

Candidates who appeared to have prepared a response beforehand often failed to answer the mandatory questions effectively. For example, a number of candidates discussed media handling and technique in response to question 1, despite the fact that they were not directed to do so. Some candidates included substantial amounts of biographical and historical information that did not relate to the question asked.

Some terminology posed a problem for certain candidates. The term 'subject matter', while mostly understood, was not approached effectively by a number of candidates. Instead of discussing this term in an analytical way, such as considering the choice of subject matter or its effect, many candidates gave a description or a list of the objects/people in the artwork.

It was noted that, in response to question 7, some candidates were unaware of the meaning of the term 'fitness for purpose' and struggled to respond effectively. In their answer to this question, a small number of candidates selected design items which were from different design areas, for example, comparing a light with a pair of shoes. Some candidates selected disparate items from the same design area, for instance, making a comparison between a lemon squeezer and a chair. While these could both be categorised as household products, and this approach is permissible (and some managed it well), some candidates found it difficult to make effective comparisons between items with very different functions.

Some responses were very descriptive. At this level, candidates are required to show that they can comment on artworks and designs in an analytical way, justifying and developing points made.

At the end of each question, candidates are directed to give justified opinions on a specific aspect. Some candidates omitted this part of the response entirely, while others repeated earlier points or failed to give a convincing justification.

In the mandatory questions, a few candidates attempted to discuss two artworks/designs by two artists/designers instead of comparing one by each artist/designer. This made it more complicated to structure a response and answer the questions effectively. A minority of candidates struggled with the paper in general, confusing artists and designers and demonstrating a lack of knowledge and understanding. A few did not read the instructions and attempted the entire paper. These candidates' marks tended to be very poor.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Portfolio

Centres should ensure that candidates have access to the instructions for the course assessment so that they fully understand the nature of the task. It is also recommended that

marking criteria are shared with candidates, as this will give them an insight into what is expected at each stage of the process.

Candidates should be fully prepared before beginning the course assessment. They should have an adequate understanding of the assessment requirements, and have demonstrated that they are able to produce Expressive and Design work at this level before proceeding with their assessment.

Candidates should be reminded to clearly identify the starting point for their Portfolio. This should be one Expressive development and one Design development from their Units. It need not be the original piece of work (a photograph or photocopy will suffice) but it must be included.

Only one line of Expressive and Design development should be included in the Portfolio. These should be the specific lines of development which lead to the final Expressive and Design outcomes.

Centres should note that tightly-controlled and formulaic approaches will most likely limit more able candidates. It is important that candidates are offered an appropriate degree of personal choice and scope to demonstrate creativity so that they can fulfil the assessment criteria. However, it is not recommended that candidates are given so much latitude that they select approaches, or attempt to work in areas, where they have little or no skill or aptitude. The Portfolio assesses each candidate's ability to apply their existing skills and understanding within an Expressive Art and Design context.

Portfolios which were well rewarded tended to communicate a thorough understanding of development. Candidates should be encouraged to fully explore their Expressive themes and selected approaches. They should also consider the creative opportunities presented by their Design brief. In each aspect, they should demonstrate evidence of the journey towards their final outcome, visually documenting their thought processes, decisions, adaptations and refinements.

In the most successful Design Portfolios, candidates produced refined and fully realised outcomes which effectively communicated their solution. It should be noted that design solutions need not rely on expensive materials, and centres should consider budget limitations when developing suitable design briefs; often candidates can be very creative in response to constraints, such as having to use limited materials, or perhaps incorporate recycled materials.

Centres need not submit candidates' 3-D outcomes, but should ensure that photographs of the work show the item clearly and from different angles.

In presenting their work for external assessment, candidates should aim for clarity so that their development process can be easily followed. Crowding the Portfolio with irrelevant Unit work should be avoided. There is no merit in filling space with such material; it cannot gain marks, and often detracts from the clear line of development which should be evident. The only Unit pieces that must be submitted are the selected developments which will form the stimuli for the Portfolio. The inclusion of some extra Unit work can help to contextualise a candidate's chosen approach, but careful selection criteria should be applied. Such extra

Unit work should only be submitted where it will give a better understanding of the candidate's selected approach. This might include, for example, an image of an artist's work, where a candidate has been very influenced by the style and technique, or perhaps an image which has been an important source of inspiration in the Design Portfolio.

Candidates must produce evaluations for both the Expressive and Design Portfolios. There is no need to produce very lengthy evaluations running to two to three pages. Candidates should concentrate on key points relating to their creative and decision-making processes, and reflect on the success of their final outcomes. Evaluations should consist of well-justified opinions that demonstrate an understanding of related issues, rather than comments that are merely descriptive. It is recommended that centres invest some time in preparing candidates for this part of the assessment. Refer to the detailed marking instructions, which are published on SQA's secure website within the Coursework Assessment Task to ensure that candidates' evaluations are focussed appropriately.

Component 2: Question paper

Centres should ensure that candidates understand how to approach the question paper. They will benefit from some teaching of exam technique, particularly how to manage their time and how to interpret and respond effectively to questions set.

It is recommended that candidates do not rely on prepared answers, as this often results in them producing content that is unrelated to the question and cannot be awarded marks.

Candidates should be familiar with Art and Design terminology so that they can fully understand the questions set.

Candidates should be aware that basic descriptive comments cannot be awarded marks. The most effective responses focus on the question being asked and contain well-developed and fully justified comments.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	0
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	9104
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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 200				
A	41.9%	41.9%	3817	140
B	25.2%	67.2%	2297	119
C	18.1%	85.3%	1651	99
D	5.8%	91.1%	529	89
No award	8.9%	-	810	-