



Course Report 2016

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

Component 1: Question paper

The question paper was well received by candidates, teachers and markers. The general perception was that the majority of candidates could access not only all of the 'image' questions, but also Questions 3, 4, 7 and 8. The questions that proved the most popular were Expressive Art Studies: Question 2 and Question 3, and Design Studies: Question 5 and Question 7.

There was no major difference in the performance of candidates in Expressive Art Studies Questions 1 and 2, and Design Studies Questions 5 and 6. However, candidates performed better in Expressive Art Studies Questions 3 and 4 than in Design Studies Questions 7 and 8.

The clarification of wording, and the removal of the 'statement' from Questions 3, 4, 7 and 8 had a positive effect on the performance of most candidates. However, disappointingly, a significant number of candidates still failed to link part (a) and part (b) of these questions. The continued lack of candidate understanding regarding the demands of these questions was addressed, and the Grade Boundary was adjusted accordingly to take account of this.

Component 2: Portfolio

The content and quality of work submitted by candidates was generally as expected, showing a wide range of ability and skills. Some centres had submitted work that was not of Higher standard, which led to low achievement for their candidates. These candidates would have been better placed at National 5 level.

Candidates' performance in the Design folio was not as proficient as it was in the Expressive folio. The assessment requirements and procedures had not changed in any way, and it appeared that the approach taken by some centres to the delivery and teaching of Design had compromised candidates' chances of success. In many folios, emphasis was weighted towards aesthetics at the expense of function and understanding of design considerations and constraints. This approach did not allow candidates to access the full range of marks.

The perception of teachers/centres as to what is required for Evaluations has changed. Evaluations were in the majority of cases excessively wordy, and were often simply descriptive. Many were a narrative of the process a candidate had followed from the Unit stage through to the evaluation itself. In light of the disproportionate amount of time and effort candidates are spending on the Evaluations. SQA is introducing an A4 pro forma for candidates to complete and attach to their portfolio.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Questions 1, 2, 5, and 6

The 'image' questions were answered particularly well, with many candidates giving extremely insightful and personal responses. The historical images in Questions 2 and 5 provoked responses that surprised and delighted the markers, showing candidates' ability to apply their knowledge and understanding to unseen images. Question 1 allowed for personal interpretation of the artist's intentions, while Question 6 prompted personal and emotional responses to an image familiar to many of the candidates. Those candidates who responded well to part (b), gave combined points that built on and extended solid responses given to part (a)

Questions 3, 4, 7 and 8

The removal of the 'statement' allowed candidates to focus on the specific demands of the questions. Many candidates displayed their knowledge of the work of a variety of artists, and an extensive range of designers, many of whom were contemporary. Candidates enthusiastically discussed their chosen art/design works and, in particular, those who carefully selected and focused on a small range of work were able to give mature and insightful comments.

In part (b), those candidates who had chosen to discuss a limited number of works also performed well. Their explanation of factors that had influenced the work discussed in part (a) displayed in-depth knowledge and understanding.

Component 2: Portfolio

The scope and quality of work produced for the majority of Expressive folios are a credit to candidates of all abilities. Work ranged from the traditional to the experimental, and covered every genre. It was encouraging to see candidates be more adventurous when tackling Landscape, as well as seeing an increase in the number of candidates undertaking Fantasy and Imagination. Although most folios were Still Life and Portraiture, the personalisation of themes showed maturity, sensitivity and confidence. For example, themes such as 'My Brother's Teddy Bear', 'My Journey to Scotland' or 'Alter Ego' gave candidates scope to explore a personal response to their subject matter.

Many candidates included reference to the work of artists and designers they had studied. The majority had used this influence in very positive and creative ways and had avoided pastiche.

Skill with media-handling was also in evidence, and many candidates worked confidently with mixed media, printing and painting techniques when communicating their creative intentions.

In Design, there were folios that showed an individual and creative response to the opportunities and requirements offered by achievable design briefs. Body Decoration/

Jewellery and Fashion/Costume were the most popular areas tackled, with slightly less evidence of Graphics, Architecture and Product. Candidates who carefully considered the aesthetics, design considerations and functional aspects of their designs were the most successful. Those who engaged with 3D work in relation to 3D design briefs showed more insight and understanding of design requirements, allowing them to access the full range of marks.

A number of candidates displayed excellent manual skills and imagination when working with 3D materials such as fabric, cane, wire and manipulated paper/card.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

There was an increase in the number of candidates who answered the questions out of sequence. At times part (b) of questions was answered first and then later in the response, the candidates revisited part (a). In the majority of cases, candidates did not benefit from this approach. Often the links between part (a) and (b) were forgotten; in Questions 3, 4, 7 and 8, different work was discussed in each part of the response meaning that marks could not be awarded; some candidates were confused as to what question they were answering; some candidates seemed more likely to write too much for the answers they wrote first and/or ran out of time to complete the paper.

Time management was an issue for many candidates. The first responses were often far too long and in many cases candidates had already achieved full marks for a response but went on to write, at times, another three or four pages. This led to candidates curtailing their final answers, or running out of time to complete the paper.

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

Although many candidates responded very well to the 'image' questions, there were a significant number of candidates who showed misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the prompts. It was concerning to find that candidates did not understand what was meant by what should be familiar prompts, such as pattern, viewpoint and imagery — pattern was confused with shape or colour; viewpoint with focal point or opinions and feelings; imagery with colour or text.

Although there are some crossovers in prompts, this must be explained by candidates in their responses. For example, 'the repetition of green shades of colour across the harbour front creates a pattern', rather than 'there are lots of colours'.

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

This part of the question is designed to be a discriminator, and candidates' responses confirmed this. However, many candidates did not seem to understand how to tackle this part and proceeded to list more un-combined points relating to the prompts. Candidates who were prepared 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 aspect of the questions, having more success in Expressive Art Studies than Design. However, many candidates did struggle to focus their

responses on the prompts selected, and went on to discuss, for example, all the visual elements. As with the 'image' questions, there was worrying evidence of misunderstanding, or lack of knowledge of the definition of prompts such as subject matter, tone, media, aesthetics and fitness for purpose. Candidates who were familiar with the definition of prompts and were well prepared for this aspect of the paper were able to access the full range of marks.

There was also evidence that candidates had not made the most appropriate choice of question and associated prompts for the work they had studied.

A significant number of candidates discussed a wide range of work — sometimes 4–8 paintings or designs. This led to very superficial responses that lacked depth and understanding of the work they had studied. Responses often repeated the same superficial points and observations, as works chosen were very similar. For example, selecting four 'Sunflower' paintings by Van Gogh hindered candidates, and did not allow them scope to show their depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding.

The most successful responses focused on one or two works, giving candidates the possibility of discussing the work in more relevant detail. Also, selecting works that had a relationship or theme encouraged candidates to give meaningful and insightful responses. For example, Expressive Art: work based on gardens, reflections, cityscapes. Design Studies: hats, festival posters, theatre costumes.

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

Although the removal of the 'statement' and the clarification in wording gave more focus and direction in the questions, disappointingly, a significant number of candidates still failed to link part (b) with the art/design work discussed in part (a). These responses focused on factors that influenced the artist/designer rather than, as indicated in the question, the work discussed in part (a). Despite often writing extensive responses, this misinterpretation of the question led to many candidates being awarded very few or no marks for part (b).

Component 2: Portfolio

The perception of teachers/centres as to what is required of candidates for their Portfolio seems to have changed. The majority of candidates submitted significantly more work than is required to meet the demands of the assessment. The amount of work submitted by a considerable number of candidates was far beyond what is asked for in SQA documentation, or was necessary for them to access the full range of marks. Increased numbers of centres had exceeded the 3xA2 sheets per folio limit, and much of the work submitted was unnecessary and repetitive.

In a significant number of folios, candidates did not identify an Expressive or Design starting point/initial idea, leading to difficulties when it came to applying the Marking Instructions and allocating marks. In many cases, as a starting point/initial idea, candidates were including the majority or even all of their unit work. The requirement is to submit an **edited** and **limited** amount of unit work as a guide to inform markers of the candidates' intentions.

For Further Development, excessive amounts of work were submitted by many candidates. Much of this work did not show further development and refinement of a candidate's ideas. If much of this extraneous work had been removed from the folios, the candidates would have

achieved the same marks. Candidates who spent time on meaningful development and refinement of the idea they had identified in the starting point/initial idea were able to access the full range of marks.

When preparing folios for submission, centres should be aware that the starting point/initial idea and unit work do not gain marks.

In Expressive folios, there were a small number of candidates who struggled with media-handling skills such as painting and sculpture. However, most used media in a competent and appropriate way. Some did find their choice of theme and subject matter demanding, and would have benefitted from a more appropriate choice for their ability level.

At the Further Development stage, a significant number of candidates did not show further development and refinement of their starting point/idea. Their work consisted of what appeared to be early stages of development and would have been better presented for unit assessment. In some cases, more than one line of development was presented

In Design folios, candidates' chances of success were very often compromised by design briefs that were totally unrealistic and too demanding for their ability level. A significant number were tackling techniques and processes that were far beyond their capabilities. For example, candidates were making dresses, bags, hats etc, when it was evident that they did not have basic hand or machine sewing skills. In body decoration/jewellery, their lack of construction and manual skills was evident when manipulating fabric, card, wire etc, leading to poor quality samples and outcomes.

At the Further Development stage, a significant number of candidates did not show further development and refinement of their starting point/idea. Their work consisted of what appeared to be early stages of development and would have been better presented for unit assessment. In some cases, more than one line of development was presented. The aesthetic qualities of design ideas were often communicated reasonably well, but the work showed little or no understanding of function or design considerations such as safety, weight, balance, wearability, or needs of the target market. This approach did not allow candidates to access the full range of marks.

Evaluations that were purely descriptions of the practical process followed by candidates were very much in evidence in both Expressive and Design folios. Many candidates did not appear to understand the difference between description and evaluation. Excessively wordy, essay style Evaluations presented at the end of the folios often included verbatim repetition of annotations already included on the Further Development sheet. On occasions, despite writing several thousand words, candidates did not achieve full marks as the content was a descriptive narrative rather than an evaluation of their process. Candidates who addressed the specified requirements of the Evaluation in a succinct and focused way were able to access the available 8 marks.

It was evident that many candidates had spent a disproportionate amount of time on writing their Evaluations, time that could have been better spent on Further Development or Final Pieces/Outcomes.

At times, Evaluations were illegible. For example, poor handwriting; point size 8 closely typed: written on orange paper with silver pen etc.

There is no requirement to write lengthy, verbose evaluations. Succinct, evaluative commentaries rather than descriptive narratives will allow candidates to access the full range of marks.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

It is very encouraging to see evidence that many centres prepared their candidates well for the question paper by offering them the opportunity to engage in meaningful and personalised study of artists and designers. By doing this, candidates were able to display a real enthusiasm for their studies. Teaching of exam technique was also evident, and by having this skill, candidates demonstrated that they are familiar with the structure and potential content of the question paper. This is to be encouraged as it allowed them to select questions that best suit their knowledge base.

Support with exam technique is absolutely essential for all candidates — selection of questions, structuring of responses, and time management will help candidates respond effectively to questions set. When selecting questions, candidates should be made fully aware of the importance of command words such as ‘describe’, ‘explain’, ‘discuss’. They should also be aware of the definition of possible prompts. Information on command words and prompts is available in the Higher Question Paper Marking Instructions and Higher Question Paper Brief.

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

Throughout the course work, centres should continue to encourage study of a range of Expressive genres and Design areas that will support candidates when responding to the unseen images in Questions 1, 2, 5, and 6. As preparation for part (b) of these questions, centres must give guidance to candidates to help them structure combined points based on the descriptions they have given in part (a).

For Questions 3, 4, 7, and 8, centres must ensure that candidates fully understand 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 clearly communicated to candidates that biographical information is **not** required unless it helps explain a factor(s) that influenced the work discussed in part (a).

Establishing the link between **work** discussed in part (a) and part (b) is essential if candidates are to access the full range of marks for these questions.

Component 2: Portfolio

Much of the work produced by candidates is to be commended. In particular, Expressive folios show a strong personal engagement with the choice of themes and subject matter, and this is to be encouraged. The quality of work produced for Expressive folios shows increasing confidence with unusual contexts and experimental use of media, techniques and technology. Centres should continue to explore these new approaches and methodologies.

At the start of the course, centres should discuss course requirements with candidates, and, before proceeding, have evidence that candidates have demonstrated the necessary manual skills to produce Expressive and Design work at this level.

Candidates should fully understand the demands of the Portfolio. It is also recommended that assessment requirements are shared with candidates as this will support them at each stage of the process. Centres should ensure that candidates show engagement with all aspects of the assessment criteria.

Starting Point/Original Idea

For both the Expressive and Design folios, it is absolutely essential that candidates include and clearly identify a starting point/initial idea. The starting point/initial idea comprising of edited and limited contextual work from the Units, should be clearly labelled/indicated, minimal and relevant. The purpose of the starting point/initial idea is merely to make intentions clear for markers and does not attract any marks. The starting point/initial idea should be carefully considered as, in 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. In Design, a summarised Design Brief and a small design sketch effectively puts the work in context for markers. There is no need to write a lengthy statement — a succinct design brief/statement is sufficient.

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

At the development stage of both the Expressive and Design folios, work should show **one** clear line of further and refined development of the starting point/original idea. Work from the unit or work that revisits early stages of development should not be included.

Candidates should be made aware that that their work must only show **one** 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 one idea that leads to the Final Piece/Solution.

Work that is submitted should clearly address the assessment requirements.

Submitting multiple Final Pieces/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 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 displaying clear continuity and articulation with the Final Piece/Solution. Work that is submitted should clearly address the assessment requirements.

Submission of Expressive and Design folios

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. Any further development work should be totally relevant, and should clearly link to the Final Piece/Solution. 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 marker, displays the candidate's work to best advantage, is safe, and that the work is securely attached. The weight of sheets attached horizontally, rather than vertically, is a problem as work is more liable to tear and be damaged. This format is also difficult to view for the markers.

There is no requirement to fill the maximum number of sheets. Adhere to the maximum number of sheets — 3 x A2 per folio.

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

Evaluation

Evaluations must be included for both Expressive and Design folios. Candidates would benefit greatly from guidance on writing, structuring and presenting Evaluations/evaluative comments. This would allow them to access the full range of marks. Centres should make absolutely sure that time spent on Evaluations is not excessive, and is proportionate to its weighting in the overall Portfolio mark. Evaluation constitutes 10% of the overall mark.

Attaching the Evaluation to the first sheet of development beside the Starting Point/Initial Idea is recommended. This can help guide markers through an understanding of the candidate's intentions and subsequent reflections on their folio.

Candidates should engage with all aspects of the assessment requirements, as this will provide relevant focus for the content of their Evaluations. Evaluations should be succinct — there is no requirement for candidates to write at length. Relevant and evaluative annotations throughout the development process can benefit candidates and help explain their decision making and intentions. However, there is no need to repeat these comments in an essay type pro-forma/format.

Centres should encourage candidates to 'review and reflect' when evaluating their work and 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 information does not gain any marks.

Comments made in the Evaluation should be succinct, evaluative and not descriptive.

Ensure handwriting is legible and easy to read. Perhaps consider word processing the Evaluations, using point size 12 minimum. Avoid double sided sheets and methods such as using white or metallic pens on coloured paper or acetate as this can make comments very difficult to read.

Do not glue the Evaluations over parts of the Final Piece/Solution.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	4125
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	5500
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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	25.5%	25.5%	1402	148
B	27.3%	52.8%	1504	126
C	28.2%	81.0%	1549	104
D	9.6%	90.6%	526	93
No award	9.4%	-	519	0

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.