Course Report 2016

Subject	Art and 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

Component 1: Portfolio

The Portfolio assesses candidates' ability to apply Art and Design skills in response to a practical Expressive Art and Design task. A total of 160 marks are available for the Portfolio, 80 marks for each of the Expressive Art and Design tasks.

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 of the creative process expected at National 5 level. The marking team reported that the standard had improved from last year. There were fewer instances of irrelevant unit work being submitted, and many centres had opted to submit more streamlined Portfolios which did not always require the maximum allocation of sheets.

A diverse range of formats continues to be submitted, within the acceptable limit of 3 x A2 sheets or equivalent. Candidates who met the assessment criteria in a highly effective way were able to access the top marks range regardless of the presentation format selected or whether they had used the maximum allocation of sheets.

A range of Expressive Art and Design areas were covered, with many diverse and exciting approaches evident. Still-life and portraiture continue to be the most frequently selected genres in Expressive Art. There were also interesting examples of more thematic and conceptual work. Fewer centres submitted 3D work. Most candidates had worked in 2D processes, such as painting, print-making and the use of dry media, such as oil pastel. There was some exciting use of collage and mixed-media.

Graphics, jewellery and fashion continue to be popular areas in Design. Surface pattern design was also a popular area for candidates this year. Product design is becoming more prevalent, with some good examples of lighting design in particular. A few candidates submitted architectural design submissions, which seemed to have gained in popularity this year.

Component 2: Question paper

The question paper assesses 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 consists of two sections, Expressive Art Studies and Design Studies. Candidates respond to four questions worth 10 marks each, totalling 40 marks. Two questions are mandatory and candidates select the remaining two from five optional questions in each section.

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.

Section 1, Expressive Art Studies, and Section 2, Design Studies, were attempted equally well by candidates. 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 wide range of works by different artists and designers for discussion. This was broadly in line with centre approaches to the Portfolio and the influence of artists and designers evident in candidates' practical work. Cezanne, Picasso, Van Gogh and Peploe continue to be popular in Expressive Art Studies, but there were also a number of less well-known contemporary artists selected. In Design Studies, Mucha, Cassandre, Lalique, Peter Chang, Timorous Beasties, Tiffany and Philippe Stark continue to be popular choices.

Of the optional questions, Question 2 (*The Soul of the Soulless City* by Christopher Wynne Nevison) and Question 4 (*War* by Ken Currie) were most popular in Expressive Art Studies. Both questions elicited some very personal and insightful responses. Very few candidates attempted Question 5 (*Maman* by Louise Bourgeois) but this is also reflected in the fact that few centres present 3D Expressive Art work.

In Design Studies, Questions 8 (poster by Bonnie MacLean), 11 (necklace by Angela Venable) and 12 (Dr Martens Boots) were the most frequently attempted.

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. The marking team reported that, in general, candidates had attempted the questions more effectively than in the past two years.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Portfolio
Most candidates performed well in the Expressive Portfolio. Candidates used a variety of media-handling techniques with confidence. There were some outstanding Portfolios, with some candidates demonstrating ability beyond that expected at this level. Candidates were often inspired by their studies of artists' work which gave their Expressive Portfolios a clear direction. This often led to interesting personal themes and topics being explored.

In most Expressive Art Portfolios, a clear single line of development was evident. If the starting point was indicated, this helped markers to understand the candidate's development process more effectively. Many candidates included relevant contextual material, such as an example of an inspirational artwork. This could help inform markers of the candidate's intended approach and assist them in understanding the subsequent line of development.

The best examples were clearly and logically laid out, labelled and annotated where appropriate.

Design briefs which were well constructed and identified relevant design issues, gave candidates effective direction. Portfolios which provided a selected idea from the unit as a clear starting point made the line of development easier to follow. The best Design Portfolios demonstrated one focused line of development showing thorough consideration of relevant design issues and excellent problem-solving skills.

A number of Design Portfolios demonstrated effective use of materials and techniques with a high level of personal engagement and creativity evident. Candidates continued to show 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.

There were some excellent evaluations which were concisely written and effectively focused on the candidate's original intentions. Candidates were rewarded when they reflected realistically and insightfully on the success of their Portfolios. Highly effective evaluations demonstrated a good understanding of Art and Design terminology.

Component 2: Question paper

The majority of candidates focused on what the questions asked, and attempted to respond to all elements in each question. Good responses were seen to all of the questions. The marking team noted an improvement in structure and content with less irrelevant information being included than in previous years.

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 asked. Responses to the mandatory questions showed a high level of personalisation and choice in candidates' selection of Expressive Art works and Design works.

The best responses addressed all aspects of each question effectively. Some candidates chose to write essay-style responses, while others used sub-headings to help structure their answers. A few candidates made very effective use of annotated illustrations. Candidates who demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of Art and Design practice were able to gain marks in the upper range. The most successful candidates demonstrated good understanding of the terminology used in the questions, and were able to fully develop and justify their comments to gain marks.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Portfolio

Design continues to be weaker than Expressive in general. This often led to a significant discrepancy in marks awarded to candidates' Design and Expressive Portfolios.

Although fewer in number than last year, a number of candidates' Portfolios did not demonstrate the creativity and skill required at National 5. These candidates would have been more appropriately presented at National 4.

A significant number of candidates did not include a starting point. At times, design briefs were also missing and themes or titles for Expressive Portfolios were not evident.

Some centres are still submitting irrelevant unit work and/or multiple lines of development. At times, candidates used the maximum allocation of sheets where a more streamlined approach would have been advisable. These Portfolios sometimes contained more than one line of development and/or repetitive development work that did not add to the process. Markers reported that this work was challenging to mark as the process was often confused and very difficult to follow.

Candidates who rely on tracing or colouring over photocopies in their Expressive Portfolios cannot demonstrate all of the skills required and cannot access all of the marks available.

Unrealistic design briefs, or briefs that lacked detail, sometimes caused candidates difficulty. Some candidates chose to engage with a design area where it was clear that they had limited skills and knowledge — for example, fashion Portfolios where construction skills were very weak. Unsuitable design briefs often took candidates beyond their skill level and resulted in some working with inappropriate materials.

Candidates involved in 3D Design sometimes did not engage at all with 3D processes. This meant that they had very limited opportunities to demonstrate their problem-solving skills through experimentation with techniques and materials. This lack of thorough development was often reflected in an ineffective solution. Some 3D Design solutions were poorly constructed and not well considered, which affected candidate marks.

In some 3D Design Portfolios, candidates submitted photographs of their solution in construction as part of their development work. This space-filling approach does not allow the candidate to fully demonstrate their problem solving skills in the development process.

Some candidates who had elected to work in graphics and surface pattern design showed a simplistic approach when using ICT to generate development work. Some candidates merely presented a number of colour schemes without developing and refining their idea. At times, a solution was presented which was an enlarged copy of a development. These candidates could not access all of the marks available for further refinement of their idea.

Only a few candidates did not include evaluations, but some candidates' marks were affected by poor quality evaluations. Candidates sometimes struggled to use appropriate terminology. Some evaluations were lengthy but were descriptive rather than evaluative. Some evaluations did not match the marking criteria.

In their Expressive Portfolios, some candidates found it difficult to maintain quality, or to refine their technique further, when working on larger scale final pieces.

Component 2: Question paper

In general, candidates performed less well in the question paper than in the Portfolio and this continues to be a challenging area for many candidates at this level.

Poor or non-existent justification was the main issue that affected candidate marks. Although most candidates tried to focus on the questions, many responses demonstrated a lack of depth with little attempt to justify comments made. A number of candidates wrote lengthy, descriptive responses.

In the mandatory questions, some candidates ignored the question and appeared to give a rote learned response, although this was less prevalent than in previous years. A few candidates confused artists and designers and demonstrated a general lack of knowledge and understanding. A very small number of candidates failed to recall the names of artists or designers or the titles of works.

Some candidates included biographical and historical information without relating these facts to the question.

Some candidates struggled to respond effectively to the Expressive Art Studies optional questions, giving a narrative response, instead of demonstrating the knowledge of Expressive Art terminology expected of National 5 candidates.

A number of candidates appeared to misunderstand basic Art and Design terminology. In Question 1, in response to composition/arrangement, some candidates described the subject matter while others tended to discuss focal point but did not discuss other aspects of composition, such as viewpoint or perspective. A significant number of candidates also struggled with the term 'style' in Question 1. Instead of explaining the style of the selected works, many discussed media-handling and technique without relating this to the impact on style. 'Style' seemed to be better understood in terms of design, but relating it to Expressive artwork posed difficulties for many candidates. In the Design Studies mandatory question, some candidates responded in an ineffective way to the term 'fitness for purpose', describing the purpose of the design instead. In responding to 'influences/sources of inspiration', some candidates identified influences/inspirations but failed to explain the impact on the design.

At the end of each question, candidates are directed to give two justified opinions on a specific aspect. Many candidates repeated earlier points and failed to gain marks.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Portfolio

Candidates should be presented at the appropriate level. They should have demonstrated that they are able to produce Expressive and Design work at this level before proceeding with the Portfolio

Ensure that candidates have access to the instructions for the Course Assessment task.

Marking criteria can be shared with candidates so that they have a clear understanding of the expectations and where marks are awarded.

Avoid very formulaic approaches. Centres need to strike a balance between giving clear direction, which all candidates need, and providing a 'one size fits all' formula. This may suit some candidates but can limit the more able.

Since candidates are awarded marks for the further development and refinement of a selected idea, it is important to include these as the starting point for each Portfolio. These should be clearly indicated so they can be identified by the marker. These need not be the original pieces of work (photographs or photocopies are acceptable).

Any unit work that is included should be relevant and not merely used as a 'space-filler'. Useful contextual material may include inspirational art work and sources of design inspiration, for example.

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

Ensure that Portfolios are clearly laid out and that the line of development is obvious. Poorly presented work can make Portfolios confusing and difficult to follow. A number of formats are acceptable, but centres should note that sheets taped horizontally can sometimes be difficult to view.

There is no requirement to use the maximum allocation of 3 x A2 sheets. Streamlined and concise Portfolios are often more effective at communicating the candidates' line of development.

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.

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

It is recommended that candidates include their title/theme on their Expressive Portfolio.

Encourage candidates to vary the media used within their Expressive development and to explore different compositions. While candidates do not have to produce a vast amount of development work, each study should show development and refinement of the idea, rather than merely repeating the composition in a different media.

Dissuade candidates from tracing or colouring photocopies in their Expressive Portfolios as this is self-penalising. Candidates must demonstrate the appropriate skills to gain marks at this level.

Some candidates struggle to work on a large or small scale in Expressive Art. Consider each individual candidate's style and preferences when offering advice on the scale of the final Expressive Art piece.

As the Design Portfolio is less well attempted than the Expressive Portfolio in most centres, more time could be spent building up candidates' understanding and ability in this area. Centres should also consider time constraints, the teacher's area of expertise and candidates' prior experience when design briefs are being developed. Briefs should provide an appropriate degree of challenge but be achievable for the candidate.

Centres should also consider their own facilities and budgets when devising briefs. It is possible to produce very effective design work at a low cost and with limited resources if this is built into the brief. Often candidates can show a high level of creativity in response to constraints, such as using limited, or low-cost, materials.

Avoid design briefs where candidates are likely to produce derivative, preconceived ideas, as this tends to limit their creativity.

Numerous photographs of a candidate's Design solution at different stages of construction is not a substitute for development work. Use the space for development in the candidate's Portfolio to show how they arrived at the solution instead; which should be the experimentation before the construction of the solution.

ICT is a useful tool, but should be used in a controlled way. Candidates should use ICT to develop and refine ideas, rather than to produce repetitive versions of an idea with different filters applied, or in several different colour schemes, which is a very basic approach at this level. Candidates can demonstrate creativity and experimentation more effectively by showing consideration of scale, layout and lettering, if appropriate. Colour is an important element, but should be used with consideration.

Candidates are required to produce refined and fully realised Design solutions, so centres should plan to allow adequate time for this.

Candidates working on 2D Design Portfolios should be reminded that a solution which is a scaled up direct copy of a development does not demonstrate further refinement.

Effective evaluations are concise and well-focused. Centres should help candidates develop their evaluation skills. Evaluations should reflect on the success of the Portfolio and provide well-justified opinions. They should not be printed double-sided, as it is difficult to read the text upside down.

SQA is introducing an A4 pro-forma for candidates to complete and attach to their Portfolios.

Component 2: Question paper

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. Centres and candidates can access the specimen question paper, as well as past papers on the SQA website.
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47388.html

Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with Art and Design terminology so that they can understand the paper content and respond accordingly. A list of terms that may be used in the paper is available in the Question Paper Brief on the SQA website. http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/N5ArtAndDesignQPBrief.pdf

In preparing pupils for the mandatory questions, centres could advise candidates on suitable artworks and designs which would give them scope for answering the questions effectively. Candidates should ensure that they understand all of the key terms in relation to their selected works.

Candidates should not rely on rote learned answers, in response to the mandatory questions. This can result in candidates writing lengthy responses which fail to answer the question asked.

Lengthy introductions giving biographical information in response to the mandatory questions should be avoided. This information can only be awarded marks if the candidate relates it in some way to the question.

Candidates should write in Art and Design terms and avoid giving descriptive narrative responses to Expressive Art Studies optional questions. Centres could prepare candidates by giving them practice questions and example responses.

Many candidates could improve their exam technique. To gain a mark, they need to make a fully justified comment in response to an element of the question. All elements of the question need to be answered to access full marks. Centres could advise on how to answer the last part of each question more effectively as many candidates find this challenging.

Some candidates' handwriting was barely legible. If the writing cannot be read, marks cannot be awarded. Centres should consider special arrangements for candidates whose writing is so poor that it may disadvantage them in a written examination.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	10150

Number of resulted entries in 2016	9650

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	41.8%	41.8%	4031	140
B	28.0%	69.8%	2702	120
C	19.3%	89.1%	1861	100
D	5.0%	94.1%	484	90
No award	5.9%	-	572	-

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.