



Course Report 2018

Subject	Art and Design
Level	Higher

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report 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.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Component 1: question paper

The question paper allows candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of art and design practice covered coursework. Candidates sit a question paper consisting of two sections: Expressive Art Studies and Design Studies. Each section contains two optional 'image' questions (Questions 1, 2, 5, 6) and two further optional questions (Questions 3, 4, 7, 8)

The question paper performed as expected and was well received by candidates, centres and markers. Feedback indicated that the question paper was fair and accessible for candidates in terms of coverage and overall level of demand.

The majority of candidates showed a better understanding of the demands of the paper and most completed the four required questions.

The questions that proved most popular were: Section 1: Expressive Art Studies: Questions 1 and 4; and Section 2: Design Studies: Questions 6 and 8.

There was no major difference in candidate performance between Section 1: Expressive Arts Studies and Section 2: Design Studies.

Part (b) of Questions 1, 2, 5, and 6, which is designed to be a discriminator, continues to be challenging for many candidates.

Component 2: portfolio

The portfolio assesses candidates' ability to understand and apply practical art and design skills through the production of an expressive art and design portfolio. Candidates demonstrate an understanding of the creative and design processes, including a creative starting point and the further development and refinement of one idea, the production of a final expressive and design solution and evaluation.

Candidates' response to the coursework assessment task was as expected, and the task proved to be fair and accessible for candidates in terms of coverage and overall level of demand. Markers commented positively on the quality of portfolios and the skills exemplified by many candidates, several whose work was 'beyond' Higher standard.

There was an increase in more concise and streamlined portfolios, with many more candidates presenting work on the maximum allocation of 3 x A2 sheets or equivalent. Portfolios continue to be submitted in a number of formats.

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

Candidates addressed the demands of the design portfolio more successfully than previously, and the work displayed a better understanding of the portfolio requirements. More design briefs were individualised which encouraged a wider range of creative treatments from candidates. Overall, centres sent fewer 3D examples with portfolios.

Evaluations were generally more succinct, with many centres using the evaluation pro forma. However, some candidates continue to find making evaluative rather than descriptive comments challenging.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper

Section 1: Expressive Art Studies

Question 1 and Question 2

Part (a): Candidates answered this part of the questions particularly well, showing their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding to unseen images. Most linked their comments succinctly to the given prompts.

Responses to Question 1 (a) provoked insightful responses, with many candidates able to eloquently respond to the prompts using accurate terminology.

Question 2 (a) allowed for personal interpretation of the artist's intentions, with candidates effectively describing the artist's approach to the subject matter. Many candidates referred to the painting's title to help inform their responses.

Part (b): This part of the questions was tackled well by candidates who made reference to, and explained, the third prompt by combining and building on points they had made in part (a) of their answer. Good exam preparation allowed these candidates to access the full range of marks.

Question 3 and Question 4

Part (a): Many candidates took the opportunity to use appropriate art terminology to display their knowledge of the work, as well as a variety of both historical and contemporary artists. It was encouraging to see evidence of candidates studying a wider range of artists and artwork from different time periods.

Many candidates enthusiastically discussed their chosen art works, showing their in-depth knowledge and understanding of the artist's intentions with reference to one or both of the given prompts.

Candidates who elected to discuss only one artwork very often did so in a meaningful and comprehensive manner while carefully relating points made to one or both of the prompts. Candidates who chose to select a number of different works that came from the same genre were able to make meaningful and insightful responses.

Part (b): Many candidates took the opportunity to show their understanding of the factors that had influenced the art works they had discussed in part (a). Candidates who clearly linked their response to part (b) to the art works discussed in part (a), were able to access the full range of available marks. Those candidates who had selected to discuss one, or a

limited number of art works, gave relevant and appropriate explanations of the influencing factors.

Section 2: Design Studies

Question 5 and Question 6

Part (a): The majority of candidates answered question 6. Candidate responses highlighted their ability to apply knowledge and understanding to unseen images. Most linked their comments succinctly to the given prompts. Responses to Question 6 (a) showed that candidates who understood the intentions of the designers in terms of the functional and aesthetic qualities of the design were able to access the full range of marks.

In Question 5 (a) candidates who understood the meaning of the prompts and described evidence of them in the image were able to access the full range of marks.

Part (b): This part of the questions was tackled well by candidates who made reference to, and explained, the third prompt by combining and building on points they had made in part (a) of their answer. Good exam preparation allowed these candidates to access the full range of marks.

Question 7 and Question 8

Part (a): Many candidates used appropriate design terminology to display their knowledge of the work of a variety of designers. It was encouraging to see continued evidence of candidates studying a range of designers and design work from different time periods.

Many candidates enthusiastically discussed their chosen design works, showing their in-depth knowledge and understanding of the designer's intentions with reference to one or both of the given prompts.

Candidates who elected to discuss only one design work very often did so in a meaningful and comprehensive manner, while carefully relating all points made to one or both of the prompts. Candidates who chose to select a number of different works that came from the same design area were able to make meaningful and insightful responses.

Part (b): This part of the questions gave an opportunity for most candidates to show their understanding of the factors that had influenced the design works they had discussed in part (a). Candidates who made the link clear between the design works discussed in part (a) and part (b) were able to access the full range of available marks. Those candidates who had elected to discuss one, or a limited number of design works, gave relevant and appropriate explanations of the influencing factors.

Component 2: portfolio

Expressive portfolio

The scope and quality of work produced for the majority of expressive portfolios continued to be a credit to candidates of all abilities. Markers saw a significant number of folios that displayed confident and creative use of media and techniques. Although most folios were still life and portraiture, the personalisation of themes showed maturity, sensitivity and confidence. Within those genres, the work was extremely varied; with subjects which held a

personal interest for the candidate often resulting in more original and successful outcomes. When landscape and built environment was tackled, it was of a high standard.

Having a clear creative starting point which identified a theme helped markers understand the candidate's intentions and allowed candidates to more successfully work through the stages of further development to produce a final outcome. Most candidates who referenced the work of an artist in their starting point did so in a positive and creative way.

Many expressive portfolios showed clear visual continuity, with candidates successfully developing and refining their artwork to best reflect their theme and practical skills.

Choice of media varied from the more traditional painting, pastel and coloured pencil work to more experimental techniques, including mixed media, print-making and the use of digital technology.

Guidance to centres on the requirements for the evaluation, and the use of the evaluation pro forma, allowed candidates to make more focused and well-considered evaluative comments and access the full range of marks.

Design portfolio

Markers commented that more candidates than previously showed a clear understanding of the requirements of the design portfolio, especially when they worked from achievable and personalised design briefs. This resulted in more individual and creative responses to the opportunities and requirements offered by the brief.

Markers noted an improvement in presentation layouts used by many candidates which helped highlight the candidate's skill, level of experimentation, and problem solving across their portfolio. Effective sources of inspiration and a clear starting point also ensured that candidates could respond in an original and creative way.

Candidates who carefully considered both the aesthetic and functional aspects of their further development ideas and design solution were, in general, more successful. Markers saw evidence of some candidates having the skill and confidence to experiment with a wide range of media, techniques and technology when communicating their creative intentions. These included paper/card construction, embroidery and weaving, ceramics and Photoshop.

2D textile, graphic and architectural portfolios which combined 'hand skills' with technology such as Inventor and Photoshop allowed candidates to communicate their creative intentions more successfully. Candidates who were tackling a 3D design area — for example body decoration, fashion or product design — benefitted greatly from engaging in 3D work at the further development and/or design solution stage.

Creative use of a limited choice of inexpensive and often recycled materials allowed candidates to engage in meaningful experimentation and refinement. In the majority of cases, final solutions were effective across the range of design areas.

Markers noted that, overall, there was less evidence of product design and an increase in graphic design portfolios.

Guidance to centres on the requirements for the evaluation, and the use of the evaluation pro forma, allowed candidates to make more focused and well-considered evaluative comments and access the full range of marks.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper

Markers commented that many candidates were better prepared for the written exam than previously. More candidates completed the question paper in the time available. There was evidence that, where centres practised exam techniques with candidates, they were able to structure their answers more effectively, especially for the (b) part of Questions 1, 2, 5 and 6.

It remains a concern that a poor understanding of art and design terminology affected many candidates' performance.

Candidates who answered questions out of order found it more difficult to access the full range of marks. This was especially the case where candidates answered the (b) parts of each question first, as by the time they answered the (a) part in later pages of their response they found it more difficult to link comments to their response in part (b) and/or were running out of time. This led to them rushing or being unable to complete the response.

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

Many candidates showed a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the prompts, especially *use of and choice of techniques*, *use of media* and *subject matter*. Candidates could sometimes describe a technique but did not describe how it was used, or why the artist or designer chose it. A small number of candidates could not describe the subject matter, but discussed composition in general terms.

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

Many candidates did not understand how to tackle this part of the question, listing points that were more relevant to part (a) of the question, or combining a response for only one prompt in part (a) with the third prompt in part (b). In some cases, candidates avoided answering this part of the question altogether.

Questions 3, 4, 7, and 8

Candidates who did not perform well in this part of the question paper often failed to read the questions correctly, or ignored command words and prompts. Several candidates struggled to make an informed choice between questions based on the prompt(s) used in part (a) of questions 3 and 4 and in part (a) of questions 7 and 8. This put them at a disadvantage as they struggled to structure their response around a prompt(s) which did not 'best suit' the art work or design work they were discussing.

As with Questions 1, 2, 5, and 6, a number of candidates revealed misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the prompts. Many candidates did not understand what was meant by prompts such as *choice of media*, *tone*, *use of imagery* and *choice of style*. Many candidates did not relate their response to the prompt(s) in part (a) of the question but instead discussed other aspects of the work which were not relevant to the question.

Although this was less common than in previous years, some candidates continued to include only biographical and historical information in part (b) of Questions 3, 4, 7 and 8, without relating these facts to the artwork or design work discussed in part (a).

Candidates who were familiar with the definition of prompts and were well prepared by centres for this aspect of the paper were able to access the full range of marks.

Component 2: portfolio

Overall, the evidence presented by candidates for both the expressive and design portfolios confirmed that centres and candidates have a good understanding of the course requirements and can edit and present work that clearly shows candidates' intentions.

Markers commented on the following issues which candidates found demanding:

- ◆ The lack of a creative starting point or a design brief in some folios led to difficulties when it came to applying the marking instructions and allocating marks, as candidates often demonstrated a confusing and disjointed line of development.
- ◆ Overly complex themes often resulted in cluttered and poorly presented portfolios which did not clarify the candidate's creative process. This lack of editing made some portfolios difficult to follow and could disadvantage candidates.
- ◆ The scale of the final expressive piece was often too large for some candidates to effectively show further refinement and media-handling skills. Final outcomes do not need to be A2 in size if a candidate is better suited to working on a smaller scale.
- ◆ A lack of personalisation caused difficulty for some candidates where centres used a very formulaic approach in terms of the choice of theme, the use of specific design briefs and the choice of media. This approach did not always allow candidates to fully meet the requirements of the assessment task as they were unable to fully respond in a creative and individual way.
- ◆ In design portfolios a number of candidates tackled techniques and processes that were far beyond their capabilities. For example, some candidates making body decoration/jewellery lacked the construction and manual skills needed to manipulate fabric, card and wire; in graphic work some candidates lacked the necessary IT skills, resulting in poor-quality samples and final outcomes.
- ◆ In several portfolios the quality of photographs to show 3D examples made it more difficult for markers to see candidate work clearly. This was especially the case where work was poorly lit or shown against a similar coloured background, or shown from only one viewpoint.
- ◆ In some folios, where work was mounted on top of other work, markers were unable to see the candidate's work properly, including the evaluation.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Centres must be commended for the support and encouragement they give to Higher candidates to meet the requirements of the course.

Component 1: question paper

The format of the question paper will change from 2018/19 onwards. Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the new format. Centres and candidates can access the specimen question paper on SQA's website.

Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with art and design terminology. The course specification contains a list of terms that may be used in the paper.

Candidates should continue to be offered the opportunity to engage in personalised study of the work and practice of artists and designers. Integrating this with the candidate's own practical work leads to more meaningful and relevant knowledge and understanding.

Support with exam technique is essential for all candidates throughout the course. Appropriate selection of optional questions, structuring of responses and time management helps candidates respond effectively to the question paper.

Component 2: portfolio

Many centres have a strong understanding of the requirements of the assessment tasks, and are preparing candidates effectively in this part of the course assessment.

Centres should give candidates 'Appendix 1: instructions for candidates' from the portfolio assessment task document. This information supports them at each stage of the process. Centres should ensure that candidates show engagement with all aspects of the assessment criteria.

Markers saw evidence of improved understanding of how to organise and present portfolios. Presentations were generally easy to 'read' with good visual continuity and a clear line of development.

Many candidates showed increasing confidence and creativity in their choice of contexts, as well as in their experimental use of media, techniques and technology. Centres should continue to encourage candidates to explore and develop these new approaches and methodologies.

Including the title of the theme at the start of expressive folios is highly recommended. Avoid using themes such as 'still life' or 'portraiture' which are too broad and do not communicate the candidate's intentions. For the design folio, a succinct, summarised design brief and a small design sketch or thematic image effectively puts the work in context for markers.

At the development stage of both the expressive and design folios, centres should submit only one clear line of further and refined development. Candidates can only gain marks for

the further development of one idea that leads to the final piece/solution so there is no advantage to be gained from including several or multiple lines of development.

When presenting work, centres must adhere to the maximum number of sheets — three A2 sheets per folio. There is no requirement to fill the maximum number of sheets. Centres should note that work that is presented horizontally rather than vertically can sometimes be a problem as it is more liable to tear and be damaged when hung for marking.

The presentation of work should clearly communicate to the marker the candidate's intentions. Avoid overcrowding the folio with unnecessary, repetitive images, and avoid layering work. The development should be relevant, and should clearly link to the final piece/solution. Development work should show refinement of the candidate's idea.

Centres are not required to submit candidates' 3D outcomes. Clear, well-lit photographs showing a variety of viewpoints should be included in lieu of 3D work.

Centres must complete evaluations for expressive and design portfolios on the SQA template and attach them to the first sheet of each portfolio. Evaluations should not overlap any work. Centres should ensure that they are using the correct version of the evaluation template. The font size is set in the template and should not be changed. If evaluations are handwritten they must be legible. Candidates must not exceed the one page provided.

Centres should encourage candidates to 'review and reflect' when evaluating their work, and avoid descriptions of processes and techniques.

While it was pleasing to see that most centres adhered to the conditions of assessment for coursework, there were a small number of examples where this may not have been the case. Following feedback from teachers, SQA has strengthened the conditions of assessment criteria for National 5 subjects and will do so for Higher and Advanced Higher. Centres must adhere to the criteria which are published clearly on SQA's website and in course materials. SQA takes very seriously its obligation to ensure fairness and equity for all candidates in all qualifications. It does this through consistent application of assessment conditions and investigates all cases to which it is alerted where conditions may not have been met.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	5369
Number of resulted entries in 2018	5299

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	28.1%	28.1%	1487	154
B	28.7%	56.7%	1520	132
C	27.2%	83.9%	1439	110
D	8.7%	92.6%	461	99
No award	7.4%	-	392	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

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.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which 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. SQA holds a grade boundary meeting every year for each subject at each level to bring 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 SQA's management team.

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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.

Grade boundaries from exam papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.