



## Course Report 2018

Subject	Art and Design
Level	National 5

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**

## **Summary of the course assessment**

The assessment tasks were revised for this session as a result of the removal of mandatory unit assessment, and performed as expected. Feedback from markers and the statistical data indicates that the assessment components had differentiated effectively between candidates of different abilities and levels of understanding.

Performance in the portfolios was broadly in line with previous years. However, performance in the question paper was weaker in general this year.

## **Component 1: question paper**

Feedback from markers, centres and candidates indicates that the paper was positively received and fair in terms of course coverage and overall level of demand. The question paper generated a wide range of marks from candidates and discriminated effectively between candidates with different levels of understanding. The majority of candidates were able to complete all four questions within the time allocated. Most candidates understood the format of the examination and selected questions appropriately.

In response to the mandatory questions, candidates selected a range of works by different artists and designers. Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Cezanne, Pablo Picasso, Frida Kahlo, Samuel Peploe, Lucian Freud, Chuck Close and Ralph Goings continue to be popular in expressive art studies, although candidates also selected a variety of lesser known artists. In design studies, Alphonse Mucha, AM Cassandre, Saul Bass, Abram Games, Louis Tiffany, René Lalique, Philippe Starck and Peter Chang continue to be popular choices.

Of the optional expressive art studies questions, the most popular were question 4 (Frostbitten by Andrew Wyeth) and question 3 (City with Animals by Max Ernst). In the design studies optional questions, the most frequently attempted were question 8 (Poster by Paula Scher) and question 9 (Beats wireless headphones by Robert Brunner).

Markers were concerned to see that a significant number of candidates appeared to be poorly prepared. These candidates failed to demonstrate the required knowledge and understanding at this level.

## **Component 2: expressive portfolio**

Most expressive portfolios demonstrated the skills and understanding required at National 5 level. Markers noted that expressive work this year continued to be of a high standard in general.

A range of diverse approaches was evident. Still life and portraiture continue to be the most popular genres, with landscape and the built environment seen less frequently. There were a range of interesting themes which encouraged personalisation and choice. It was encouraging to see more expressive and experimental approaches, as well as realistic interpretations.

As has been the trend in recent years, there were very few submissions of 3D work in expressive art. Most candidates chose to work in 2D processes, such as painting and print-making, or to use dry media, such as pencil and oil pastel.

### **Component 3: design portfolio**

While design portfolios are generally not as strong as expressive portfolios, the standard continues to improve, with most portfolios meeting the assessment requirements at this level.

There was an increase in 2D design, with a number of candidates attempting graphics and textile design. 3D design areas which continue to be popular are jewellery and product design, particularly lighting.

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

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

#### **Component 1: question paper**

Markers saw very good responses to all questions. Some candidates demonstrated effective exam technique and were able to manage their time effectively, making focused, justified comments in response to the questions asked.

In the mandatory questions, most candidates were able to apply knowledge and understanding of specific art and design works in response to the questions asked. In the best responses, candidates focused on the questions and demonstrated a good understanding of how to respond to the prompts. Well-prepared candidates who demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of art and design practice were able to gain marks in the upper range. It was clear that these candidates had learned about relevant factual information, including external influences and how these had impacted on their selected artists and designers. This knowledge and understanding enabled them to respond effectively to both parts (a) and (b) of the questions.

Some candidates responded very effectively to part (b), having selected artists and designers whose work and practice had obvious influences which the candidates had learned and applied to the question. These candidates had prepared thoroughly and were able to clearly and convincingly explain the impact of particular influences either on a specific work, or on the art or design practice.

Candidates who had a good knowledge and understanding of expressive art and design issues, and who were able to apply this to the question asked, made good attempts in the optional questions. These candidates understood the question prompts and were able to apply art and design terminology effectively.

#### **Component 2: expressive portfolio**

Centres and candidates had a good understanding of the revised portfolio assessment. Most candidates performed well in the expressive portfolio, and markers commented on the high

level of performance. Almost all candidates included highly relevant investigation work. There was a confidence in the production of development work. Most candidates had a good understanding of the creative process. They showed experimentation with composition, materials and techniques while refining their idea, exploring compositions from different viewpoints, and often considering framing, cropping and changes of scale.

The majority of candidates demonstrated an appropriate level of skill. Some portfolios were outstanding and demonstrated skill beyond the level required.

The best examples had a strong theme which allowed candidates to show a personal interpretation, as well as a high level of skill and creativity. For example, a 'travel' theme resulted in a still life of a globe, maps and suitcases. A strong theme often helped candidates explore an idea with connections and associations, as opposed to a random collection of objects.

Some candidates took inspiration from artists; this positively influenced the subject matter and style of their work. Reference to an inspirational artist, as long as it connected very clearly to the candidate's work, helped to inform markers of the intended approach.

Most candidates made effective choices about the media and scale of their final piece. Many final pieces were highly finished with excellent visual impact.

The best expressive evaluations reflected on the success of the portfolio rather than telling the story of its creation. Highly effective evaluations demonstrated a sound understanding of expressive art terminology and made clear reference to the candidate's theme.

### **Component 3: design portfolio**

Well-constructed, realistic design briefs, identifying key design issues, gave a number of candidates good direction and helped them to produce successful design portfolios.

The majority of candidates understood the revised assessment, including investigation and market research. Most candidates produced highly effective investigation and research. This often involved identifying an appropriate source of inspiration and compiling examples of relevant market research.

The best design portfolios were clearly laid out containing only relevant material, allowing markers to easily follow the design process. Most candidates appeared to understand the design process. Design development was attempted reasonably well in most cases and very well in a number of portfolios. Development usually linked well visually with the investigation and research.

A number of candidates demonstrated a high level of skill in using materials and techniques. Paper manipulation and modelling were often used well to solve design problems. Candidates often handled the use of low-cost or recycled materials in 3D design creatively and skilfully. Candidates who explored modelling and construction techniques as part of their 3D design process had the opportunity to show an effective understanding of design elements relating to their particular design area. Candidates often used technology effectively and meaningfully in graphics, textiles and architecture.

In the most successful portfolios, candidates responded very effectively to their brief, considering functionality as well as aesthetics.

Highly effective evaluations demonstrated a sound understanding of design terminology and design issues and made clear reference to the design brief.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Component 1: question paper**

The question paper continues to present a challenge for many candidates at this level. Markers commented on the significant number of poor responses. Many candidates failed to demonstrate understanding of art and design terminology used in the questions.

Basic subject-specific terms which candidates struggled with this year include:

- ◆ subject matter – candidates sometimes gave a list of objects or a description without developing this, for example in terms of treatment, arrangement, symbolism, whether it was conventional/unconventional/typical
- ◆ imagery – candidates who had studied artists with more imaginative or surrealistic approaches offered imagery as an alternative to subject matter, but some candidates misconstrued imagery as mood and atmosphere, for example ‘happy imagery’
- ◆ tone – candidates often misconstrued tone as mood, for example ‘a sad tone’, rather than commenting on light and shade or the effect of the tonal range. Many candidates discussed colour without any reference to tonality
- ◆ style – often candidates described the appearance of a design in very simple terms or became confused with sources of inspiration, for example ‘a sea-life style’

Simplistic or non-existent justification affected many candidates’ marks. A number of candidates wrote lengthy, descriptive responses that did not show an understanding of art and design practice or critical analysis.

In response to the mandatory questions 1 and 7, candidates are supposed to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the work and practice of artists and designers they have studied on the course. Some candidates showed a very poor understanding of the materials and techniques used by their selected designers, particularly in graphic design, and missed opportunities to discuss use of technology, or processes such as lithography. On many occasions, candidates gave information that was speculative and factually incorrect, for example ‘Lalique’s Dragonfly Corsage was designed for the catwalk’.

Candidates often did not perform well in part (b) of the mandatory questions. Instead of explaining the impact of external influences on the artist or designer, some candidates discussed how the artist or designer influenced the world of art and design. Many candidates gave lengthy biographical information or referred to influences without explaining the impact on the work or practice. At times, a comment was so vague as to be meaningless, for example ‘Van Gogh visited France and met French artists and this made his colours brighter’.

A large number of candidates did not perform well in the optional questions. Question 8 (Poster by Paula Scher) was attempted by a significant number of candidates who demonstrated little or no understanding of graphic design issues.

Candidate often did not pay attention to the last part of each question, which requires a justified opinion on a specific aspect. They often gave a general response, for example stating whether they liked or disliked work, regardless of what was being asked. It was common for candidates to repeat earlier comments in their justification.

### **Component 2: expressive portfolio**

A minority of centres exceeded the maximum of three A2 sheets or equivalent by layering work and/or the evaluation. This resulted in candidates submitting more work than was required and made the creative process more difficult to follow.

Some centres used a pro-forma approach where all candidates followed exactly the same process, with the same range of materials and often with an identical approach to the final piece. At times, these approaches highlighted a candidate's weaknesses rather than developing their strength, for example where every candidate produced a painting as a final piece, when some candidates clearly struggled with wet media. More able candidates could be limited by very prescriptive approaches.

A minority of portfolios contained more than one line of development. This affected the mark awarded for process.

Some final pieces appeared rushed and were less resolved than earlier development studies.

Occasionally, centres used the previous version of the evaluation form, which is not tailored to the revised assessment format. At times, evaluations focused on a description of the subject matter and techniques used, rather than reflecting on decisions made and the success of the work.

### **Component 3: design portfolio**

In general, design continues to be less well attempted than expressive, with a significant difference in quality between the two portfolios at times.

A number of candidates continue to be adversely affected by poorly constructed and unrealistic design briefs. These were sometimes lacking in detail, or were far too open and did not give adequate direction.

Cluttered and confusingly presented portfolios did not help to clarify the candidate's creative process, particularly where more than one idea was presented. Sometimes, a centre's approach could disadvantage candidates because of a lack of editing.

Some candidates were confused about what constitutes one line of development, and could not differentiate between a development and an additional idea. This could result in portfolios that lacked a clear and focused single line of development, showing instead

numerous different ideas. This type of 'scattergun' approach does not fulfil the requirements of the assessment task.

Portfolios sometimes lacked a clear process and did not demonstrate all of the steps leading to the solution. At times, the development steps were too similar so the process did not show adequate development and refinement.

Problem-solving was weak in some portfolios. A number of candidates failed to show an effective understanding of functionality. In graphic design, layout and lettering could be poorly considered at times. In some repeat pattern portfolios, refinement consisted of repetitive colour changes but showed no experimentation with motif development, pattern placement or change of scale.

It was very difficult for markers to follow the design process where developments were not presented in a clear order.

Some candidates attempted to use unsuitable materials, which could result in poorly resolved, unsophisticated outcomes. At times, candidates attempted to work in a design area where they clearly had little skill, knowledge or understanding.

A number of portfolios used the previous version of the evaluation form. Weaker evaluations tended to include lengthy narrative descriptions of the process, rather than reflecting on the effectiveness of what had been done. These candidates often failed to refer to their original design brief.

## Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

### Component 1: question paper

- ◆ A poor understanding of basic art and design terms affects many candidates' performance. Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with art and design terminology. A list of terms that may be used in the paper is available in the course specification. Appendix 2 gives details on how these subject-specific terms could be interpreted and developed in candidate responses.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the format of the exam and have an idea of the types of questions and diversity of images that may come up. Candidates should have opportunities to develop their exam technique. They could prepare for the question paper by completing practice questions and receiving feedback on their responses. To gain a mark, candidates need to make a fully justified comment in response to each element of the question. All elements of the question need to be answered to access full marks. When marking responses and giving feedback to candidates, teachers and lecturers could make it clear when justifications are lacking.
- ◆ Centres and candidates can access the specimen question paper, past papers and marking instructions on SQA's website.
- ◆ Understanding Standards exemplar responses and commentaries are available. Centres can make use of these to help teachers and candidates to understand how the question paper is marked and the level of response required.
- ◆ In preparing for the mandatory questions, centres should advise candidates on suitable artworks and designs which would give them scope to answer the questions effectively.
- ◆ Responses to Questions 1 and 7 should demonstrate that a candidate has studied the works selected. Comments should not be speculative. They must be based on factually correct information and show knowledge and understanding.
- ◆ Centres should recommend special arrangements for candidates whose writing is so hard to read that it may disadvantage them in a written examination.

### Component 2: expressive portfolio

Most centres appear to have a good understanding of the requirements of the expressive portfolio assessment task, and are directing and preparing candidates effectively. Presentations were generally easy to 'read', with good visual continuity and a clear line of development. There were many examples of good practice.

- ◆ Centres should ensure that all candidates have access to the instructions for the course assessment task.
- ◆ Candidates should include their theme on the first sheet of their expressive portfolio.
- ◆ Centres should discourage tracing or colouring photocopies in the expressive portfolio as this is self-penalising. Candidates must demonstrate the appropriate skills to gain marks at this level.
- ◆ Centres should avoid very formulaic approaches. Centres need to strike a balance between giving clear direction, which all candidates need, and providing a formula, which may suit some candidates but can limit others.



- ◆ Centres should allow candidates to play to their strengths. For example, there is no requirement to produce a painting if the candidate is better at using dry media, or to work in colour if the candidate's strengths are in working with tone.
- ◆ It is not necessary for candidates who prefer to work on a smaller scale to produce a large-scale piece of work. Likewise, candidates who have a very expressive style may be more comfortable working on a larger-scale final piece.
- ◆ 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. Candidates must not exceed the one page provided.
- ◆ Evaluations must be attached to the first sheet and centres should ensure that it does not overlap other work.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that the correct evaluation has been attached, as a number of expressive portfolios contained the candidate's design evaluation and vice versa.

### **Component 3: design portfolio**

- ◆ Design was less well attempted than expressive art in general. Centres should aim to balance the time spent on each activity to allow candidates to perform effectively in both areas.
- ◆ Design briefs should give clear direction to candidates and ask them to consider important functional issues as well as aesthetic issues. For example, candidates could consider readability and clear communication of a message in graphic design, or practical issues — such as balance, weight and fastenings — in jewellery design.
- ◆ Centres can provide briefs or design brief templates for candidates, but should not give them briefs that are too open and overly ambitious.
- ◆ Having a source of inspiration can help candidates develop their ideas. When choosing sources of inspiration for design, centres should encourage candidates to be focused and specific. For example, 'cacti' or 'seedpods' is likely to elicit a more creative and focused response than 'plants' in general.
- ◆ Expressive drawing is not a requirement in the design portfolio. Centres should only consider using this approach if a candidate will genuinely benefit, for example in illustrative graphics. While drawing for design has an important place, it is often a different type of drawing which is used to explore shape, form or pattern.
- ◆ Candidates who are intending to produce 3D solutions should engage with 3D development to refine their ideas and skills before starting on the production of their outcomes.
- ◆ Centres should avoid 'wallpapering' in design portfolios. Numerous photographs of a candidate's design solution at different stages of construction does not attract marks and should not be included within the development. The space would be better used to show experimentation carried out prior to construction of the solution.
- ◆ In graphic design and repeat pattern, candidates could show more thorough consideration of scale and layout. Colour is an important element, but should be used with consideration.
- ◆ In graphic design, centres should advise candidates to explore the use and integration of lettering in more depth as this is often poorly considered.
- ◆ The portfolio should include only one line of development. It should not include work that has no connection to the solution.
- ◆ The design process is much clearer for markers to understand if the line of development is presented in the order the refinements were made. Candidates could also use labels or arrows to make their thought process clearer.

- ◆ Centres are not required to submit candidates' 3D outcomes, but should ensure that clear, well-lit images showing the piece from different angles are provided.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that they are using the correct version of the evaluation template and that candidates adhere to the one page in the template and do not reduce the font size.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that the appropriate evaluation has been attached to the first sheet and that it does not overlap any other work.

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	9369
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	9198
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### 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	42.3%	42.3%	3894	175
B	27.5%	69.8%	2530	150
C	18.7%	88.5%	1720	125
D	8.7%	97.2%	796	100
No award	2.8%	-	258	-

## **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.