

Visual Arts

2014 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

Successful folios displayed a sophisticated exploration and refinement of skills in response to a diverse range of media, technologies, and materials. They showed evidence of creative thinking through to final resolutions, exploring the work of artists from varied contexts and making strong links to these throughout the developmental stages. These folios were documented with rough markings and notes showing spontaneous thoughts and ideas rather than a structured, scaffolded approach reflective of Assessment Type 3: Visual Study.

Students who presented well-constructed folios began with a concept or theme or mind map to define the direction of folio development. The folios indicated the main idea and concept refinement at regular intervals throughout the work, tracing creative thinking processes and problem-solving.

Appropriate folio annotations discussed relevance to the theme and the objective of the practical, as well as ideas on future experiments, exploration, and planning rather than just a recount of practice. Some students merely mentioned practitioners and failed to synthesise thoughts and identify their learning in response to them, without making any connections to the idea, the problem-solving, or the refinement. Teachers should encourage students to research practitioners where they can make a link to their idea development.

Students who used their own authentic imagery for sources of inspiration, who annotated, and who clearly indicated their own photographic sources provided greater insight into their creative thinking processes, thus delivering authentic visual arts learning.

A number of students who did not demonstrate learning against the specific features of knowledge and understanding made no references to contexts, artists, or designers, which would have informed their idea development. In the better folios, students used this knowledge to make direct connections to their development of ideas, exploring styles, techniques, and concepts.

Some students needed to demonstrate learning, creative thinking, and problem-solving rather than process. Students should avoid using too many pages showing the process of production unless changes are made to the product. The practice of including a large number of photos documenting the process alone does not demonstrate the learning.

Folios often appeared to document their process by working backwards from the resolved practical. This is not a successful practice and lacks exploration, experimentation, and the depth needed to address the learning required in the specific features of the practical application criterion abbreviated as PA1 and PA2. Teachers need to be mindful when marking folios not to base their assessment decision on the final practical resolution.

Successful design folios had a clear, purposeful design brief for a defined client, allowing the student scope for creative conceptual development.

Teachers should encourage students to develop topics or ideas with a broad focus and a variety of applications and opportunities to experiment with. Students should be aware of the clear link between the creative processes in both art and design, as this is used as a framework for developing their ideas. Students are encouraged to include brainstorming, to define the idea or concept; research; generation of ideas; visual thinking and problem-solving; and acknowledgment of relevant knowledge and understanding.

Teachers are encouraged, in task design, to explicitly show the process required for students to follow, and to provide a clear unpacking of the assessment design criteria.

The more successful students used primary sources for inspiration, the development of ideas, the exploration of media, and the refinement of technique. This included personal photographs, and notes on interviews, art galleries, observations, and drawing studies.

This year, the standard of the folios showed a better understanding of the performance standards by teachers and students. In particular, students who were more conscientious with their research summaries and analytical comments were able to articulate their inspiration that led to their resolved practical.

Assessment Type 2: Practical

The specific features of PA1 and PA4 evident in the practical resolutions were immediately reinforced by what the student had written in the accompanying statements. Students were equally successful in demonstrating the learning of PA1 and PA4 with the strong application of a range of media, materials, and technologies in both art and design.

Students who chose to complete a body of work were successful, as it supported students when the thinking and idea development with the theme or concept was expanded, providing the opportunity for creative generation and growth, and contributing to a broader depth of visual responses. In many cases, the 1000-word practitioner’s statement supported the learning in PA1 and PA4 convincingly.

Students who explored ideas based on personal or global issues, or meaningful experiences developed more authentic works.

The more successful design practicals were in response to a well-planned and challenging brief which generated creative problem-solving potential and the opportunity to initiate innovative conceptualisation.

Copyright concerns arose when students appeared to mimic the style of a practitioner, or work was found to be derivative of images accessed on the Internet. Students and teachers are reminded that original and authentic work is required for this task.

Highly successful students provided evidence of their time spent developing an idea or concept, resulting in an imaginative, personal, and refined resolution.

This year there was an increase in the use of multimedia applications and technologies to produce conceptually and visually successful and innovative practical resolutions.

Practitioner’s Statement

The practitioner’s statement is an integral part of this assessment type and thus affects a student’s overall grade. Students who did not submit a statement compromised their achievement in this assessment task.

Successful statements were clear in the expression of the ideas, articulating specific connections to influences, and to the practitioners’ styles. The implementation of their decisions were clearly visible in the practical work.

Teachers should not expect students to demonstrate their learning against too many specific features in this task.

Successful practitioner’s statements contained visual arts language and referenced the elements and principles of art and design, and the application and manipulation of the media. The stylistic features on ideas in works of art and design were also discussed.

Well-written practitioner’s statements reflected positive teacher direction and support in the choice of relevant artists for students to make purposeful and discerning connections. Teachers should encourage students to engage with local artists and galleries as a source of inspiration.

Successful students viewed real art works, and used reference materials other than the Internet. They were able to make sophisticated, highly perceptive, and discerning evaluations of their own work and that of other practitioners. These students used appropriate visual arts language to interpret and analyse art and design works from different contexts, and to form insightful conclusions.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Visual Study

Successful students developed challenging questions and topics that enabled them to analyse, problem-solve, make connections, evaluate, and make conclusions that were often insightful explorations of personally relevant visual ideas.

Teachers should direct students to plan and construct the visual study to comply with the SACE word-count policy.

It is suggested that teachers direct students to create a question around which the visual study is based. It is not advisable for students in a class to construct their visual study on the same topic. It is better for each student to select their own topic and style of presentation and to work individually.

If the work is handwritten, the layout and readability are important. Scrapbooking is not required at the expense of content, and students should avoid writing in gold, silver, or white pens.

Students should avoid pixelated and unrelated imagery that takes up the entire background, as it distracts from their own writing, work, and learning.

The use of excessive highlighted photocopied material as a means of indicating to markers what should be read is also be avoided as this can be confusing and disjointed.

Students are encouraged to select artists who have a body of work that can be verified. Obscure artists and artworks obtained online can often cause concerns in relation to authenticity.

Students should not simply replicate or emulate the work of visual artists but rather explore their concepts and make connections with their own concepts and use of media and resolutions.

The visual study is not a folio and, as such, design students do not need a brief; likewise art students do not to need work towards a completed work of art. Students should explore concepts and resolutions of artists and designers and then use these examples to further develop their own personally relevant ideas. This exploration also leads the student to successful critical analysis, synthesis and conclusions.

The following discussion addresses how students provided evidence of their learning in relation to the specific features of the assessment design criteria, as listed in the subject outline for this assessment type.

Practical Application

PA1

Successful students used the ideas, media processes, and techniques of other practitioners to develop and explore their own personal visual examples. Some students simply replicated the work of artists and were unable to demonstrate the ideas of the artist or to develop their own ideas in response.

Students who study tattooing, anime, or manga, should produce their own designs rather than copying an artist’s work and technique.

PA3

The successful visual study demonstrated a clear personal connection to the artists and designers, and careful documentation of the creative visual thinking and problem-solving processes.

Analysis and Synthesis

AS1

Students were more successful when they had clearly linked their research, their analysis, and their own practical responses. Students should be encouraged to develop an understanding of the elements and principles of art and design. Student learning is enhanced when students analyse their own work as well as the work of their chosen practitioners.

At times critical analysis was ignored; this effectively meant that students commented on ‘what I like’, rather than using art and design terminology to critically discuss the works selected from different contexts.

AS2

Successful students used visual arts language to interpret and respond to a range of issues that enabled them to synthesise their thoughts on issues raised in the study.

AS4

Successful students were able to explore their chosen topic or question with insightful and well-documented evaluations and conclusions about their learning. They were able to make connections with personally relevant ideas.

Inquiry and Exploration

IE1

Successful students used a wide range of resources and references to make insightful personal connections to the question or the intent of the study. These students did not just rely on Internet sources, but used visits to galleries, interviews with artists, and workshop participation, as well as art books.

Students need to reference and acknowledge their sources in the footnotes and in the bibliography. Visual arts works should also be referenced by the name of the artist or designer, title of work, year, and media utilised.

Students who produced the less successful responses collected a limited range of sources and failed to cross-reference to substantiate their findings and opinions.

IE2

Students who demonstrated astute exploration and creative visual thinking ensured the development of a personal aesthetic which culminated in an outstanding study.

Students who did not create any of their own personal responses were unable to address the development of a personal aesthetic.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

Teachers are reminded that the current learning and assessment plan (including the addendum, when appropriate), task design sheets, and assessment notes are part of the moderation materials for (1) moderation (on site), and for (2) final moderation.

Teachers should ensure that student samples selected for moderation are clearly labelled.

Teachers need to understand that on-site moderators are to work in a private and quiet location.

In preparing the visual study for marking, teachers should ensure that on each page of the work is the student’s SACE registration number.

## General Comments

The SACE Board will conduct clarifying forums for Visual Arts teachers in 2015.

Support materials, including examples for all assessment types, will continue to be updated and made available on the Visual Arts minisite. Suitable references to support learning in Visual Arts can be found under ‘Subject Advice and Strategies’ in the ‘Support Materials’ section of the minisite.

Teachers should consider reducing the number of specific features of the assessment design criteria in the learning and assessment plan, in order to give students a realistic and achievable set of criteria against which they will demonstrate their learning.

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