

Assessment Report

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Part A: Commentary

Submissions for verification across the individual fields showed a high level of professional understanding of where the standard for achievement and relative grade boundaries sit. In many cases, schools are sending samples to refine this understanding of the grade boundaries as exemplars to use for making future assessment decisions. In some submissions, verification adjustments were made in line with national benchmarks. It was clear online exemplars for Level 1 and 2, alongside consultation with colleagues within regional associations, might have been beneficial before assessment. Teachers new to teaching or to this particular NCEA assessment are encouraged to seek advice and guidance while building their experience in assessing folios at this level, especially if marked verification changes resulted.

Project or inquiry-based curriculum design has become a much-vaunted approach across the learning areas in schools relatively recently. In Visual Arts at Level 2, student-led propositions with a high level of student agency have formed the majority of submissions for many years and 2019 was no exception. Tapping into interests across students' lives, this rich approach should be celebrated by those who have been embracing this model and shared within schools. While sometimes the volume of candidates dictates a certain level of class-wide instruction and support, striking a balance between this and increasing student agency appears to create a high level of ownership and engagement.

At higher grades, an authentic creative process was evident, with candidates being able to sustain their own artistic practice in preparation for art-making beyond the Level 2 assessment. Candidates at lower levels of achievement required the scaffolding of teacher guidance and directed tasks to complete the portfolio and often lacked the reflective and evaluative skills to make critical decisions.

Digital processes have been widely perceived as future-focused and valued in schools. In previous years, this resulted in more use of these in portfolio submissions, possibly for the sake of being seen to employ them,

as sometimes they hindered, rather than contributed to the proposition. Candidate work in 2019 reflected an increasing criticality about appropriate ways in which to utilise and integrate digital tools and processes. This also involved a greater number of submissions where discarding irrelevant digital options, or reducing them in some fields to a developmental capacity, strengthened the art-making outcomes within submissions. In other fields / approaches where digital tools and processes were highly useful and relevant to the proposition, it appeared that candidates had sufficient time to master the skills necessary to allow achievement at all levels. There was much less gratuitous use of digital tools and techniques and an increased capability when using them.

The number of teachers who are embracing student-led propositions that might sit outside their own personal comfort zone is to be commended. This is resulting in a greater range of established practices and subject matter being called on. In particular, issues pertaining to the environment and young women were more apparent in propositions that included design branding focused on environmentally friendly menstrual cups. Wahine toa and students embracing and exploring their ethnic and cultural diversity were also apparent across the fields, including ideas about unity within this diversity, possibly stemming from events in Aotearoa in 2019. Teachers are encouraged to continue to build resource banks of established practices beyond their initial (often euro-centric) knowledge base. Encouraging candidates to explore Māori and Pasifika practices as part of their immediate context establishes a broad foundational knowledge base for them as artists. Collaborative, co-constructed propositions at higher grade boundaries often included a sound understanding of another topic linked to the portfolio proposition, such as environmental science or the subconscious. This encouragement of polymathy enables students to experience and embrace life-long learning and creative curiosity.

Part B: Report on standards

91320: Produce a systematic body of work that shows understanding of art making conventions and ideas within design

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- engaged in the design process by generating and developing ideas
- made some decisions in relation to their design brief
- filled the two-panel folio submission series and sequences of works
- produced work at the appropriate curriculum level.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- showed evidence of 'creative play' with a lack of ideas and decisions
- placed imagery on to design formats without consideration of design methodology
- showed a low level of technical skill and facility with their chosen media
- did not generate enough evidence of imagery of the design process in order to support the proposal.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- were able to extend ideas in new directions
- selected appropriate briefs that allowed them to explore a range of design conventions
- understood some of the characteristics and constraints of their chosen design formats
- explored relevant options, such as thematic colour and font choice, to develop a look or style
- showed some understanding of having looked at and used established practice.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- showed fluent technical skill alongside critical thinking in reflecting on previous works to move their project forward
- produced original work that synthesised a range of appropriate established practices
- established an investigation that had the potential to develop in a range of possible directions from a rich selection of initial material.

Standard-specific comments

Subject matter this year featured bees, environmental issues, (particularly relating to the local area), organics, healthy living, food products, fashion, music, iconic art imagery (including classical sculpture), feminism, gender-specific issues, and basketball. Overall, it is clear students are being allowed and encouraged to take on subject matter that is important and relevant to their own cultural milieu.

Digital collage, drawing and image creation was seen on some submissions, and was often used as a visually rich and enervating starting point for projects. Digital drawing over photographs was seen often as a starting point for idea generation and technical exploration. There continues to be evidence of good use of established practice, particularly in the identification and utilisation of appropriate codes and conventions

seen in artist models' works, which successfully supported the development of ideas, as well as technical processes. Some of those entering submissions made the decision to use a limited colour palette as a means to enable the consideration of other design elements. Design artefacts such as double-page spreads, business cards and packaging were placed in situ and/or as mock-ups, and this was used as a way to evaluate success.

Common design formats seen this year were: T-shirts, posters, logos, tickets, websites, phone app symbols, and smartphone formatting and apps. There was some concern about candidates' understanding of characteristics and constraints of logos and their usage in varied contexts. Candidates often initially generated successful logos but subsequently lacked the 'fine-tuning' (weight, leading, kerning, tracking) required to adapt the logo for the range of uses or products to which it was applied.

Presentation of visual materials at the start of the submission included clearly labelled original photography, stock imagery, and artist model influences that set the scene for the investigation. Those candidates who took the opportunity to clearly label their source material and the images they created made clear the process of generation. In some cases, this material took up a disproportionate amount of space on the panel, which could otherwise have been used to present the candidate's design work.

Some candidates overlooked the opportunity to include a brief on their folio, or labels identifying particular briefs. The inclusion of a brief (and labels) on the folio assists in identifying the work as part of a methodical system and sets the scene. More importantly for the candidate, the use of a brief helps identify the characteristics and constraints of those particular design outcomes they are engaged in making. Candidates are more able to advance the development of ideas and explore options if it is clear what is being made, for what purpose, and how it should look and/or function.

Greater consideration needed to be shown towards printing finals nearer their appropriate size; problematic artefacts included oversize business cards, and impractically sized tickets and loyalty cards. Some consideration also should be shown towards relative scale of design artefacts. For example, a DPS is, by its nature, a bigger and more complex proposition than a business card; appropriate space should be allocated on the board to acknowledge this. Many folios used an increase in the scale of work to indicate the stages of the design process, and this was seen as clear and systematic presentation of evidence that supported student achievement.

Dependence on unedited stock or found imagery could limit the candidate's opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of design processes and procedures. For example, text

and image relationships became simplified to a layout proposition if unmodified stock imagery was used. Higher-achieving folios typically attempted more complex problems with a greater range of design elements. For example, the generation and development of their own imagery, or sufficient editing of chosen imagery.

Some full-board or large-scale prints were of a lower visual quality, with blurring and/or pixilation an issue that interfered with the reading of the work. Checking the image size (resolution) before printing is an integral part of design practice and would have avoided pixilation issues.

91321: Produce a systematic body of work that shows understanding of art making conventions and ideas within painting

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- began the portfolio with a limited proposition or subject matter
- demonstrated superficial engagement and understanding of art-making conventions to develop ideas
- showed some understanding and control of their selected paint processes, media, and techniques
- provided evidence of editing, selecting, and ordering of work across two panels in a systematic body of work
- show generation and development, but not extension of ideas within the art-making process
- relied often on a narrative approach to the detriment of picture-making concerns.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- presented individual unrelated works without any systematic generative or developmental links
- showed limited understanding of paint processes, materials, and techniques
- had insufficient technical control in the application of paint at the expected curriculum level
- used found or appropriated imagery, and lacked sufficient source material or subject matter to develop picture-making ideas.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- began with a strong proposition that could be sustained across two panels

- identified traditional and contemporary artists, and referenced them in their work
- demonstrated an understanding of established practice to inform the development of new work
- used more than one reference to develop and extend the ideas
- demonstrated technical skill, control, and understanding of paint conventions
- showed a systematic and purposeful decision-making process in the extension of the ideas and in the understanding of painting conventions selected.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- demonstrated clear intentions from the beginning of the folio
- used drawing as the central means to explore a range and depth of ideas
- refined their proposition, working with comprehensive understanding of how paint conventions can be used with fluency to clarify and regenerate ideas
- provided convincing evidence of further exploration of their proposition by introducing new artistic references that facilitated the clarification and regeneration of additional work
- edited and ordered the work through critical decision-making to demonstrate the progression, clarification, regeneration, and resolution of the proposition.

Standard-specific comments

Trends were indicated by an increase in portfolios exploring: local and global environmental issues (including the life cycles of bees, pollution and the power of the ocean). Personal themes based on strong conceptual propositions included identity and cultural heritage. Art historical images were used as themes or subject matter, sometimes juxtaposed with contemporary imagery sources to create new ideas / meanings. Graffiti and street-art themes were used with greater understanding of the characteristics and constraints of this genre. More authentic and personally generated imagery was seen being used to develop ideas, replacing a previous trend for an over-reliance on internet imagery. Photoshop or collage compositions were used intelligently to generate, develop, and regenerate picture-making ideas.

Fewer portfolios were reliant on pattern-making to develop pictorial decisions, the use of dark themes, including personal or societal angst ,or 'cartoon imagery' as subject matter to generate a body of work. In a number of portfolios using the figure compositionally, it appeared actual

life drawing or research into scale and proportion had taken place. In other figurative portfolios, facial features were blanked or landscape was used to fill faces to avoid more difficult painting elements. Within the genre of portraiture, successful candidates developed comprehensive propositions with understanding. Other candidates who relied on a succession of individual portraits were unable to provide evidence of extension. Some portfolios used sculptural projects to generate painting ideas. While this is accepted practice, the sculptures themselves do not need to be over-documented on the painting portfolio.

An increase in the use and understanding of painting conventions and media was evident on many submissions. Improved understanding of painting application conventions was seen as conventions were selected and integrated with the ideas being explored. Digital painting was used with understanding of its characteristics and constraints within established painting practice. A wide range of media was successfully employed across the cohort as part of current painting practice. This included watercolour, Indian ink, collage and oil painting. Printmaking and monoprinting were also used to develop different textures and patterns within a painting context. Overall, portfolios provided evidence of greater consistency in using media appropriate to their proposition, leading to higher levels of performance and more accurate decision-making.

Concerns that limited some candidates' ability to achieve this standard included a reliance on drawing rather than painting conventions. The use of single large pieces, particularly on the second panel, did not aid in showing development, extension and regeneration, whereas small studies often helped to move drawing investigations forward. For a number of candidates, the decision to use existing cartoons and anime restricted their ability to show development, extension and regeneration in a body of work. To achieve at higher levels, these need to be integrated into their own work through pictorial development. When this works well, the character is developed and extended through original compositional ideas. Using text in established painting practice also varied in criticality. Candidates need to understand when it is a good idea to use text, making sure it is well formed and appropriate to the proposition. Used well, text enhances the ideas and adds another dimension to the reading. However, too often it is poorly executed and is not integrated pictorially or conceptually.

91323: Produce a systematic body of work that shows understanding of art making conventions and ideas within printmaking

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- established a good beginning or starting point, sufficient to carry out a systematic printmaking investigation over two panels
- demonstrated the generation and development of ideas in related works within the field of printmaking
- worked within a limited range of print processes sufficiently to generate and develop ideas
- made some implied reference to artist models, but were unable to show a clear link in their own work
- identified subject matter and pictorial possibilities early in the folio
- used at least one printmaking technique appropriately, showing the characteristics and the constraints of the selected convention.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- provided insufficient evidence of a systematic development of ideas and/or use of print processes
- were unable to identify pathways for development of ideas and so often repeated block / plate imagery without any clear purpose
- produced work inconsistent with expectations of candidates studying at Level 7 of the New Zealand Curriculum
- began with a limited idea or insufficient pictorial information to sustain ideas over two panels
- were unable to work within simple print conventions of surface, colour, ground and/or mark.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- established a sound starting point, sufficient to sustain a systematic and purposeful printmaking investigation
- generated options and a range of ideas, and were able to work with them in purposeful ways to extend ideas
- developed and extended ideas that did not rely on a pre-constructed narrative
- provided a wider range of options initially that allowed for subsequent extension
- made reference to established printmaking practice, using one or more artists

- showed a consistent control of printmaking conventions throughout the submission
- demonstrated the ability to edit and make decisions in developing a sequence or series of works
- demonstrated a purposeful link between drawing and the subsequent prints and the development and extension of ideas.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- showed the ability to develop, clarify, and regenerate ideas in related sequences of work within the field of printmaking
- demonstrated good decision-making through a progression of ideas, evident in the ordering and sequencing of work
- exhibited clarity in the use of a variety of compositional devices and printmaking techniques when developing sequences and series of works across the submission
- developed ideas early in the submission, clearly showing investigation and thematic exploration
- showed clear links between drawings, developments, extension and regeneration of ideas with printmaking conventions.

Standard-specific comments

For a folio to meet the requirements of this standard, the work must show evidence of planning and ordering. Folios assessed at the Not Achieved level typically provided insufficient evidence of both planning and ordering of work. At the Achievement level, candidates often relied on single pictorial ideas that were either minimal, or were not able to be sustained in a series or a sequence throughout the submission.

In 2019, all print submissions tended to explore more traditional and accessible forms of printmaking. Technical skill was evident across all processes and it was encouraging to see a greater awareness of print etiquette across printmaking submissions. Traditional processes such as intaglio and woodcut were used with a higher level of competence in technical ability in a seeming 'lift' compared with previous years. Candidates demonstrated the use of clean-edged printing, white borders, and the use of quality printing ink in their submissions.

Programmes and propositions that confidently enabled students to advance ideas and skills strongly using those processes were evident. There was less reliance on multiple process or mixed media to advance the folio. Ideas on the first board were explored more strongly and fully in print itself, rather than multiple media, such as collage, paint, and photocopied work. Some submissions explored contemporary socio-political and environmental issues, such as surveillance, human

occupation of space, and the fragility of the planet. These were explored beyond cliché and in an authentic manner. Fewer submissions were seen solely dealing with narrative-driven propositions.

Submissions at higher grade ranges sat very comfortably within the achievement levels, as they demonstrated competent skills in the printmaking discipline chosen. Candidates showed they could develop a range of ideas from an earlier exploration of ideas on the first board, which allowed them to clarify across a range of options and directions. There was considered use of colour, with evidence of deliberate choice and tonal qualities within compositions. Several student submissions combined digital and traditional print methods to explore options appropriate to the propositions. Unlike candidates at lower grades, they showed a clear understanding of established practice within printmaking disciplines beyond technical conventions.

As in previous years, some submissions featured well-cut wood print blocks in a range of genres, both figurative and pattern-based. It is encouraging to see a growing confidence in the use of a range of processes in various programmes. Candidates in 2019 continued to exhibit a greater facility with print submissions, where the general skill of students allowed the subject to be more than simply process-driven. Students are to be encouraged to continue to develop higher degrees of skill in the techniques characteristic of each of these processes. The use of dry-point engraving and woodcut were again dominant choices for print exploration across all submissions

The limited reference to established practices beyond the technical aspects was of concern. The use of artist models as a form of understanding printmaking and picture-making conventions has all but disappeared. In most instances, candidates' work seemed to be process-driven. Where artist models were identified on the panels, they were predominantly placed at the end of the final board, sometimes as a reproduced image or as a homage to a specific artwork. Investigating relevant artist models at the beginning of the submission with acknowledgement of established practice, regardless of the field, allows students to fluently drive and develop their ideas.

There were further encouraging signs in the 2019 printmaking submissions, where there was a noticeable trend in less prescriptive programmes and a move toward more individualised open-ended programmes. This creates a greater number of opportunities for candidates to achieve in the higher-grade ranges, as it allows for more individualised thematic developments and levels of thinking. Candidates were, therefore, more likely to explore ideas in more diverse directions and use processes and techniques appropriate to the investigation.

Overall, printmaking submissions in 2019 were reassuring. The quality of work throughout all submissions was of a high standard, both in the general presentation of prints and in the ideas explored by candidates. All candidates could work confidently in their chosen medium. Candidates understood the notion of print, paper and ink and used these to develop a range of ideas.

91324: Produce a systematic body of work that shows understanding of art making conventions and ideas within sculpture

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- generated ideas in a systematic way, but often within a limited proposition
- presented a sufficient, though minimal number of sculptural outcomes, which limited opportunities to extend ideas
- used appropriate sculptural conventions with the level of control and practical knowledge expected at the lower end of Level 7 of the New Zealand Curriculum.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- presented an insufficient number of sculptural outcomes for the 12-credit weighting of the standard
- demonstrated insufficient use of sculpture-making conventions throughout the submission
- used processes, procedures, materials and techniques at a level that was below the practical knowledge requirements of Level 7 of the New Zealand Curriculum.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- used materials and processes with intent to extend ideas
- worked with a range of materials or the same materials in a range of ways
- demonstrated the extension of ideas, but with inconsistent control of media and techniques
- presented a limited range of sculptural outcomes that did not allow for regeneration.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- identified a clear proposition that thoroughly explored a range of appropriate established sculptural conventions

- used highly appropriate sculptural drawing techniques to effectively transition between series throughout the submission and demonstrated fluent use of media and processes
- used fluent photographic documentation, or video documentation in the case of digital submissions, to support the clarification and regeneration of ideas
- identified a hierarchy of work through strong editing and layout of images on panels.

Standard-specific comments

Sculpture offers candidates an opportunity to investigate a broad range of technical and conceptual concerns in an open-ended and exciting field of study. Candidates interested in ideas can push boundaries by investigating a wealth of established and contemporary sculpture practices to inform and extend their enquiry. Sculpture offers opportunities to extend thinking outside a two-dimensional investigation and allows candidates to take ownership of the technical direction of their individual study in response to a wide range of possible sculptural materials and processes.

Sculpture submissions in 2019 included a diverse range of practices and a focus on the use of accessible materials to create a systematic body of work.

A reduction in the number of class-wide programmes has allowed for students to engage in authentic and varied responses to sculpture problems while showing clear evidence of an understanding of appropriate established practice. It is recommended that if a class-wide programme is undertaken, it allows for students to select their own materials in response to their interests and strengths. Teacher-directed programmes should also provide significant opportunities for students to generate and develop their own ideas within the constraints of the programme.

Performance-based approaches that demonstrated clear and insightful responses to established practice were seen in a number of the more conceptually driven submissions. The ambitious nature of works undertaken by some candidates resulted in a number of larger-scale works that also pushed ideas outside the boundaries of object-based practice.

Competent and fluent handling of media and techniques were frequently seen in submissions in 2019. Candidates spent time developing and building on their skills resulting in finished works that demonstrated significant patience and reflected an understanding of the nature and limitations of their chosen materials.

Sculpture teachers are encouraged to send sculpture submissions for verification, as numbers of submissions in this field are relatively low.

Receiving feedback in relationship to the standard is particularly valuable in smaller fields such as sculpture, where there are fewer samples from which to select exemplars.

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Previous years' reports

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