

The following report gives feedback to assist assessors with general issues and trends that have been identified during external moderation of the internally assessed Visual Arts standards in 2019.

It does not clarify specific standards but provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year.

Awarding Excellence

When making judgement for Excellence, it needs to be ensured that all indicators of the Excellence criteria in the standard have been fully addressed. These are outlined in the Explanatory notes. The quality of evidence provided should also reflect the curriculum level. If the evidence demonstrates that the Excellence criteria have been only partially met, then the grade awarded cannot be Excellence. This is critical in distinguishing between high Merit and Excellence.

Consideration also needs to be given to the overall submission, such as succinctness and clarity.

Students who demonstrated in-depth understanding (Excellence for 3.2) showed critical selection and fluent application of technical and pictorial conventions to support a specific narrative or conceptual proposition. This typically involved highly refined management of field specific processes and procedures, as well as purposeful application of visual elements to create particular effects and communicate personal themes.

Excellence students in 3.3 standards (Regeneration) showed the sustained advancement of pictorial and technical ideas to support new responses to a thematic or conceptual proposition. This typically meant at least three distinctly different iterations of the investigation, with the first clarifying ideas (Achieved), the second extending ideas (Merit) and the third regenerating ideas (Excellence).

Collecting evidence

Opportunities are encouraged that allow students to collect evidence through different modes, such as blogs, video clips, etc. Such opportunities allow students to have agency on how best to demonstrate what they know.

Moderation samples in 2019 indicate that a wide range of appropriate evidence gathering methods are being used, particularly for research standards.

Finished work standards also provide opportunity for students to explore alternative contexts such as collaborative projects and moving image conventions.

Student wellbeing

Where students are guided in how to present their evidence succinctly, the quality of their responses improves. When students are aware of the concept that quantity is not an indicator of quality, this also helps to reduce workload pressures.

In terms of student wellbeing, it is also timely to consider the importance of positive contexts and guidance regarding potentially 'dark themes' or inappropriate material. While the need for self-expression and realism is not disputed, the mental and physical wellbeing of students in their learning and assessment should be a significant consideration in programmes.

Graphically 'dark' images are occasionally received for photography submissions. Often, these investigations are based on pure curiosity or are cathartic experiences. However, in some cases, selecting these themes could signal an underlying concern. Where students explore 'dark themes', particularly relating to self-harm, teachers should ensure that students know how to seek appropriate support if needed.

Assessor Support

The Best Practice Workshops (online and face-to-face) offered by the Assessment and Moderation Team continue to be viewed by the sector as significantly contributing to improved assessor practice:

*"The workshop helped to review my own knowledge, and great to share ideas."
"It was great having time to challenge my thinking in assessment."*

Based on the success of the 'on request' model and the ability to have targeted support, the Assessment and Moderation Team will continue delivering this support model in 2020. Workshops or presentation slots can be requested to provide targeted support to regional or national audiences.

Additionally, we will continue to run the generic Transforming Assessment Praxis Programme, an online programme which helps assessors learn about re-contextualising assessment resources and collecting evidence in different ways to better meet the needs of their learners.

More detailed information, including how to request or register for a workshop, can be found on our Best Practice Workshop pages or by emailing workshops@nzqa.govt.nz.

Nine Visual Arts workshops were delivered in 2019. The main focus of these was on the 'finished work' standards, and moving image approaches to those standards. Single-focus workshops on research approaches and photography were also delivered at the request of particular regions.

Observations from the 'Finished Work' standards

In some submissions received for external moderation in 2019, the specific Visual Arts cultural context was not sufficiently defined. Care should be taken to ensure that outcomes for 90917, 91325 and 91460 are not a subset of work generated for field specific standards (design, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture).

A 'specific cultural context' means that generic paintings such as an A3 landscape, or design approaches such as a logo, are more appropriately assessed within painting and design standards.

However, specific visual arts cultural contexts may precede, or emerge out of, field-specific investigations, for example a mural or multimedia installation for painting, or a moving image promotional product for design.

Digital submissions

The Digital Moderation Application moderation application, introduced in 2017, has seen a significant increase in the number of digital submissions received for moderation. When documenting visual evidence for moderation purposes, care should be given to file size, format and orientation.

For online assessment, individual images should not need to exceed 5MB providing that written notes can be clearly read. Successful formats include .ppt, .pdf and zipped folders, rather than uploading individual .jpeg files. Ensuring that all images are correctly oriented, rather than sideways or upside down, greatly facilitates the moderation process.

Episodic approaches in photography

Several submissions received in 2019 featured a series of different approaches to drawing conventions in photography. This strategy can be appropriate for 91312 and 91447 in terms of enabling students to explore a variety of pictorial and technical conventions.

However, trialing a range of unrelated approaches can limit students' opportunity to show the depth of understanding needed for Merit and Excellence. More cohesive investigations, which explore alternative conventions within the context of personal proposition, more regularly result in the purposeful application needed for higher levels of achievement.

An additional benefit of basing investigations on a personal proposition, is that the resulting evidence supports more seamless integration of 2.2/3.2 and 2.3/3.3 standards.

Assessing the dual requirements of 90914 and 90913

For 90914 students need to show recoding skills with both dry and wet media. For 90915, students need to develop ideas in at least two fields (design, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture).

In most moderation submissions for 90914, the dry media evidence was sustained and showed skilled management of media for recoding purposes. In some cases, the use of wet media was less sustained, or focused on compositional or stylistic conventions rather than demonstrating recoding skills. For each level of achievement, both wet media and dry recording evidence is required.

For 90915, some submissions focused mainly on one field with a second field being significantly less sustained. For higher levels of achievement, both fields need to be operating at the assessed grade. For example, if a sample includes painting outcomes at Excellence, but is accompanied by a small unsophisticated print, then the overall grade will be Achieved.

It is possible for the stronger media or field to compensate for the weaker media or field allowing for a higher overall grade. In these cases, the stronger media or field needs to be *very strong*, while the weaker media or field needs to be *very close* to the final grade.

Communications

Outcome statements in external moderation reports

In 2017, moderation report outcome statements changed from '**Confidence**' statements to '**Consistency**' statements, as explained in an NZQA [Circular](#) at the time.

The previous **FOUR** 'Confidence' statements were changed to **THREE** Consistency statements. This reduction in the number of categories of statement has, in some cases, resulted in moderation report outcomes previously noted as 'Confident' now being noted as 'Not Yet Consistent'.

It is important to recognise that 'Not Yet Consistent' does not imply major issues on the part of the assessor, but that the aspects highlighted can be easily addressed through the advice given in the report.