2024 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Visual Arts
Level:	2
Achievement standard(s):	91320, 91321, 91322, 91323, 91324

General commentary

For the most part, schools are using the verification process well, and are sending samples that, whenever possible, cover a range of grades, practices, and modes of presentation. The verification process is in place to support teachers' professional judgments.

Teachers are encouraged to use past exemplars and records from their own programmes and teaching contexts in order to assist with making accurate assessor judgements. This is an example of 'best practice'. Past exemplars can be accessed at:

https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/past-exams-and-exemplars/visual-arts/

Logistical and administrative issues continue to be problematic at times in the verification process. Schools need to ensure that work is properly affixed to the portfolio panels. Conversely, if there is a likelihood of work adhering itself to the facing work on the opposite panel, steps should be taken to keep wet or tacky media surfaces separate. Work that is not dry enough should not be sent. Every care is taken to ensure work is not damaged when received for viewing, but in some cases wet paint or glazes meant that work was damaged as it was teased apart. Schools have been notified if this was the case.

Schools should ensure that they follow guidelines for candidate numbers. In some cases, numbers were glued on top of student work, which inhibited the reading of that group of works at the top of Panel 2. This practice seems remarkably disrespectful to the candidate, and those schools are advised to consider alternative means by which the necessary information can be affixed to the portfolio – for example, a flap or tab that can be lifted off the work.

There were some instances of schools providing paperwork that did not match the contents of the portfolio bag. Please ensure that candidates are entered in the correct standard, and that the portfolios, identified on the schedule, are sent for verification.

Schools are to be reminded that signing off the submission schedule is an acknowledgement of authenticity of work, that it is the students' own and that it does not transgress any threshold for use of AI generated imagery and / or use of 'stock imagery' from the web – in Design in particular. Schools have to be the 'gatekeeper' of image generation and its use; the use of AI sourced imagery will become deceptively apparent, and teachers need to maintain a close proximity to the production of student work in order for its veracity to be authenticated. Generation of imagery by the candidate continues to be a worthwhile endeavour that presents learning opportunities, and ensures authenticity and 'ownership' of the subject matter.

The verification model places the onus for accuracy in assessor judgements on the individual school and teacher(s). Therefore, there is a need for school management to support the marking of portfolios prior to submission for verification through appropriate resourcing. This includes both time, i.e. not at the end of a busy teaching day, and space, i.e. somewhere to view the cohort of work.

The verification process generated a similar number of review reports to last year. Schools receive a verification review report when: two or more provisional grades are changed a full grade step

(e.g., M to E), a grade change is made that is greater than one grade (e.g., A to E, M to N), two or more portfolios are verified as Not Achieved when the provisional grade awarded was A, M, or E. Schools should access the verification report and use the feedback to assist with the interpretation of the standard in future submissions. Advice in the reports could be a reason to reflect on the teaching programme itself, the nature of the work submitted, and its relevance to the criteria of the standard, not just the accuracy of provisional grades. Schools in this situation are also advised to seek assistance from their local subject association, or teachers in another local school. Working collegially within the sector will build confidence in teachers' ability to deliver relevant teaching and learning, and supports student outcomes.

Trends

Portfolios sent for verification portrayed a broad spectrum of interests that reflected student-led inquiry, as well as teacher and class projects. There was a richness of cultural imagery and contexts, and projects that engaged with personal interests and experiences. Overall, there were far fewer whole class programmes, but where they did exist, for example in the use of a common theme or starting point, there was scope for individualism and self expression. As such, there was an authenticity in the ownership of the work.

All fields contained images, imagery, and artefacts that pertained to the cultural milieu of students. For the most part, teachers clearly guided candidates towards relevant and topical subject matter that facilitated engagement and participation. There remains a concern, though instances appeared less often than in previous years, about the appropriateness of some subject matter – anxiety, depression, trauma, etc, and similarly 'dark themes' such as drug taking, alcoholism etc. Rather than the 'weighty-ness' of any particular chosen subject matter, using art making conventions remains the 'driver' for projects to move forward, to advance and to develop ideas.

Many submissions engaged in a rich way with materials and processes, and explored fully the qualities of the medium with which they were working. An example of this was seen in submissions verified for Sculpture (AS91324), where the range of sculptural practice was broad. Painting (AS91321) also had many examples of candidates pushing the possibilities of wet media and substrate materials, and this extended to an increase in the number of submissions that used oil-based media. (Use of this media was no guarantee of a high level of success, but clearly was an exciting and challenging medium with which to work). In Painting, most candidates included only drawings at the top of Panel 1 that were relevant to the proposition, and moved swiftly onto use of wet media as befits the requirements of the standard.

In Design (AS91320), candidates demonstrated levels of confidence in their use of digital media, but it was notable that analogue processes of drawing and sketching were used as a means for spontaneous generation and development of ideas, before digital media was employed as means to render and refine. Submissions that carefully deployed this use of mixed media were more able to present the development of their ideas in linear form.

Overall, candidates are evidently enjoying art making processes, taking time and effort to craft outcomes that engages with materials and processes.

There were very few digital moving image (DMI) submissions this year. Some level of success was to be had for those candidates whose work used the codes and conventions of that particular mode of presentation, and who saw opportunities for the creative exploration of ideas that combined visual, temporal, and aural effects that would otherwise not have suited presentation on a two-panel portfolio.

Art making conventions continue to be used as the foundation for informed decision-making. Use of artist models and established practice varied from explicit emulation to implicit referencing, and their use when employed beyond the generic tended to support submissions that appeared more insightful and sophisticated. In some cases however, the use of appropriated imagery closely resembled its source, i.e. emulation, and did not evidence understanding on the part of the candidate.

In their provisional marking, some teachers valued too highly work that was technically sophisticated, but which was not supported by ideas.

Lower Achieved submissions presented outcomes, rather than a presentation of a process. The presentation of the means by which students arrive at outcomes can support the awarding of higher grades. Evidence of extension and re-generation are related to the establishment of a pictorial and / or conceptual purpose that can evolve over the course of the submission. If they are working at a higher level, candidates can edit and select work for presentation of their artistic 'journey'.

In conclusion, the Level 2 Visual Arts examination retains its validity as a means for candidates to have acknowledged their artistic endeavours within specific fields of practice, and candidates' work is recognised as an opportunity for them to experiment, develop, and express their own artistic identity. The standard continues to be the best guideline for teaching and learning – albeit one that busy teachers can lose sight of in the melee of everyday school life and in the actual art processes and procedures of making. Teachers are advised to reference the standard in their teaching, and guide candidates through the key words and explanatory notes that help make sense of the expectations of the standard.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

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

Commentary

Candidates in design courses commonly follow recognisable processes, beginning with a design brief and a collection of images that support their theme. This approach, particularly when using original photographs and identifiable artist models, results in a more purposeful outcome, showing a deeper understanding of design conventions and procedures. Integrating reference materials, original photographs, and artist models gives the candidates ownership of their work, building confidence and direction into their design projects.

Using original imagery, such as photographs or hand-drawn elements, helps establish a clear sense of purpose and personal direction in design work. Thoughtful integration of typography, particularly in projects like garment or product design, significantly enhances the design's impact and adds depth to the work.

In recent years, candidates have increasingly engaged with character design, bringing authenticity to their work through hand-drawn illustrations and exploring character features, such as expressions and movement. However, an over-reliance on character generators has sometimes led to weaker outcomes that lack conviction and depth.

Attention to document resolution is essential, as issues like pixelation can compromise the overall presentation and diminish the quality of the design portfolio.

Maintaining a unified approach to text and image that aligns with the project's thematic direction also strengthens the presentation. Candidates are encouraged to show the full extent of their creative process, rather than focusing solely on final works, as this helps document idea generation, exploration, and development. In Design, superficial changes rarely lead to meaningful progress or innovation. Candidates need to focus on a more intentional process that involves evaluating various options, identifying the most promising ones, and building on those to push ideas further. This approach demonstrates critical thinking, a deeper understanding of design principles, and a commitment to refining concepts toward more developed outcomes.

Identifying and using established practice – including genre-specific examples of design that have relevance to the project – has the potential to inform sound decision-making.

Current trends include a strong focus on personal character and narrative development, often seen in webcomics, graphic novels, and gaming projects. Package and product design, particularly in food branding, remains popular, though candidates sometimes struggle with design conventions like menu layouts and product wraps. There is an increasing exploration in typography and web design, with many candidates incorporating more sophisticated digital media elements, including website and app interface design.

To enhance the presentation of portfolios, it is essential for candidates to clearly label original versus found imagery and arrange images in a way that logically guides the viewer through the development process. Designs should be presented at appropriate scales, such as tickets at ticket size, rather than using oversized mock-ups to fill empty spaces. Instead of relying on mock-ups, candidates should emphasise demonstrating growth, development, and regeneration of ideas, focusing on a systematic and thoughtful body of work.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- presented a systematic body of work across two panels
- demonstrated selection and ordering of images that guide the viewer through their design process
- presented work that reflects some understanding of design conventions
- presented work that may require further development to reach a fully systematic outcome.

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

- demonstrated a strong grasp of their design brief
- exhibited a clear thematic direction and a purposeful application of design elements
- demonstrated a personalised creative style
- included innovative choices in composition, colour palette, and design layout across panels, allowing for a competent layered investigation.

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

- displayed fluent skills in media and techniques
- integrated multiple elements like layering, patterning, and specific typographic choices to achieve fluency and consistency
- blended personal exploration with established practices, showing hands-on techniques such as character drawing or product and personal photography
- demonstrated a thoughtful and appropriate integration of analogue and digital processes, as well as imagery, typography, and thematic elements
- reflected both a range of media and fluency in specific design skills.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- lacked the required volume of work
- lacked the required depth in development
- did not meet the standards of Level 7 of the New Zealand Curriculum.

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

Commentary

Choices of subject matter, themes, and ideas continue to evolve. Emerging trends and approaches in the field of painting revealed both thematic diversity and a varied engagement with media and techniques, combined with explorations of personal and societal issues through students' art making.

The incorporation of contemporary issues such as climate change and body image, alongside traditional influences, like Surrealism on stylistic decisions, and the use of various cultural narratives as a starting point, reflected student engagement with both personal and global issues.

With so many rich and thought-provoking areas to explore as the beginning for a painting investigation at this level, it is disappointing when students decide to use work and images that are not their own, sourced from the internet or otherwise. Such sources are limited in their ability to provide a student with opportunities to engage in an authentic and individual art making practice.

Many portfolios took a narrative or documentary approach in painting, which required students to focus on understanding and building upon the pictorial and technical conventions related to the chosen genre or style to be successful. Referring to cultural motifs to tell stories or convey their heritage can be a rewarding decision for many students, provided they use an appropriate visual and technical vocabulary that meet the criteria to support the narrative.

Additionally, developing informed layout strategies to effectively communicate the ideas and demonstrate the extension, clarification, and regeneration of those ideas is essential to reach higher levels of achievement.

Frequent subjects, symbols or approaches:

Koi fish and water are recurring symbols and are frequently used as a reference to nature and other cultures, including traditions from Eastern Art.

The depiction of skulls remains popular, serving as a symbol of mortality and the passage of time. These portfolios often begin with a Vanitas reference and artworks are tied to themes of life, death, and rebirth, incorporating motifs that explore existential questions. Time as a motif appeared frequently, with clocks, hourglasses, and ageing figures symbolising the relentless passage of time. These artworks are often contemplative or melancholic. Students are occasionally attracted to a darker thematic approach and here, school and teacher guidance is advised.

Fruits and vegetables appear in various works to signify themes of nourishment, abundance, or the fragility of life. As such, they are utilised for their symbolism, and are often portrayed expressively and with vibrant colour choices. Pomegranates are used for their historical, mythological, and cultural connotations.

Incorporating Surrealist influences, referencing artists such as Vladamir Kush, Salvador Dalí, and René Magritte is also a popular decision for some students, providing them with opportunities to portray dreamlike states and deeper psychological narratives.

Environmental activism is continuing to gain traction as a topic for art making, with many students creating works highlighting the impacts of climate change. These pieces often employ stark contrasts, dramatic imagery, and symbolism to emphasise urgency and a call for action. There are many useful references for these students to use as resources within our current cultural and social contexts.

Connected to climate change, some portfolios envision dystopian or post-apocalyptic scenarios. Religion in its many and varied forms can also be a rich source of ideas, ranging from reverent depictions of religious icons to critical examinations of religious practices and their societal implications.

An ongoing source of ideas for some students includes street art and graffiti. These works often convey social or political messages and bring an urban vocabulary, including spray paint and stencilling, to traditional painting. Caution is advised with this approach too, as copying graffiti can be a limited proposition.

Birds and animals were also featured in many successful portfolios this year. Flowers, used symbolically or decoratively, employed to signify beauty, growth, or ephemeral qualities were frequently linked to themes around portraiture.

Specific approaches and processes included:

Painting over photocopied images, and combining digital and traditional media to develop compositional ideas. This approach should not be employed to mask a lack of engagement with painting concerns.

An over-reliance on dry media. This practice can be problematic when used instead of paint and can limit the exploration of painterly techniques and the depth of colour and surface achievable with wet media.

The integration of digital tools alongside traditional painting has increased. The use of digital sketching as preparatory work or as a mixed-media element within final compositions, or creating compositions entirely using digital tools, was a feature of more portfolios in 2024. When used with understanding of the criteria for this standard, these approaches were successful.

Overall, the submissions for painting this year ranged from more traditional approaches to some new interpretations of older ideas, many choosing individual approaches and avoiding formulaic or whole-class methods. A selection of submissions demonstrated outstanding engagement, creativity, originality, and exemplary command of media and technique.

Encouragingly, the number of exceptional painting portfolios achieving at Excellence continues to demonstrate the consistency, diversity, and excellence in painting practices in schools throughout the country.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- presented a narrow proposition, restricting them from developing / extending ideas
- required more variation in their compositions
- relied on large-scale works at the end of the submission that sometimes prevented the ability of the portfolio to move forward
- Spent too much time in the initial drawing stages for the portfolio, creating limited opportunities to investigate paint conventions throughout the submission
- relied on using paint pens / felt-tip pens / gel pens to colour in swathes of images or to add detail to paintings
- demonstrated limited use or understanding of related established practice, often only referencing a single artist or approach
- avoided adding details – for example, hands and faces of people or animals
- provided limited or very little evidence of layering paint.

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

- referenced and applied understanding of established practice to explore ideas
- used multiple artist references to help shift and extend ideas on the portfolio
- demonstrated more originality in artwork or approaches, although some copying can sometimes be identified – when this happens, it is often combined with personal interpretation and expression

- cohesively used colour, and blending / mark-making occurs throughout the submission, demonstrating understanding and control of the selected conventions
- introduced topics or themes and allowed for extension through varied compositional approaches
- presented artwork that looked authentic, with the students' individuality evident on the portfolio
- developed work consistently and with purpose.

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

- intelligently selected the appropriate paint approach, with a clear understanding of the art making opportunities presented by the manipulation of these media
- used media with fluency, often benefiting from risk-taking and purposeful experimentation
- demonstrated an understanding of light and colour relationships throughout, and the use of tonal modelling, depth of colour, luminosity, and application of paint are consistently fluent
- provided for opportunities for extension beyond the finish or end-point presented on the portfolio – these are often created because the candidate has selected the best opportunities several times across the submission
- demonstrated an advanced understanding of compositional devices, interpreting and drawing on the influences of established practice with intelligence, making these concepts their own through sophisticated reflection and integration.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- presented incomplete or insufficient work
- worked below the curriculum level
- presented single, unrelated works that did not meet the requirement for a systematic body of work
- copied images or content directly from the internet.

Achievement standard 91322: Produce a systematic body of work that shows understanding of art making conventions and ideas within photography

Commentary

The majority of candidates entered for this standard embarked on investigating personal photographic journeys. This individualised approach enabled them to engage with their chosen topic, subject matter, or conceptual idea in a way that was meaningful to them and to drive their own creative investigations.

Candidates explored diverse themes and subject matter, drawing inspiration from personal connections. Some did this by focusing on significant people or places; they were able to revisit their chosen topics repeatedly, deepening their engagement with the subject matter and their creative processes, as well as enabling through re-photographing an advancement of techniques and ideas.

Common subject matter choices included:

- still life – investigations exploring formal properties or conceptual ideas
- documentary approaches – exploring people or places
- urban landscapes and architecture
- rural landscapes – particularly popular were the investigations of farm animals such as cows, horses, dogs, and deer. Candidates who investigated animals in landscapes (and not just the animals exclusively) were able to add some variety to the investigations by offering new perspectives of the subject matter and therefore had greater visual opportunities.

There was a refreshing revival of documentary approaches and site-specific investigations. Some

investigated architectural places and local landscapes. Successful propositions revisited the locations, used light effectively (noting its capacity for change), explored the potential in a site / place (with or without people), and used a range of photography conventions to, in many cases, thoroughly investigate and advance their ideas.

A significant number of candidates used local environments as a means to generate ideas, attempting to capture the essence of their surroundings. Candidates who explored people or places connected to them were particularly successful in creating compelling photographic investigations. An example of this was candidates who photographed grandparents, which provided a nostalgic and intergenerational perspective, personal insight, and connection. Themes of time passing and reminiscence were appropriate in this context.

Some candidates explored conceptual ideas driven by teenage social issues such as mental health, bullying, and the use of technology. This included changing camera technologies. There were also candidates whose projects presented and celebrated their own cultural identity. Less popular were narrative-driven approaches. Moving image digital photography submissions were almost non-existent.

Trends in techniques:

Many students started out exploring their subject matter using light and camera techniques, and then further investigated ideas through layering images, multiple exposures, and digital collage later in the portfolio. Some candidates used techniques metaphorically such as using selective colour to appropriately evoke themes of time or nostalgia.

There were various trends in photography techniques used by candidates, such as more use of macro lens studies and coloured filters to develop ideas.

Tessellation was used more sensitively – for example, as an appropriate way to investigate architectural subject matter with its planes and surfaces.

Many portfolios demonstrated good decision-making in the layout of the work and in the sizing and sequencing of images to show the flow and organisation of the ideas being explored effectively.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- generated and developed some ideas that began with a clear proposition
- explored ideas methodically to provide a systematic, coherent flow in the organisation of the work across the submission
- successfully used some photographic conventions.

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

- showed clear evidence of extending ideas with purpose
- showed competent use and understanding of photography conventions
- understood and used established practice appropriately, and as a means to advance ideas
- made purposeful decisions in the layout and presentation of work – in the sizing and sequencing of works.

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

- demonstrated fluency in their use of photographic conventions and techniques
- explored a range and depth of ideas
- successfully regenerated ideas from the original proposition
- used a critical approach to select from and advance the best ideas in distinct and new directions
- used established practice implicitly in a sophisticated manner.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- generated, but did not develop, some ideas
- presented an insufficient amount of evidence of work across the submission
- made few decisions about the layout or sizing of the individual works, e.g. all the photographs were the same size or were very large
- did not demonstrate an understanding of photography conventions – e.g. camera control: exposure, focus, and image resolution. Images were blurry, squashed / stretched or pixelated.

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

Commentary

The printmaking portfolios submitted for verification in 2024 reflected a positive trend in the national cohort, showcasing a strengthening of practice, quality of outcomes, and programme planning. Printmaking continues to flourish across schools, with a clear improvement in both the complexity and personal relevance of student work. The verification panel observed a broad spectrum of approaches to programme planning, with several common themes emerging in successful submissions.

Successful printmaking programmes this year demonstrated strong scaffolding of ideas and processes, enabling students to sequentially build on initial works. These programmes balanced structured development with opportunities for open-ended exploration and personalised thinking, allowing students to engage deeply with their subject matter. Students were encouraged to explore themes that were personally relevant and authentic, with many submissions reflecting topics such as family or cultural stories, connections to nature and the landscape, architecture, faith, historical and contemporary imagery, and digital culture. As a result, there was a noticeable increase in 'student voice', with more submissions featuring work that was genuinely reflective of individual experiences and perspectives.

Successful programmes integrated both an investigation into thematic subject matter and a purposeful exploration of specific printmaking processes. Students were encouraged to move beyond illustrative characters and linear portrayal of a narrative, which makes it difficult to achieve in the higher grade ranges. Those who combined thematic exploration with strong technical mastery of printmaking processes were able to achieve very high levels of success.

This year, a significant number of schools focused on etching and woodcut techniques, with students demonstrating exceptional control and refinement in their work. Many submissions featured finely executed dry point etching, with hand-worked details, intricate mark-making, and printing with an awareness of plate tone and colour selection. The attention to inking, wiping back techniques, and tonal qualities was particularly noteworthy, resulting in visually fluent and polished works. Similarly, lino- and woodcut prints exhibited precise, clean cutting, intentional colour selection, and well-executed printing, showcasing students' growing technical proficiency.

Across all processes, a common characteristic of successful submissions was the careful attention to tone, mark-making, and the thoughtful use of colour. Whether through selective colour choices or the extension of colour in more complex ways, many students demonstrated a clear understanding of the role colour and tone plays in enhancing the impact of their prints.

Some submissions explored the integration of digital and analogue processes, such as gel medium transfers of digital imagery combined with traditional print techniques. While this approach was successfully employed in some cases, it was not always effective. The digital imagery, when overused or not properly integrated, could distract from or dominate the focal point of the

composition. It is important that digital processes and use of photocopies do not hold students back from developing knowledge and skill of their selected printmaking conventions.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the use of processes that overlap two fields, such as spray painting and stencilling. While these techniques can enhance creative expression, they may detract from the development of core printmaking skills. Ensuring that students have ample opportunity to develop and extend their ideas through printmaking techniques is crucial to their overall success.

Tetra pack, collagraph, and mono-print techniques, while less commonly used this year, remain valuable techniques when explored in depth. Likewise, botanical printmaking featured in some schools' programmes and was an effective approach that supported both technical development and thematic exploration.

This year, there was a noticeable reduction in programmes that heavily directed students throughout the portfolio, and fewer submissions relied on repetitive stamp-making techniques. These trends are seen as positive developments, as overly structured programmes can limit students' creative growth. When schools used multi-plate and collage techniques, they did so successfully, allowing students to generate complex compositions and explore a specific range of pictorial concerns, such as colour, overlay, and composition.

In the initial stages of a printmaking portfolio, it is helpful for students to select drawing approaches and media that align with the printmaking processes they intend to explore. This ensures that students build foundational skills that are directly applicable to their chosen techniques and subject matter.

One area for caution is the creation of very large works on Panel 2. While students with advanced technical skills may have the capability to execute large-scale prints, these works can limit opportunities for the continued extension and regeneration of ideas. Large prints may work well if preceded by iterative development and extension of ideas in smaller, refined compositions on Panel 1, featuring continued extension and regeneration of ideas on Panel 2.

To further enhance student achievement in printmaking, some art departments could consider focusing on developing expertise and resources in one or two specific printmaking processes. By honing in on a select set of techniques, programmes can be designed to allow students to evolve their ideas deeply and extend their mastery of printmaking practices. This focused approach can provide a solid foundation for students to develop both technical proficiency and conceptual clarity.

Overall, the 2024 printmaking submissions reflected a growing maturity in student work, with a stronger emphasis on personal expression, thematic depth, and technical control. The trend towards more open-ended, exploratory programmes is proving to be successful, and students are increasingly able to demonstrate both creative and technical excellence. With continued attention on developing expertise in selected printmaking techniques, the outcomes for future cohorts are poised to further strengthen.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- produced a body of work that was organised and presented in a systematic way
- provided sufficient evidence of skill in their selected use of processes, materials and techniques at Level 7 of the New Zealand Curriculum
- generated and then developed ideas across the portfolio – sequences may have been developed via the student's theme, compositions, pictorial, or technical development
- created a more limited number of print blocks, or worked with a limited understanding of techniques as they were preparing and printing the plates.

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

- introduced more than one idea on Panel 1 and developed, and then extended, ideas on Panel 2
- avoided or limited the repetitive use of the same print blocks and imagery
- purposefully worked with a selected range of printmaking and compositional conventions
- showed extension in the use and understanding of their chosen printmaking materials and techniques across sequences of work
- made conscious decisions about colour, materials, and composition as they extended ideas.

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

- began the portfolio by introducing conceptual as well as pictorial ideas
- generated, developed, and began to extend ideas on Panel 1, and in doing so set themselves up with a range of options to work with and to regenerate ideas from on Panel 2
- made new print blocks for every sequence on the portfolio
- demonstrated a high level of facility in their printmaking skills, refining and advancing techniques throughout their sequences
- explored ways of working that resulted in compositional shifts, or inventive use of media
- made clear links to established practice, which informed their use of materials, techniques, and ideas
- worked with personalised ideas in response to the school programme, in an authentic, open-ended way that reflected the student's curiosity, interests, or experience.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- provided insufficient evidence of skill at Level 7 of the New Zealand Curriculum
- generated ideas based on a theme or topic but failed to develop their ideas in any systematic way
- made works using singular, random, or unrelated ideas
- worked with media drawing in other fields of practice, such as painting methodologies, but failed to produce sufficient evidence of printmaking itself across the portfolio.

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

Commentary

Sculpture offers the opportunity for candidates to explore ideas within an arts context but without the need for a specific technical skill set. Sculptural investigations can incorporate a broad range of technical approaches, a wide variety of media, and can be explored at almost any scale. This flexibility allows for deeply personalised learning, embracing candidates' particular areas of interest and levels of technical facility.

It was fantastic to see a larger number of samples sent for verification in Sculpture in 2024. The range of practice within these samples was expansive and demonstrates a willingness amongst teachers to pass ownership over to candidates to make decisions regarding subject matter, material choices, and sculptural approaches. The absence of prescriptive teacher-directed programmes in 2024 afforded candidates the scope to find their own way through their investigations rather than working towards preconceived outcomes. This in turn resulted in playful, explorative outcomes and more opportunities for candidates to demonstrate the extension and regeneration of their ideas.

It was pleasing to see fewer portfolios with a focus on strong photographic images at the expense of a clear documentation of three-dimensional works. Photography and Sculpture submissions can appear similar due to the fact that both present with photographic outcomes. However, it is critical

with Sculpture submissions that the images are there to act as documentation of the work produced, rather than the photographs being the work in and of themselves.

If documentation of a work is ambiguous in terms of scale, a small additional note under the image with information regarding the size, media, site, and anything else of note, supports the reading of the work.

Where candidates present evidence of a performance-based practice, consideration should be given to the most appropriate method of presentation. The digital moving image (DMI) presentation format allows for performance practice to be viewed as a time-based process. The act of viewing a performance in a video format offers a more authentic reading of the work than a collection of still images. Nuances of performance practice can be missed if reading a performance work as a storyboard across a submission.

There were some examples of submissions this year with a relatively low number of sculptural outcomes. These submissions often included significant numbers of photographs of each work, at the expense of candidates exploring new possibilities to further advance their ideas. This limited opportunities to extend and to regenerate ideas into new works and tended to hold submissions at Achieved or within the lower end of the Merit grade range.

Candidates would benefit from ensuring that each image presented offered a different viewpoint or additional information. Approximately three images is usually sufficient to clearly present a sculptural work for the portfolio.

Many submissions this year considered the hierarchy of images during the layout phase of the portfolio process. This allowed for the presentation of clearly related works, and in the submissions that were rewarded with Merit or Excellence, evidence of the critical selection, clarification, and regeneration of ideas.

Sculpture teachers are encouraged to send Sculpture submissions for verification, as numbers of submissions in this field are relatively low. Receiving feedback in relation to the standard is particularly valuable in smaller fields such as Sculpture, where there are fewer samples from which to select exemplary material.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- demonstrated an understanding of sculptural conventions within a limited framework
- presented a sufficient, though minimal, number of sculptural outcomes, which limited opportunities to extend ideas
- presented appropriate documentation of the sculptural outcomes
- 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 who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- had a clear thematic or conceptual framework that drove the investigation
- included sound photographic documentation to best represent the work produced
- used sculptural conventions with purpose
- demonstrated competent use of appropriate media and techniques
- presented evidence of an extension of ideas.

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

- demonstrated a strong engagement or connection with their proposition e.g. personal / cultural interests, which further supported a reflective sculptural practice through a depth of ideas
- built on previous outcomes to advance the proposition and to clarify and regenerate ideas

- presented work that was technically fluent and understood the materiality of each of their chosen media
- demonstrated a critical awareness of the field of practice in which they were working
- used fluent photographic documentation to support the clarification and regeneration of ideas
- identified a hierarchy of work through strong editing and layout of images.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- presented an insufficient number of sculptural outcomes for the 12-credit weighting of the standard
- presented work that was episodic rather than systematic
- generated ideas but did not sufficiently develop these
- demonstrated insufficient understanding of established practice to inform sculptural outcomes
- used processes, procedures, materials, and techniques at a level that was below the practical knowledge requirements of Level 7 of the New Zealand Curriculum.