

2025 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Visual Arts
Level:	3
Achievement standard(s):	91455, 91456, 91457, 91458, 91459

General commentary

Candidates presented a portfolio of individual candidate-led evidence for assessment consisting of either predominantly a three-panel portfolio or a digital moving image (DMI) submission, or a digital three-panel portfolio for 91459, representing the requirements of the standard.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91455: Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within design practice

Commentary

Overall, the Level 3 Design submissions reflected a strong standard of candidate performance, demonstrating confident application of design principles and processes across both physical and digital media.

Submissions demonstrated engagement across a variety of media, outcomes, and briefs. Candidates showed conceptual understanding, technical proficiency, and creative versatility across print-based and digital moving image contexts. Submissions explored contemporary issues, narrative-driven projects, branding, cultural themes, and interactive experiences. The breadth of approaches—from print campaigns to screen-based design and moving image (e.g. animation, motion graphics, time-base documentation, motion graphics)—demonstrated growing sophistication in visual communication and audience awareness.

Candidates who achieved at higher levels were anchored by purposeful briefs with clearly defined deliverables and scope. These submissions demonstrated conceptual depth, authentic audience consideration, and coherent development phases. Candidates explored diverse topics including personal narratives, cultural perspectives, social-good initiatives, and world-building. Original asset creation—such as illustrations, photography, copywriting, and graphic elements—was a consistent strength. Integration of artist models informed purposeful refinement and supported originality of design concept and process. Iterative development and considered regeneration enabled well-crafted and cohesive outcomes, with physical craft and print-based elements further enhancing the presentation quality of submissions.

Vague, overly complex, or poorly contextualised briefs impacted candidate success. Candidates who achieved at lower levels of success relied heavily on found or AI-generated images, decorative typography, or placeholder text, which limited communication clarity. Development was frequently fragmented, with heavy reuse of a narrow set of assets, minimal regeneration of ideas, or excessive emphasis on construction steps instead of conceptual progression. Overuse of large templates, duplicated finals, and non-essential annotations reduced available space on the portfolio for

meaningful development. These factors limited narrative clarity and inhibited systematic idea regeneration.

Digital Moving Image (DMI) submissions at the higher levels demonstrated inventive concepts, narrative clarity, and fluent control of moving image conventions. Candidates used interaction, motion graphics, animation, pacing, and sound with purpose. Many integrated 2D and 3D elements, extending their propositions into game design, interactive experiences, or screen-based storytelling. Original asset creation and sophisticated sound integration were consistent strengths. Proposal brief and development at Excellence level were succinct and informed design decisions, and final art work sequences were resolved, coherent, and technically controlled.

DMIs at lower levels of achievement tended to be static, slideshow-like, or lacked narrative clarity. Common issues included abrupt transitions, generic or borrowed assets, minimal sound design, or the absence of purposeful sequencing. Some submissions attempted scopes that were beyond what could be achieved in the timeframe, leading to incomplete outcomes. Fragmented development phases and limited consideration of audience engagement were common in these submissions.

Across the cohort, evidence of personal authorship was strongest where candidates generated and transformed their own assets. Submissions that relied heavily on stock imagery, third-party artwork, or AI-generated assets provided less evidence of authenticity and independent decision-making.

Grade awarding

Physical Submissions

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- established a clear brief with intentions generally relevant to topic and audience
- selected personally meaningful topics with initial visual exploration supporting narrative intent
- analysed research and artist models with limited integration into later phases
- generated some original assets, though inconsistent graphic treatments reduced cohesion
- developed ideas with some promise but showed limited regeneration and a narrow range of methods
- iterated in repetitive rather than transformative ways
- sequenced and scaled work with variable clarity, affecting readability across formats
- resolved outcomes to a basic level with adequate craft
- included minimal copywriting or used placeholder text *Lorem Ipsum*
- applied functional and readable but unrefined typography and colour choices
- relied on image-led storytelling with limited text integration
- demonstrated basic hierarchy and audience communication
- executed technical processes adequately but with limited advancement
- worked within a narrow range of formats with limited adaptation across media.

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

- developed a purposeful brief with clear intentions and scoped deliverables
- applied design conventions consistently to refine ideas for topic and audience
- integrated artist-model influence to extend conceptual thinking
- sustained research showing contextual understanding of narrative and audience
- produced original assets with a consistent personal style and ownership of decisions
- used multiple methods with proficient technical control
- developed ideas systematically through linked iterations to resolve outcomes
- considered audience through purposeful tone, visual language, and typographic choices

- applied typography and colour to support hierarchy and meaning, with clear portfolio organisation
- presented refined, cohesive final outcomes with appropriate contextual mock-ups.

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

- created focused briefs and topics with precise intentions and creatively ambitious scope
- combined and extended conventions in innovative, audience-relevant ways
- synthesised models and contextual research to generate original, conceptually rich ideas
- conducted investigations showing insight into narrative, audience psychology, and thematic meaning
- produced distinctive visual languages, with fluent control of typography, branding, and image-making
- applied multiple methods with mastery across outputs
- developed ideas iteratively with critique and reflection evident at each stage
- embedded targeted audience engagement through tone, messaging, and visual language
- managed conceptually driven image, type, and colour choices for communication impact
- drew on personal or cultural perspectives to strengthen authenticity
- regenerated imagery to increase complexity rather than reuse assets
- integrated physical craft to enhance sensory and conceptual aspects
- structured space and movement fluently through strategic composition
- delivered fully resolved outcomes contextualised in real-world settings
- applied format-specific conventions to produce cohesive, sophisticated projects.

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

- presented briefs lacking clear purpose, context, or audience alignment
- followed unsystematic or overly complex processes leading to unclear direction
- relied on trends or iconic examples instead of generating original ideas
- showed limited audience consideration, reducing communication clarity
- prioritised surface aesthetics over topic or narrative, often using low-quality found imagery
- relied on AI or automated tools with minimal evidence of personal authorship
- reused a small set of initial imagery with little regeneration
- showed gaps between early and final work with insufficient iterative development
- included oversized templates or die-cuts with little contribution to progression
- repeated final designs and elements rather than extending development
- used placeholder text instead of topic relevant copy
- applied decorative or unrefined typography that reduced clarity
- presented disconnected or hard-to-see-workbook style notes
- focused solely on technical assembly rather than conceptual development.

DMI Submissions

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- generated original assets showing engagement with early design phases
- demonstrated adequate use of digital tools, but often emphasising construction over concept development
- used simple or abrupt transitions that limited narrative flow

- treated the DMI format as a largely static sequence rather than moving-image
- modelled assets on familiar tropes, limiting conceptual depth
- applied generic sound with limited alignment to pacing or tone
- presented proposal briefs outlining intention; however, sequencing and relevance varied
- completed functional sequences with variable clarity and integration of motion conventions.

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

- presented clear proposal briefs supporting efficient project pacing
- employed animation, motion graphics, gaming, or UX/UI conventions with competent control
- used smooth transitions that supported coherent storytelling
- approached DMI as a creative medium to shape feasible, story-driven sequences
- produced assets that contributed coherently to world-building and communication
- maintained consistent graphic treatment and atmosphere
- made purposeful sound choices reinforcing tone and narrative
- managed polished sequences aligned to real-world contexts
- showed systematic development from storyboard to refined motion within the three-minute limit.

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

- presented succinct proposal briefs conveying clear intention and audience insight
- controlled animation and motion conventions fluently, with rhythmic, impactful sequencing
- developed concepts with narrative clarity, technical proficiency, and emotional resonance
- used DMI expressively to build distinctive visual languages within time constraints
- produced original assets with high fluency
- integrated well-selected and strategic sound design, enhancing tone, pacing, and mood
- aligned DMI format closely with message and context
- embedded targeted audience engagement through pacing, tone, type, and sound
- demonstrated purposeful iterative development without unnecessary process content
- delivered resolved, innovative sequences with technical and conceptual sophistication.

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

- presented static slideshows rather than moving image sequences
- omitted clear narrative intent, with proposal briefs lacking key information or clarity
- set overly ambitious briefs that led to incomplete outcomes
- used minimal motion conventions with abrupt transitions
- substituted static deliverables unsuited to DMI
- developed predictable concepts with limited originality
- dedicated excessive time to construction rather than refinement
- sequenced work inconsistently with gaps in development
- produced final sequences lacking resolution, clarity, or with meaningful sound
- showed limited consideration of real-world or audience contexts.

Achievement standard 91456: Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within painting practice

Commentary

Overall, Level 3 Painting submissions reflected a strong commitment to painting as a mode of expression. Creative, analytical, and innovative approaches were engaged in, with cross traditional and contemporary modes of practice. Many candidates produced portfolios that demonstrated original thinking and sustained enquiry, communicating ideas and perspectives through a wide range of meaningful working processes within the painting medium.

Portfolios demonstrated varied approaches to materials, techniques, subject matter, and conceptual intent. Many candidates sustained purposeful art-making and increasing control of chosen modes, communicating ideas through a developing and distinct visual language. Clear and manageable proposals supported early direction and enabled candidates to extend their enquiry through selective experimentation and exploration.

Successful portfolios demonstrated strategies aligned with established painting practices and relevant contexts. Candidates who investigated contemporary and/or traditional processes showed stronger understanding and coherence, with deliberate attention to surface, colour relationships, gesture, and composition. Representational and surreal approaches remained common, alongside geometric or gestural abstraction, expressive painterly modes, and mixed-media. Where drawing capability was evident, candidates were able to produce distinctive mark-making and expressive paint qualities.

Engagement and ownership of the topic and inquiry were strengthened when candidates established explicit links between subject matter and selected techniques. Stronger submissions demonstrated informed looking, drawing on relevant artist models and image-making strategies appropriate to the enquiry. Experimentation and innovation supported sustained development and helped maintain coherence across the submission.

Portfolios that generated subject matter from personal experience or direct observation often showed greater authenticity and commitment. Candidates selecting topics connected to lived contexts—rohe, whānau, friends, home—typically produced more convincing and engaged propositions. When secondary source material were used, successful candidates synthesised references into new compositions, shifting palette, texture, or structure to move beyond original imagery.

Less successful submissions showed limited engagement with conventions, minimal development, or work that did not reflect Level 3 standard. Unrelated imagery, early stage work, or extensive use of existing artists' work without substantial transformation into their own imagery and thinking, reduced evidence of authenticity. Copying for technical understanding is more appropriately positioned as preparatory investigation.

Consistent and sequential passages of work supported clearer evidence of sustained practice. Edited submissions established coherent links between works and demonstrated control of media and iconography. Weaker portfolios introduced unrelated artist models or inconsistent approaches to their topics, while stronger submissions maintained continuity through considered decision making such as colour palette and surface treatment.

Presentation and ordering of works on the panels strongly contributed to clarity of intent. Overlapping or poorly secured works, three-dimensional additions, and strongly coloured backgrounds often diminished readability. Effective portfolios spaced and sequenced works to emphasise development or narrative, varied scale in response to discoveries, and demonstrated planning for larger pieces through prior testing. Minimal works presented on panels reduced evidence of sustained development. Some submissions were adversely affected by surface treatments (including varnish and certain mediums), where adhesion and transfer during transit compromised the condition of the paintings presented for assessment.

Digital painting was successful where candidates integrated conventions such as lighting, context, brushwork, and layering consistent with established digital practice. In contrast, suites of isolated figures on blank grounds (character-design presentation), typography-led outcomes, or poster-style compositions sometimes shifted emphasis away from painting enquiry toward adjacent fields.

A small number of candidates incorporated generative AI processes within their submission. In stronger examples, candidates sustained evidence of candidate-driven drawing and painting decisions in response to AI-informed imagery, including composition, palette, and pictorial development. However, submissions that relied heavily on AI-generated or printed imagery, and lacked evidence of candidate-generated practice, did not align with the standard's intent and hindered achievement.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- presented a sufficient quantity of work that was coherent and aligned to Level 3 expectations
- selected relevant models from established painting practice and applied these to extend initial ideas
- developed a subject, process, or proposition with identifiable continuity across the portfolio
- progressed painting technique through observable problem-solving and incremental decision-making
- engaged with pictorial ideas that indicated an underlying concern within the subject matter
- showed emerging consideration of grounds, surface preparation, and image placement
- ordered and presented work with some attention to layout, sequencing, and hierarchy.

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

- sustained consistent technical skill and conceptual coherence across the portfolio
- applied drawing and painting processes that supported the investigation (e.g., portraiture, still life, landscape)
- prepared and used surfaces and grounds with deliberate attention to colour relationships and layout
- generated drawings that informed painted outcomes and showed considered decision-making
- established clear links between subject matter and selected techniques to achieve specific effects
- demonstrated purposeful investment in image-making through sustained goals and intentions
- produced a substantial body of work evidencing sustained effort and development
- edited and sequenced works to strengthen coherence and clarify pictorial progression
- analysed and extended technical understanding through considered development of composition, colour, and surface
- selected artist model references to support the conceptual and aesthetic enquiry and pictorial decision-making
- were able to prioritise technical refinement or conceptual development while maintaining overall continuity.

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

- sustained a mature and highly engaged approach characterised by deep conceptual understanding and technical mastery
- moved beyond explicit reference to artist models and established distinct, candidate-generated modalities
- generated and regenerated ideas to maintain momentum and ownership across the submission

- synthesised ideas through informed research and purposeful integration of prior knowledge
- analysed and extended pictorial ideas across the full portfolio with conceptual and technical sophistication
- employed a range of strategies to communicate intent with clarity and critical understanding
- handled materials inventively and with control, aligning processes and techniques to purpose
- worked in clear series and sequences that advanced the proposition through purposeful variation
- structured the spacing, scale, and hierarchy of the portfolio layout to emphasise major works and developmental pathways
- produced and used self-generated imagery (including candidate-led photo shoots) to support independent practice
- developed surface and media handling to extend meaning and atmosphere of subject matter
- integrated symbolism, metaphor, and iconography to communicate layered and open-ended propositions
- reconstructed and extended influences from relevant artists in original and thoughtful ways
- maintained sustained technical and conceptual development across the entire body of work.

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

- presented limited evidence of a systematic and sustained enquiry across the portfolio
- included minimal content on one or more panels or left substantial areas undeveloped
- assembled imagery that appeared interchangeable or loosely connected, reducing evidence of sequence
- showed limited regeneration of ideas and developments in technique as work progressed
- demonstrated minimal analysis of relationships between works limiting the development of a proposition
- showed inconsistent control of media and paint processes relative to Level 3 expectations
- relied heavily on artist model references without sufficient re-forming, re-contextualising, synthesising, or transformation to demonstrate candidate-generated work.

Achievement standard 91457: Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within photography practice

Commentary

Level 3 Photography submissions demonstrated strong candidate ownership, with propositions driven by individual interests and sustained investigations. Themes ranged across identity, culture, social issues, constructed realities, abstraction, nature, sport, urban/suburban/rural sites, and spatial surveys.

Documentary approaches were particularly notable for their depth and authenticity, reflecting increased engagement and more purposeful inquiry. Candidates generally adopted more mature strategies and showed improved understanding of photographic processes, technical skills, and printing outcomes. When used, the integration of text within compositions was handled with confidence and intent.

The exploration of subject matter broadened across portfolios. Many candidates approached topics from multiple perspectives, showing growing awareness of how subject matter could support the development of an inquiry. Landscapes, botanical studies, and interactions with natural environments—such as farm surveys, hiking and trekking experiences, and oceanic recordings—were investigated with clarity and depth. Topics centred on music culture, band typologies, fashion,

and experiential approaches to sound and performance revealed strong engagements and conceptual insight. Submissions situated in the genre of sport were executed with confidence, with candidates demonstrating familiarity and personal connection to their chosen codes, including boxing, squash, hockey, frisbee, tennis, basketball, baseball, rugby, and football.

There was a noticeable increase in submissions exploring wildlife, magazine, journalistic, and commercial genres. Candidates working in these areas demonstrated confident handling of macro photography and genre-specific conventions.

Short-term or one-off events, such as brief overseas trips or isolated protests, limited the potential for sustained inquiry over time and prevented candidates from revisiting key locations or refining visual strategies. Investigations need to allow opportunities for multiple photoshoots, revisitation, and regeneration of ideas.

Attention to technical detail remained critical. Candidates need to monitor light sources, file quality, and exposure both during capture and in post-production. Where Photoshop filters were used, candidates needed to apply them purposefully to support clarification and regeneration of ideas rather than as experimental play without direction. The use of black portfolio panels or overlapping images reduced readability of imagery; white portfolio panels provided clarity and consistency. Presentation is an important component of Photography submissions, and candidates need to ensure that all work is securely attached to the panels using adhesive spray or tape; Blu Tack is not suitable.

There was an increase in candidates presenting downloaded internet images as their own photographs, which did not meet the intent of the standard. Similarly, candidates who downloaded images to manipulate—through cropping, reversing, or converting—did not meet the requirement for authentic, candidate-generated image-making. All candidates were required to complete the two-page authentication form in full and attach it to the back of Panel 3.

Generative AI may be incorporated meaningfully to enhance compositions alongside authentic photography or to add a conceptual dimension; however, work created entirely by AI is unacceptable. Successful submissions balanced candidate-driven image making with AI-generated elements, ensuring authenticity and alignment with the intent of the standard. Candidates should critically consider the proportion of personal production versus AI contribution. Work created entirely by AI does not meet the intent of the standard.

Digital Moving Image submissions (DMI), though limited in number, were generally of a high standard. Stronger submissions demonstrated in-depth research, with sound, lighting, camera work, and pictorial conventions handled purposefully and fluently. Sophisticated sound design—including diegetic and ambient audio, layered music tracks, and voice narration—supported the coherence of visual sequences.

When producing DMI submissions, candidates needed to consider factors such as effective directorship and the demands of clarifying and regenerating ideas. Critical reflection after each iteration supported decision making. Multiple locations, the use of text or spoken word, and shifts in perspective or viewpoint contributed conceptual depth and strengthened propositions.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- demonstrated the ability to establish a clear theme and sustain an investigation
- employed image-manipulation techniques with adequate understanding, such as layering, cutting and collaging, or tessellation to advance pictorial development
- displayed adequate camera control and understanding of basic functionality
- presented a systematic body of work, with some reference to established practice to support decision making

- relied on a limited number of photoshoots, which restricted opportunities to regenerate or develop ideas
- delivered photographic sequences in which progress between phases occurred in small steps.

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

- established a clearly researched theme using appropriate subject matter and explored it through multiple sequences and iterations
- demonstrated greater control of conventions and more proficient camera functionality
- showed awareness of their strengths and used these to extend ideas, with research evident through the integration of established practice and consideration of alternatives
- exhibited a clear understanding of the purpose behind decisions, creating meaningful connections between phases of work
- presented two or three significant pictorial and conceptual shifts on Panel 3 that supported clarification and regeneration of ideas.

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

- developed a strong, well-researched proposition that supported the exploration of complex ideas, with work demonstrating critical decision-making through multiple iterations
- demonstrated a high level of technical fluency, particularly in the use of camera functionality to explore a broad range of image-making approaches and concepts
- engaged in critical reflection, shown through a sophisticated understanding of established practice that supported the production of a substantial body of work
- presented portfolios in which multiple photoshoots had occurred, with evidence of revisiting sites, shifting locations, directorship or staging to advance the proposition.

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

- struggled to establish an appropriate topic that enabled clarification and regeneration of ideas
- presented bodies of work lacking coherence, with interchangeable sequences across Panels 2 and 3, often due to short or superficial investigations—for example, a single figure walking, one flower, or a brief action such as mowing a lawn
- displayed inadequate knowledge and skill in basic camera functions, limiting control of light, focus, and exposure
- produced an insufficient number of photoshoots and therefore lacked the range of photographic material and works required to meet the standard.

Achievement standard 91458: Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within printmaking practice

Commentary

Printmaking is the ideal subject for those who enjoy drawing to communicate ideas. In 2025, many portfolios explored subject matter and/or concepts relating to whakapapa, personal experiences, culture, identity, religious belief, social issues, and politics. In these submissions, the candidate's voice was embedded and clearly communicated through the work. Alongside conceptually driven portfolios, there was an increase in highly successful submissions that focused on abstraction and formal picture making. Both conceptual and pictorial approaches sustained, regenerated, and extended ideas when candidates remained open to exploring possibilities, taking risks, and consistently advancing their ideas.

Strong drawing and confident use of technical skills were characteristic of most submissions. Many candidates showed evidence of sustained engagement with one or two printmaking processes, such as monoprint, relief, or intaglio, while others produced complex, multi-layered works that combined a repertoire of processes. Successful submissions demonstrated ongoing reflection on resolved works, with specific elements prioritised to advance ideas and extend learning. Careful ordering and editing of works streamlined the reading of portfolios and supported the clear communication of thinking and development in relation to the overarching topic or concepts.

The most successful portfolios included series of smaller exploratory works that trialled a range of possibilities prior to the production of larger, refined prints. Some submissions included only three or four large works on both Panel 3 and Panel 4. In these instances, the predominance of large-scale works limited the ability to demonstrate a depth and range of ideas. Large works were often less resolved and tended to repeat similar compositions that sometimes appeared interchangeable between panels. Successful portfolios demonstrated progression, where each phase explored a new idea or direction regarding subject matter and imagery rather than reiterating previous approaches. Clear spacing between individual works on the panels supported readability and ensured that smaller works were not read as a single unified image.

Portfolios that regenerated ideas effectively typically introduced new plates rather than repeatedly printing from the same image. Where plates were reused, development was limited, and momentum was reduced. In contrast, successful submissions evaluated strengths and extended ideas by altering imagery, composition, scale, proximity, viewpoint, or process. These portfolios contained passages or sequences of work that explored and refined ideas before progressing towards more resolved outcomes.

Woodcut processes were used with flair to emphasise expressive qualities. Cuts demonstrated sensitivity and a clear understanding of mark making. In reductive woodcuts, thin layers of ink were applied fluently, reflecting a sound understanding of layering processes. Found and recycled materials, including Tetra Paks and cardboard collagraphs, were often used in inventive and sophisticated ways. Rolled-slab monoprints and handprinted processes that did not require a printing press were also used effectively.

Monochromatic approaches were well considered, with earth tones selected for their expressive qualities or their ability to enhance meaning. Plate tone was wiped purposefully to suggest gesture and create atmosphere within images. Equally successful were vibrant, multi-colour portfolios where meaning was communicated through deliberate and symbolic colour choices. Embossing was another technique used to emphasise surface qualities or extend ideas, such as suggesting absence or the passage of time.

Portfolios informed by personal interests and experiences, where candidates generated their own photographic source imagery for prints, enabled sustained momentum and a broad range of possibilities. In many cases, printmaking conventions were strongly linked to cultural traditions, supporting further in-depth development of enquiries. Very few candidates relied on borrowed or existent artworks. Artist references were generally implied rather than explicit, with isolated elements drawn from a range of practices and integrated to support the candidate's own ideas. Work informed by artist exemplars, rather than mimicking them, was innovative and distinctive.

With an increased number of Level 3 Printmaking submissions in 2025, approaches ranged across painterly, photographic, sculptural, graphic, collage, digital, drawing, and illustration-based interests. Three-dimensional print works and installation were integrated effectively alongside works on paper. Large-scale works that were photographed and plates printed onto alternative surfaces were both purposeful approaches and enabled candidates to effectively regenerate and extend ideas. Where large works were documented photographically, concise notes identifying size and media supported the reading of the portfolio.

Submissions that demonstrated a high degree of individual ownership and sustained engagement with ideas were rewarded. In contrast, portfolios produced within highly predetermined class programmes limited opportunities for regeneration and extension.

Overall there was an increased level of technical skill evident across submissions. Fewer digital print works were included on physical portfolios than in previous years, with only a small number of candidates using this approach on their final panels. Traditional printmaking processes were more frequently selected and skilfully utilised.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- established a proposition and a related body of learning
- demonstrated understanding of printmaking media, methods, and techniques
- recognised some strengths to inform subsequent works
- produced sequences of works with similar compositions or pictorial elements, often repeating resolved imagery or reusing the same plate
- demonstrated some consideration of layout and hierarchy to emphasise strengths
- replicated aspects of artist model references rather than integrating elements or ideas from a range of sources
- developed a cohesive body of work related to the chosen subject or idea.

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

- established a broad proposition that sustained learning
- developed and explored an individual idea in-depth
- demonstrated decision making by reforming and building on ideas and pictorial interests, and combining elements from previous works
- mixed colour purposefully to achieve a particular effect
- demonstrated understanding of ink characteristics and applied ink sensitively in thin layers
- utilised printmaking conventions and processes that aligned with subject matter and key ideas

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

- embraced individual stylistic strengths using self-generated imagery
- integrated elements from a wide range of sources to advance ideas
- moved beyond explicit artist references to establish independent pictorial and conceptual approaches
- expanded own subject matter or concepts through analysing possibilities in series of works to establish new directions
- used colour and mark-making to communicate meaning or emphasise ideas
- refined the use of printmaking techniques, processes, and materials in relation to subject matter and intended conceptual outcomes
- sustained momentum across the portfolio through exploratory works that informed larger, resolved outcomes showcasing strengths.

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

- produced a body of work where evidence of thinking and decision making were unclear
- repeatedly printed the same plate or image, limiting development and regeneration
- demonstrated potential but did not build on strengths, techniques, or own ideas
- relied heavily on found imagery rather than generating own imagery
- applied ink inconsistently, either too sparingly or excessively showing a lack of media control.

Achievement standard 91459: Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within sculpture practice

Commentary

Overall, submissions in Sculpture demonstrated engaged and purposeful investigation into three-dimensional, and in some cases, four-dimensional sculptural practice. The portfolios reflected the diversity of sculpture as an art form that extended beyond pictorial outcomes into physical, spatial, and experiential encounters. Candidates developed ākonga-driven sculptural propositions grounded in personal inquiry, demonstrating in-depth understanding of both traditional and contemporary established practice.

Successful candidates engaged in sculptural activity that addressed both conceptual and formal concerns. Effective portfolios demonstrated critical analysis of form in space, with consideration given to scale, materiality, and site. Candidates commonly employed traditional sculptural actions such as twisting, stretching, stacking, and compressing within formally driven investigations. These approaches were frequently linked to the inherent physical properties of selected materials, allowing formal relationships to emerge through process. In many cases, these formal investigations were integrated with thematic narratives that extended the conceptual depth of the work.

Candidates often utilised established subject matter as a framework for exploring personal, political, or contemporary concerns. They addressed ideas such as environmental impact through material and scale shifts, employing sculptural strategies to communicate their conceptual and critical positions. Other propositions explored themes of body image, gender expectations, and identity through scale, material substitution, or contextual relocation, with humour or idiosyncratic observation used as conceptual devices. Additionally, submissions investigated the intersection of organic and technological forms, as well as the use of the human body as metaphor to communicate emotional states or cultural references.

Portfolios showcased sculptural practice most effectively when candidates pursued ideas through genuine curiosity, experimentation, reflection, and ambition within personalised approaches. Candidates generally demonstrated sound understanding of sculptural principles and operated within a broad range of established sculptural practice, referencing traditional and contemporary methodologies both implicitly and explicitly. Collaborative sculptural projects were also evident, with some candidates producing work that engaged wider school communities through participatory or site-responsive approaches.

Many candidates experimented with accessible and economical materials before refining selected processes, resulting in sculptural outcomes that were ambitious, resolved, and coherent. Most portfolios contained clear and well-edited photographic documentation that established scale, context, and progression. Image scale on panels was generally used effectively to indicate importance and development within the body of work, and logical sequencing supported the sculptural progression across panels. Portfolios were strongest where conceptual understanding was communicated through visual decision-making rather than explanatory text. Successful submissions also included concise contextual labels beneath photographic sequences that identified materials, scale, site, and, where appropriate, duration for time-based work.

The majority of candidates submitted portfolios in the required digital PDF format. These portfolios were generally structured to reflect the equivalent of a three-panel portfolio, with a comprehensive overview image followed by sequential individual panel documentation. This presentation supported examiner navigation and close analysis of sculptural detail.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- created small-scale object works using traditional sculptural processes such as assemblage, casting, or additive and reductive methods
- demonstrated understanding of established formal sculptural conventions
- employed readily available materials and sites to develop ideas within conventional propositions
- advanced ideas through simple, incremental development steps.

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

- presented a coherent body of work built around a clear sculptural proposition informed by established practice
- used drawing in two, three, and where appropriate, four dimensions (time-based work) to support and extend sculptural inquiry
- created a sculptural proposition within a candidate-directed conceptual framework
- selected and applied materials and processes and techniques to advance sculptural proposition
- established formal and conceptual links between phases of work.

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

- presented a resolved body of work that extended beyond reference to established artists practice to generate innovative sculptural outcomes and ownership of ideas
- expanded technical processes logically into ambitious and integrated projects
- employed a clear conceptual framework to investigate a range of sculptural methods
- presented work using aligned sculptural conventions across varied formats
- used strategic editing to clarify the sculptural proposition with synthesis of conventions while allowing for conceptual openness
- included concise contextual labels underneath sequences of work that supported full understanding of scale, site, and process
- demonstrated understanding of how scale and site informed sculptural outcomes.

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

- engaged in exploratory material activity without demonstrating engagement with sculptural conventions
 - presented a limited number of unresolved works that did not extend or regenerate ideas
 - failed to establish a coherent sculptural proposition across the portfolio
 - demonstrated a lack of understanding of established sculptural practice and related contexts
 - submitted moving-image material that did not demonstrate understanding of time-based sculptural practice.
-