

2025 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject: Design and Visual Communication
Level: 3
Achievement standard(s): 91627, 91631

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91627: Initiate design ideas through exploration

Assessment

Candidates are required to demonstrate that they can use a starting experience to generate ideas, and by using visual communication strategies, transform these ideas in a way that enables the formation of design ideas. Evidence is submitted as a portfolio.

Commentary

Candidates used a wide range of media (CAD, physical modelling, digital sketching, collaging, digital drawing, etc) which provided different ways of working, although candidates should be encouraged to focus on using the modes that work best for them. Spatial design was the most prevalent design field present in the submissions.

Portfolios were easier to view when visual material was carefully curated to prioritise important information and where space was managed to allow for easier examination.

Candidates are encouraged to limit the number of observation drawing pages to avoid running out of pages to demonstrate the interrogation of forms and the reinterpretation of design ideas in response to the starting point.

Limiting the number of starting points is helpful for candidates to be clearer and more effective in their interrogating and regenerating of forms that lead to design ideas that can continue to be extended and reinterpreted.

While some writing is useful, extensive written analysis or research pages are not required for this standard. Prioritising visuals helps show the full range of forms and design ideas.

Evidence that is not relevant to the standard should not be included in the submission, such as planning work for exhibitions or final presentations.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- demonstrated a good understanding of form exploration that were derived from their starting points
- used a variety of visual communication strategies to interrogate and regenerate new 2D shapes and 3D forms which led to spatial or product design ideas
- generated a range of different initial design ideas that had clear functionality and of which the qualities of the ideas were clearly derived from their form exploration

- articulated their design ideas with suitable visual communication techniques and principles appropriate to spatial and product design, for conveying three-dimensional information.

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

- showed purposeful form generation and exploration, which then led to a greater degree of design detailing and further exploration and reinterpretation, linked to the design context
- found a visual theme/narrative/spark that they then reinterrogated further to develop a cohesive train of thought
- explored and refined design ideas connected to an emerging theme from the starting point
- demonstrated a degree of intent and purpose in their drawings
- demonstrated ideation strategies to progress their initial design ideas and connected it to the design context
- demonstrated the intentional pivoting back to interrogating shape and form at the development stage of design, which led them to 'reinterpret ideas' more successfully
- showed evidence where they had selected an idea that had been explored and regenerated (not just an overall form), and showed further analysis and reinterpretation in relation to its context.

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

- chose initial research and 'starting experiences' that were relevant to their chosen context that clearly informed their own design work
- showed that their interrogation of forms and reinterpretation of design ideas was done purposefully and resulted in a unique spatial or product design outcome
- selected visual modes and media wisely, conveying design ideas with appropriate techniques that clearly articulated the design without the need for extensive annotation
- included drawings that showed design features and details with good proportion, refined skills, and highly suitable techniques for conveying spatial or product design ideas
- generated a body of work that was cohesive and engaging, progressing and examining original design ideas in new and innovative ways
- showed an ability to extend and transform both aesthetic and functional elements, making both elements work together
- continued to challenge the form and function of their design amongst final refinements rather than settling on a leading idea.

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

- demonstrated limited understanding of appropriate modes and media, with the use of visual communication skills and techniques being limited for conveying design features and function
- included too much written content, especially research, design specifications, and stakeholder feedback/forward, with a lack of emphasis on 'drawing' (freehand, instrumental, and/or digital)
- included too much initial exploration of line, shape, and form, without adequately applying within a design context
- used too many different starting points that were documented haphazardly, resulting in an unclear approach
- generated design ideas that did not relate to previous exploration and interrogation from a starting point
- had only a single design idea (with identifiable functional qualities) expressed from the starting point and/or interrogated forms OR had no starting experience/starting point evident, beginning instead with the generation of design ideas
- used starting source material as design ideas and did not offer exploration or interrogation of alternatives (i.e. form just a copy and applied to a design).

Achievement standard 91631: Produce working drawings to communicate production details for a complex design

Assessment

Candidates are required to produce a set of related drawings that utilise 2D and 3D modes, instrumentally constructed/modelled using either traditional drafting equipment or computer applications. Evidence for this standard involves the selection of views and modes, informed by accepted design and visual communication practice and convention. The drawings are required to communicate the candidate's knowledge, understanding, and skills, and convey the design requirements of the standard.

Commentary

Spatial design remains the most prevalent type of submission for this standard, with CAD becoming the dominant graphic mode. This trend allows candidates to create intricate designs that are both directly related and precisely executed. However, it is still crucial for candidates to grasp and understand projection, conventions, and standard drawing practices used in New Zealand (refer to Explanatory Note 6 of the Standard), and standard accepted scales with all details correctly referenced and scaled. Accurate scaling is essential, as issues with scale can prevent candidates from achieving higher than an Achievement level.

It is encouraging to see that submissions still using conventional drawing methods continue to achieve high grades. Drawing board submissions are still highly valued and demonstrate strong foundational skills.

Several submissions included 3D drawings, pictorial views, and/or CAD models or animations to clearly communicate assembly and construction. The animations offered sequential information that clearly communicated assembly and rotational views that explained 3D design details.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- selected a design of adequate complexity
- included views and modes that would conventionally be used as a set of working drawings, including site plans, floor plans, elevations, cross-sectional views, assembly views, detail views, material information
- included exterior and interior detail related to their construction and/or assembly
- showed some proficiency in drawing conventions
- indicated the relationship of one drawing to another using recognised conventions
- identified materials using appropriate hatching, colouring, or symbolic reference of material types and/or used labels.

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

- showed precise measurement and dimensioning, accurate line work, and good application of drawing conventions
- produced a complete set of linked drawings with the exterior and interior detailing, explaining the construction and assembly of the design with accuracy
- presented drawings that were the outcome of considered design thinking and represented a solution to a design problem.

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

- showed excellent and consistent use of drawing conventions and standards
- included all relevant drawings to clearly communicate detailed construction or assembly information, using carefully selected series of plans, elevations, section views, assembly views, and enlarged detail views
- included three-dimensional drawings, pictorial views, and/or CAD models or animations to clearly communicate assembly and construction. The animations offered sequential information that clearly communicated assembly and rotational views that explained 3D design details.

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

- did not submit a set of working drawings
- selected a design of inadequate complexity
- did not show an understanding of drawing conventions
- produced drawings that were not linked and/or related to each other
- produced working drawings of the exterior or interior (by using cross-sections) but not both
- did not communicate construction or assembly of their designs using appropriate detailed drawings
- did not communicate materials or components/parts adequately.