2021 Visual Arts — Art/Design Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2021 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

Students produce one folio that documents their visual learning, in support of their work(s) of art or design. A work of art or design may be a single resolved practical or body of resolved work.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated high-quality documentation and structured organisation, showing the creative progression of thinking and decision-making processes that led to the refinement of ideas
* included references to a vast range of practitioners that were integral to the idea development and authenticity of ideas
* explored the role that artists play in society through a variety of cultural and social contexts to extend and explore ideas throughout the folio
* included extensive media experimentation as well as various testing of practical solutions (experimenting with compositional structures and elements and principles of Art and Design)
* applied extensive and sophisticated visual arts and design terminology, particularly when analysing and synthesising the aesthetic qualities of the works of referenced practitioners. This allowed successful students to develop a thorough understanding and knowledge toward an idea or concept
* demonstrated effective reworking of technical skills, media and material experimentation and problem solving to clarify all thoughts, decisions, and ideas. This allowed students to demonstrate comprehensive ideas and concepts
* used clearly annotated ideas, experiments, observations, appraisals, and visual arts thinking
* developed, authentic, insightful, complex, and challenging ideas with personal significance that went beyond an emulation and appropriation. These responses clearly defined the students’ direction towards a major work
* demonstrated a diverse approach toward a topic of inspiration, personal meaning or influence, leading to continual questioning of their direction
* applied creative and visual thinking and/or problem-solving skills through a broad range of practical experiments in style, media, materials, technologies, and processes
* reflected and documented sources of inspiration and influence that resulted in the synthesis of movements/artists/techniques to create original and personally relevant ideas
* researched a broad range of artists’ styles, ideas, and techniques to inform connections and comparisons with their own practice and media experimentations toward an idea or concept
* clearly refined their ideas that led to decisions, reflections, and evaluations about the final resolved work. These responses included sophisticated justification on the final decisions made regarding their idea or concept
* demonstrated conclusions that were highly challenging, authentic, and refined to support and/or justify artistic or design conventions.

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated poorly structured folios that lacked relevant information in relation to the idea or brief
* identified specific features that were inconsistent with the evidence produced in the students’ work
* lacked definition of an idea or direction to follow into any conclusion especially in design, where a well-structured design brief is needed to resolve a problem
* demonstrated minimal documentation of the development of an idea or concept, and hence were unable to demonstrate how the final resolution was arrived at
* missed opportunities to use specific visual arts language (reference to elements and principles) and evaluative commentary relating to artists’ work and the student’s own idea development
* contained too many pages with a research focus and minimal evidence of media experimentation or problem-solving
* developed a folio that was structured more like a visual study as opposed to an exploration of a visual art concept, idea and own personal aesthetic
* followed ideas that relied heavily on the replication of derived images and practitioners’ works, limiting their own development of authentic exploration and experimentation of an idea or concept
* repetitively used sources with limited artist information and authenticity, such as relying on Pinterest sources with no reference to the artists
* demonstrated minimal and limited evidence in the experimentation, direction and exploration of an idea or a concept
* excluded evaluations, analysis, and synthesis of visual art thinking with minimal documentation and annotations
* emphasised process at the expense of authentic research, resolving ideas or concepts and connections with themselves or practitioners
* provided evidence that was disorganised, disjointed and in some cases repetitive
* lacked evidence and connections between the student idea’s thoughts and processes and practitioner/s works with poorly developed technical skills.

Assessment Type 2: Practical

All practical works are resolved from visual thinking and learning documented in the folio. The practical consists of two parts: art or design practical work and the practitioner’s statement.

The more successful responses commonly:

* pushed boundaries with ideas, complemented by refined practical techniques, indicating a carefully considered knowledge and understanding of aesthetics
* presented practicals with authentic concepts developed from diverse media experimentation
* provided evidence of problem solving and personal engagement with the creative processes, resulting in highly imaginative solutions based on the student’s social, cultural, and emotional experiences
* demonstrated a conceptual strength and meaning through a variety of interpretations and applications of media and technologies
* used imagery sourced and inspired by the student’s own photos and experiences
* indicated knowledge and understanding of stylistic applications and aesthetic sensibilities relevant to the student’s ideas
* explored complex, achievable, and creative design briefs with unique problems and defined parameters
* showed a creative approach in design solutions to problem-solving, based on hands-on experimentation with a variety of media, which was then refined and resolved with digital manipulations and applications
* provided clear evidence in their body of work of two or more distinct ideas and outcomes (graphic design applications, product design, and/or environmental design)
* applied innovative art-making practices, influenced by contemporary practitioners, to create installations and three-dimensional works, applying new media possibilities
* demonstrated rich use of visual arts language throughout the practitioner’s statements when responding to other practitioners’ works and their own
* used the practitioner’s statements to articulate how specific art elements and principles had been manipulated to achieve the desired aesthetic and functional results to express their concept or idea
* created authentic, refined, meaningful and accomplished works through the exploration of a range of possibilities. These responses were highly skilled in the use of media that was often personally relevant based on a theme/topic/idea
* showed highly resolved major works that were visually appealing in their application of an idea through the highly sophisticated and technical use of the media and materials
* developed and explored an original, authentic, and highly challenging idea that was supported by a well-executed practitioner’s statement
* reflected on the artistic process using their personal aesthetic and experiences that justified and evaluated their final piece.

The less successful responses commonly:

* contained derived imagery, often resulting in practical works that lacked refinement or personal engagement with the idea or concept. These responses appeared emulated and sometimes copied from other sources
* had many presentations of a body of work, not equating to two practicals, with one idea being replicated or applied to a variety of products
* selected too many specific features for discussion in the practitioner’s statement, resulting in students not being able to address all requirements within the 500-word limit, or alternatively selected specific features that were beyond the students’ ability to achieve
* responded with a practitioner’s statement that read more like a simple recount or explanation of the processes. These responses included limited references to the idea, research, analysis and synthesis of their work or connection
* made generic, limited or no references to practitioners in the statement, with limited indication of connection to practical resolution
* used limited visual arts and design terminology, including limited identification of specific techniques and use of specific media
* executed a final piece that lacked authenticity, originality and personal relevance with limited technical skills and use of media expertise
* were unable to address all design criteria as outlined in the identified performance standards of the LAP
* showed evidence that was non-resolved with limited refinement. In some cases, one piece was often stronger than the other, which indicated rushed production with poorly applied technical skills
* limited their reference to concepts explored that were commonly non-original with little conceptualisation and evaluation of learning.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Visual Study

A Visual Study is an exploration of, and/or experimentation with, one or more styles, ideas, concepts, media, materials, methods, techniques, technologies, or processes. Students base their exploration and/or experimentation on critical analysis of the work of other practitioners, individual research, and the development of visual thinking and/or technical skills. They present the findings of their Visual Study as well as their conclusions, insights, and personal opinions about aesthetics.

The Visual Study is either formatted in an A3 folio or electronically and includes deconstructions of the artist’s/designer’s practice and their works. This is accompanied by comparative critical analysis of art/design works, leading to a synthesis of thoughts presented as evaluative and personal conclusions. Visual Study

The more successful responses commonly:

* began with a clear statement of intent, posing a question identifying the idea, theme or concept explored
* explored a question, design, or topic that allowed for scope across time periods, cultures, artists, and media
* chose a focus with a theme of personal interest, maintaining engagement throughout the Visual Study with imaginative and creative practical responses supported by insightful informed commentary
* explored a variety of verifiable art and design practitioners that were historical, contemporary and/or from a variety of contexts. This was evident in both practical exploration and written analysis.
* referenced and identified links between themselves and between different practitioners as the study progressed, which helped students to reinforce and synthesise understanding
* demonstrated imaginative synthesis of ideas, concepts, and media applications that were directly responsive to practitioner’s use of techniques
* used systematic research skills and acknowledged a wide range of sources with extensive detailed and appropriately formatted bibliographies and footnotes. These responses included a variety of relevant sources such as interviews, books, workshop involvement, exhibitions, and YouTube clips
* made informed and accurate references to stylistic features in the critical analysis of art and design works. These responses also made perceptive connections to the historical and contemporary contexts
* made consistent references to the key concept or theme (as stated in their question or topic) in practical and written responses
* demonstrated methodical organisation with consistency in formatting, use of informative headings and page layout, with a clear key to highlight students own practical work
* unpacked practical responses with analytical and evaluative annotations clearly. These responses linked to an aspect of the topic being explored and deconstructed, and used arrows and lines to point to relevant features
* used clearly labelled visual references regarding practitioners’ works, indicating artists name, title of work and media to support critical analysis references.
* critiqued and analysed the visual features of the art or design works with clear explanations linked to compositional structures and devices, manipulation of design elements and principles, and styles using relevant visual arts terminology
* demonstrated insightful analysis of practitioners’ work, showing strong links to the topic and moved beyond the obvious analysis and synthesis
* signposted discoveries or summaries after sections on each practitioner
* used a broad range of visual arts/design language to interpret, respond to, and synthesise thoughts on a range of relevant issues and questions that provided a depth to the study
* showed engagement with the art world, seeking out exhibitions (online and visits) and contact with artists
* engaged with practitioner’s techniques by applying knowledge and skills learned to their own problem solving and creative practical applications, using personalised imagery
* showed a strong personal aesthetic through the development of a range of ideas and resolutions
* connected the wider subject to the world around them, demonstrating a deeper understanding of the impact and role of art in society
* developed a clear design brief, allowed design students to synthesise the designer’s workflow and methodologies in response to a personally relevant idea
* demonstrated critical analysis of artworks, that included personal interpretations of ideas, artist’s intent, symbolism, meaning, mood, and emotional context. These were then explored in practical applications
* used research to guide original and unique explorations of concepts rather than copying, emulating, or replicating artists’ work
* presented practical applications, including explorations and experiments in response to specific art and design works. These responses culminated in a diverse range of creative and original resolutions, with evaluative annotations supporting the development of a personal aesthetic and synthesis of ideas linked to practitioners and topic focus
* had succinct and clearly articulated evaluations throughout the Visual Study, which were supported by annotations noting synthesis of thoughts.

The less successful responses commonly:

* identified a poorly developed or generalised topic with no clear focus. These responses were either too broad or complex to manage, thereby limiting ability to provide a clear direction and arrive at conclusions about learning
* lacked in depth of inquiry, analysis, and practical responses, indicating poor understanding of the topic. These responses would benefit from more scaffolding to unpack topic to aid research
* misused the term abstract
* demonstrated a misunderstanding of the difference between figurative and nonfigurative art
* explored generalised topics that limited scrutiny of ideas or scope for an in-depth investigation. Generalised topics often included hairstyles, henna tattooing, makeup, cake decorating, formal dress, bags, car designs, etc
* presented historical studies of an aspect of visual arts or design, with minimal analysis and often no personalised practical applications
* presented studies where the content was different or at odds with the stated topic, question, or statement of intent. Clear links to intent need to be maintained throughout the Visual Study through choice and unpacking of practitioners and their work inform practical explorations and applications
* lacked personal connection and/or own ideas, as well as missing opportunities to make personal statements when attempting to analyse works and draw conclusions
* lacked synthesis of learning. For example, working in the style of an artist, then not including personal synthesising comments about their efforts with interpretation of meaning
* included only step by step photographs and descriptive narration on practical processes rather than critically analysing (AS1) or evaluating the visual arts learning occurring
* demonstrated disjointed documentation, indicating lack of planning in the presentation of personal practical applications and/or research on practitioner’s
* lacked depth of investigation, formatted with excessively large font size and repeatedly unacknowledged images of artists work with limited personal responses
* included practical applications that were emulations, replications, or copies or practitioner’s work, therefore limiting evidence of the development of a personal aesthetic (IE2) through an exploration or experimentation of practitioner’s practices (PA1,3)
* demonstrated simple or limited experimentations, such as traced replications recoloured with different media. Such responses included no follow up of further personal experimentation or creative visual thinking. Responses should explore media used by artists to enable authentic problem solving and evaluations on learning (PA1, PA3. AS4)
* incorporated inappropriate and insensitive copying of iconography, style, and techniques of an Indigenous group or artist. Instead, artists’ themes and ideas should be investigated with reference to student’s own world experience. Students should be encouraged to consider their connection to where they live in developing their own unique imagery. Aboriginal artists names and language groups must be recognised when using Indigenous works
* demonstrated limited conclusions or personal evaluative commentary that would provide context or evidence of learning (AS4)
* used descriptive commentary rather than interpreting or analysing art or design works
* included irrelevant biographical information with no connection to intent of study
* disorganised, limited or no documentation of student’s own problem solving and creative thinking when presenting practical applications
* included only one final concept, artwork or design presented at end of the study. Often presentation and process were formatted more like folios than visual studies, which limited ability to address all the required assessment criteria to any depth, especially PA1, IE1 and IE2
* used limited terminology repetitively as dot points or lists, limiting responses to basic interpretations of art and design works
* lacked correct use of processes and current terminology in design, with no references to context and aesthetics
* demonstrated responses that did not extend beyond provided scaffolding, which limited ability to make authentic and personal insightful practical and written or oral responses
* lacked a bibliography or documentation of resources used. All relevant sources need to be appropriately acknowledged throughout the Visual Study (IE1)
* included generalised summaries of practitioner’s practices and background, without reference to individual works
* included too many practitioners, making it difficult to explore concepts in-depth. Limiting to 3–5 practitioners allows students to make stronger connections, clearer comparisons and synthesis of thoughts
* included slabs of copied notes from websites with some highlighted sections. This lacks a demonstration of personal synthesised thinking
* exceeded the maximum word count. As a result, the evaluations and conclusions in some responses could not be assessed. In such responses, visual evidence was not self-explanatory enough to be assessed at the higher grade band.

External Assessment Advice regarding online submission

Students were not disadvantaged in any way regarding any arising issues with online submission. Markers suggest teachers and students address the following points in preparation for future year’s submission:

* Check scanned PDF files for consistency of page layout prior to uploading. Markers experienced problems with having to rotate pages, which included combinations of portrait, landscape, upside down, and pages repeated or out of order. This can impact the continuity of marking.
* Take the time to ensure that files are optimised, compressed, or zipped before uploading. Some files took up to 40 minutes to download and as such was time consuming for the marker.
* Check to ensure scanning has not cropped or cut off annotations.
* Ensure PDF and documents provided for assessment do not identify school or student.
* Do not include marked or highlighted performance standards rubrics with students work.
* Provide accurate word counts. Markers can visually establish basic word count even if in a PDF format. Important content, such as the conclusion, is not considered for assessment if it doesn’t fall within maximum of 1000 words for 10-credit subject or 2000 words for 20-credit subject.
* Take pages out of plastic sleeves for scanning to ensure clarity of images and legibility of writing.
* Check scanned PDF files for legibility of writing and clarity of images. Pencil and tone drawings can be hard to view, and some handwritten annotations can be difficult to read.
* Presentation format and styles need to be carefully considered for ease of viewing. White writing on black backgrounds, decorative collaged backgrounds and features can make relevant content difficult to view.
* Use a minimum of 10 or 12 point font size to avoid zooming.