NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Assessment Report

Scholarship, 2007

Graphics

Graphics, Scholarship, 2007

Commentary

The assessment of Scholarship for 2007 continued to use the three strands introduced in 2006. The three key strands were as follows:

- Design Thinking
- Synthesis
- Visual Communication

These strands accommodate the key dimensions of graphics (referred to in the assessment specifications) deemed necessary to reach the Scholarship Standard, recognising these are inter-related in a holistic nature within a coherent body of work.

The strand on Design Thinking was primarily assessed on the quality of ideas in terms of appropriateness to the brief and the design context, the generation of creative possibilities and innovative outcomes, and the valid reasoning associated with effective decision-making. The quality of the solution was deemed an essential indicator to the effective application of design thinking.

The strand on Visual Communication was primarily assessed on the quality of communication in terms of appropriateness to the brief and the design context, the effectiveness of expressing design thinking, and the execution of high-quality presentation techniques and skills.

The strand on Synthesis was primarily assessed on how all the evidence associated with both Design Thinking and Visual Communication is integrated into a coherent design process. Candidates were essentially required to demonstrate a coherent body of work that showed a clear and effective progression from a design problem to an effective solution. The appropriate application of research, idea generation and development, and communication of a solution were considered integral components towards the effective application of a design process.

A candidate must attain a good level of performance across all three strands to achieve a sufficient outcome to a Scholarship level.

In 2007, candidates were no longer required to provide evidence specifically from two Graphics areas as was necessary in previous years. At this level, there is a tendency for the distinction of areas to become rather arbitrary and contrived, and that in many cases, an in-depth and highly detailed body of work did, in fact, draw on material from a range of sources beyond a single designated Graphics area. Candidates who did provide two clearly linked projects still had all their appropriate evidence assessed under these new conditions, though the emphasis remained on the major unit as the primary body of work.

The Nature of Submissions:

A diverse array of projects were submitted, encouraged by the negotiated brief for 90734, but also assisted by programmes that allow for greater student-directed learning. It was evident that when candidates were given the opportunity to be more self-directed, the work appeared to demonstrate a greater level of purpose and understanding that was not necessarily seen in some of the more

teacher-directed brief situations. This approach also allowed for the greater expression of the candidate's interests and strengths.

There has been an increase of digitally based evidence. However, candidates do need to be aware that well-presented work in itself does not automatically ensure success in Scholarship. The clear evidence of high level thinking remains paramount at this level, while the use of advanced graphic and presentation skills can be beneficial in aiding the effective communication of such thinking.

Candidates who used computer software throughout the design process need to ensure that the flow of ideas is not constrained or restricted, or lacking the exploratory possibilities that can occur in the rapid visualisation approach of quick sketching.

In terms of presentation, candidates need to ensure digital material is submitted in a readable format. Submissions must adhere to the Assessment Specification guidelines given for acceptable digital formats. The aspects concerned with drawing conventions and qualities associated with formal drawing also apply in digital media. The resolution of images and the communication and presentation of ideas is still important to ensuring success. There are examples of poor quality computer generated drawings or inappropriate software being employed in providing the evidence for presentation.

The design process must be fully articulated and detailed. The use of A3 sheets tends to edit out the thinking and ideas from the design process. What results is evidence that may look polished but lacks the detail and full consideration the candidate may have given to the project. Candidates who effectively employed a visual diary did tend to meet with greater success in terms of expressing a fuller range of ideas and a more in-depth and coherent design process.

Candidate evidence indicated success where candidates engaged with manageable problems that were well-defined, not too large scale, yet open enough to allow the freedom to explore and generate ideas creatively and thoroughly. Projects that were of too substantial a scale or complexity tended to suffer from a lack of depth in design thinking as candidates addressed a broad range of aspects or a superficial and basic level rather than addressing any particular aspects in an in-depth manner. This also meant that solutions would tend not to be adequately resolved. Projects that were too tightly defined would tend to follow a restricted and predictable line, making it quite difficult for candidates to explore their own ideas and thinking in an imaginative fashion.

Candidates who attained Scholarship demonstrated a clear understanding of the design brief and were able to generate and graphically articulate their thinking in a relevant and integrative manner. These submissions proved compelling and convincing in their articulation, showing a confidence and assurance in their demonstration of skills and principles, and a clear understanding of the problem, its associated design considerations, and the skills and knowledge required to develop a well-defined solution.

The best performing candidates most commonly demonstrated the following skills and / or knowledge:

- the ability to articulate ideas and design thinking confidently and emphatically and be able to work to their strengths. It was evident that no single method or approach necessarily ensured success

- the ability to fully engage with the brief and consider a range of ideas in a clever and imaginative fashion
- the ability to explore appropriate ideas, demonstrating effective and well-reasoned decision making that leads to the development of a resolved and innovative outcome
- the ability to apply an effective design process demonstrating a coherent and integrative approach which leads to the full grasp of the nature of the problem and the evolution and refinement of ideas
- the ability to employ research material in a focused and informative manner that integrates effectively with the generation and refinement of ideas
- the ability to confidently articulate ideas clearly using sketching, formal drawing (digital and / or manual) and annotation
- the ability to utilise presentation skills and techniques appropriately and with a high degree of proficiency and quality of execution.

Candidates who did NOT achieve Scholarship lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge above and in addition they:

- lacked the depth required at this level; frequently they submitted up to three units of work that were all comparable and lacking any indication of which was the primary unit for Scholarship. In order to optimise their opportunities for attaining success in Scholarship, candidates should focus their efforts in one area rather than spreading themselves across many areas. Success in Scholarship is based more on depth of knowledge and skills rather than superficial breadth
- lacked a suitable brief. The nature of the brief, whether negotiated or given, remains an important ingredient to ensure success. A brief that is either too limiting or far too broad can prove to be unsuitable for the candidate to achieve to a Scholarship level. Furthermore, the selection and understanding of the issues and design considerations associated with the brief is pivotal to setting up the problem and going about working through to a solution. When a brief has significant limitations, either excessively prescriptive or too simple, candidates find it difficult to get the scope of exploration or the opportunities for innovation. When a brief is too complex or extensive, candidates find it difficult to manage all the design considerations to the necessary depth of detail, and hence, can run into serious workload issues
- lacked sufficient design development towards a refined solution through a lack of detail consideration, idea selection and refinement, or directed exploration and experimentation. In these instances, the development tended to be limited to the reiteration and detailing of a selected idea rather than the continuing improvement and refinement towards a well-resolved solution.
- lacked an ability to research effectively. There is frequently a distinct lack of purposeful connection between research and the development of a suitable outcome that meets the needs of the brief.
- lacked skills in visual communication as a key element in describing design ideas, showing design development and in the production of refined outcomes. They did not show the ability to confidently and clearly articulate ideas using sketching, formal drawing and annotation appropriate to the nature of the brief. There were numerous examples of candidates providing evidence limited to largely two-dimensional drawing systems for projects of a spatial nature. Furthermore, there were still candidates overly reliant on notes. This was to the detriment of effective visual communication and made it difficult to ascertain the actual visual qualities of their ideas.

- lacked skills in presentation as required for the effective communication of design ideas and solutions. There were examples of a lack of high level skill as would be shown through the employment of a variety of modes and media.
- a lack of understanding regarding the principles associated with composition and visual communication was also shown by some candidates.