



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Scholarship, 2005

Visual Arts 93302

National Statistics

Assessment Report

Visual Arts, Scholarship, 2005 93302

National Statistics

No. Scholarship Results	Results			
	Outstanding Scholarship		Scholarship	
	No. Awards	% of L3 Cohort	No. Awards	% of L3 Cohort
113	18	0.3%	95	1.7%

Commentary

Assessment of Scholarship consisted of viewing the collective evidence of both a portfolio and workbook. These two components have separate titles in the current performance descriptor, but in practice they are components that exist together as one body of work. Portfolio and workbook were considered together as a whole.

Workbooks were again presented with more than eight pages. In these cases pages nine onwards were not assessed.

The ‘proposition’

The Visual Arts Scholarship performance standard requires candidates to produce an individually conceived proposal presented as evidence through the combination of a portfolio and workbook. Candidates should consider carefully how the ‘proposition’ is structured. While working to a brief is an essential part of art/design methodology, candidates at this level must be able to critically revisit, reframe and remodel their inquiry as a result of insights gained through practical investigation. The proposal, therefore, manifests in the work itself and not in the pre-organisation of the proposition. To pre-empt decision-making at the point the proposal is established negates the possibility of learning through discovery. The candidate’s ability to work in a lateral manner and recognise unanticipated possibilities depends on a process of continual renegotiation of the proposition.

Constructing a ‘proposition’ does not require that a candidate describe it in language before the work is undertaken. Candidates need not assemble a workbook that assumes a proposition is resolved before work begins. It is in lateral working that options for development emerge, priorities are established, and the purpose of the proposal is clarified and synthesis is achieved.

Research

The function of research is to establish an individual context from which candidates can operate. Theoretical and practical research need not only reference what other practitioners do. Insights may arise from any aspect of a candidate’s investigations. These insights, observations and reflections testify to a candidate’s own perceptions and how they meaningfully construct their own creative endeavours.

Candidates need a range of references within which to operate. The focus can become narrow and repetitive when artists models are too few or too similar. Superficial inquiry can be a downfall when connections made to other practitioners' work are literally tied to 'looking the same'. Effective selection is dependent upon *using a critical and decisive approach to drawing in generating, analysing, clarifying and regenerating ideas in working towards and making original work*. It is difficult to show evidence of this if the artist models chosen do not sit in alignment with the intention, strategy and context of the candidates' own investigations, thus preventing them from being able to demonstrate *the ability to think and work laterally and to show in their work further options for development*.

Drawing

Any practical activity that contributes to a candidate's understanding of visual concepts, contexts and characteristics may be understood as drawing. It is important that there are prior discernible intentions and critical/evaluative responses as a consequence of the application of drawing. Ultimately, drawing might be conceived of as a useful analytical and critical faculty with the capacity to provoke independent evaluation of works of art and design and the contexts in which they derive meaning.

The workbook

There are no prescribed, particular components that constitute a workbook. Instead, the general necessities for observation, imaginative exploration, research (both practical and theoretical), experimentation and critical reflection should be highlighted. How a candidate might best engage with that information offers insight to their own practical thinking and their inventive and imaginative endeavours. A prescribed structure will not allow candidates to organise information that they feel best serves and relates to their own purposes and intentions.

The workbook could be understood as analogous to the travel diary of a street map. It serves as a guide to the intellectual neighbourhood that is home to the candidate's proposition. Cul-de-sacs, detours, main highways, arterial routes, crossroads, north/south orientation are features of maps that aid in navigating oneself through the terrain. The decision to turn left is equally justified through contemplation of what one might behold in turning right. During the course of study or travel, the map will become increasingly individuated, 'marked-up' and annotated.

As the proposition is advanced or the journey through the 'intellectual neighbourhood' proceeds, the workbook operates as witness, scribe and memory; a means of giving full attention to one's curiosities and dealing with the unanticipated along the way. Travel demands transportation away from sights familiar and recognisable schedules. The workbook captures those internal explorations prompted by a heightened awareness that is the consequence of contact with the unfamiliar. At this point, the workbook reveals itself as a shifting form, a testimony to a passage rather than the final destination. To talk of a workbook in this way is to encourage its habitual use and to discourage the assemblage of a document after the event that can only be superficial.

Candidates need to be encouraged to regard the workbook as a working document continually maintained and added to throughout the production of work for level 3. To establish links between the two components, the workbook and portfolio need to be produced together. The requirement of a workbook, when integrated into the production of work for level 3, is a mechanism that encourages candidates to take

ownership of their investigation and provide opportunity for critical reflection and the decision-making necessary for the award of Scholarship.

Selection between portfolio and workbook needs to be carefully managed. The workbook's role is to demonstrate a candidate's ability to think imaginatively and critically, rather than function simply in a quantitative sense as replication, description or collection of 'poorer' examples. The focus of the portfolio is to provide evidence of final outcomes through critical analysis and reflection. While the workbook offers the same opportunities, its main focus is on extrapolation, reinforcement and substantiation.

The workbook may also be used for the documentation of related activities that do not fit well into the portfolio eg large-scale projects and ephemeral time-based works that are best suited to photographic documentation.

Material/technological concerns may offer a way for candidates to reference processes, procedures, materials and techniques, without becoming too descriptive. Many artists/designers make work that is about process, method and making. The centralisation of 'material' as a concept is a useful way for *candidates to research test refine evaluate and synthesise ideas, processes, procedures, materials and techniques using a systematic approach.*

Candidates need to continually challenge themselves, to question what underpins their creative efforts, as this is what is required of the workbook. Are they well-researched? Are they able to ascertain, in evaluative terms, what effect their research has had on their outcomes? Have they provided evidence of exploration and experimentation? Have they been productive enough to select and edit the portfolio?

The best-performing candidates:

- independently conducted a practical line of inquiry, synthesising a range and depth of understanding, to communicate unique and imaginative insights.
Central to this endeavour is the requirement for candidates to show evidence of all performance criteria. This testifies to an in-depth understanding of the context(s) in which 'practice' is located, which enables inventive and imaginative responses in the production of distinctive and original work. While evidence of manual dexterity, visual acuity and analytic thinking should be apparent in a scholarship submission, it is the manner in which meaningful connections are construed between such types of evidence that provides for a systematic and in-depth study. These connections should be supportive of the candidate's interests, and consistent with the conceptual terrain the 'proposal' looks to traverse. Scholarship, therefore, requires candidates to give practical account of the interdependence of material/technological considerations, formal (aesthetic) judgements and communicative intentions.
- presented submissions which maintained a sense of an over-riding concept or framework, even though individual works utilised quite different materials, media and processes, were still able to sustain fluency and clarity of purpose.
- demonstrated the ability to use the influence of practitioners in disciplines, other than the one they were working within.
One of the indicators of an ability to think and work laterally is to derive information from one context and critically apply it in another. Equally, submissions that located a proposition within the limits of a very particular art-making tradition were able to extract considerable mileage as a consequence of

this narrow focus, detailed observation and in-depth investigation. Both approaches were equally capable of demonstrating the quality of decision-making necessary.

- understood the value of producing and evaluating outcomes in order to progress the argument further.
This reflected a critical and decisive approach to practice and enabled the work to communicate a clear and distinctive point of view.
- had the ability to produce work that was distinctive and original, demonstrating the ability to see and practically assimilate connections between information /ideas/contexts that were previously un-associated or would be otherwise unrelated, giving impetus to ways of thinking about the ‘proposition’ under consideration.
- provided evidence throughout their submission of critical engagement and reflection as a means of advancing the proposition.
This evidence was seen within the portfolio, from one sequence of work to another, one board to another, and further substantiated within the workbook.
- strongly demonstrated the synthesis of ideas, without having to rely on repetition to allude to a systematic approach.
Above all, it is important to understand the nature of the proposal as being a creative and intellectual critical structure that allows the candidate to generate and sustain a body of work that can shift and change when necessary. It is a framework that can help the candidate select evidence for the workbook. The misinterpretation of the workbook as a retrospective written analysis and evaluation of a programme of study is often detrimental as it supplants the visual information and becomes overly focused on candidates’ non-visual communication skills that may be inferior to their artistic abilities.

Other candidates:

- selected a ‘proposition’ for study which often lacked definition or sufficient breadth. As a result the possibilities for diagnostic testing, evaluation and refining demanded of a systematic approach were inhibited.
- failed to demonstrate the necessary coherence demanded of a systematic approach and limited the possibility for fluency, analysis and synthesis of ideas in development.
In some instances workbooks resorted to rudimentary two pages of 3.1, two pages of 3.2 and two pages entitled ‘Further development’ or alternatively used categorical headings such as ‘Artist model(s)’ and ‘further development’. This format tended to preclude the sustainment *of links and relationships to the portfolio that are indicative of a critical and decisive approach.*
- produced workbooks that contained a proposition that was descriptive, describing what a candidate intended to do rather than advancing a line of inquiry.
In these instances, workbooks failed to elucidate the portfolio in revealing the depth of inquiry but merely described the steps undertaken.
- repeated or overstated particular strategies and/or references to established practice.
This strategy did not allow the workbook to provide sufficient evidence to meet the Scholarship performance descriptors. Extensive communication of biographical information on artists is of little relevance. Likewise, lengthy

explanations of literal processes about ‘how to do’ were of limited use in conveying critical underpinnings of the portfolio.

- submitted workbooks constructed after the production of the Level 3 portfolio, or explanatory workbooks detailing the planning of the layout of a portfolio. Such strategies were unlikely to demonstrate sufficiently the body of work necessary to satisfy Scholarship performance descriptors.
- produced workbooks that operated as a fourth portfolio panel. Such workbooks lacked clarification and synthesis. New options were required. Simply adding a new outcome, however, was insufficient. In some instances this new outcome detracted from the portfolio and took a superficial or backward step. This approach failed to provide the necessary connections that could have sustained the level of critical thinking and drawing strengths already presented on the portfolio.
- did not make effective use of the eight workbook pages available to them. Images were larger in scale than their significance to the portfolio warranted. This wasted valuable space that could have provided evidence of other learning, experimentation and thinking. Extra ‘stand alone’ whole page artworks are also mostly a waste of space especially if they are obviously ‘rejects’ from the portfolio. Selection between portfolio and workbook needs to be carefully managed to demonstrate thinking, rather than replicate or present poorer examples of what else has occurred.
- only provided descriptive accounts of very simple and obvious thinking, steps and design.
If written commentary is provided, it needs to be succinct, purposeful and functional when referring to visual imagery. The workbook is not about descriptive writing but needs to focus on analysis, inventive thinking and development of ideas and appropriate contexts.