

2015 NZ Scholarship Assessment Report

Visual Arts: Design

Part A: Commentary

Comment on the overall response of candidates to the 2015 examination.

The 2015 Design Scholarship presented a wealth of engagement that was comprehensive and provided a compelling overall vision. Candidates demonstrated a high degree of industry within each phase of design practice that went beyond the expected level of practice, creating parallel bodies of work and consistently forging new links and connections.

Successful candidates have a close relationship to their chosen topic. Enquiries are driven by ideas first with the best possible solutions instigated by ongoing development and review. As a reader, you believe that there is a passion and knowingness driving the enquiry, which enables them to sustain a thorough and in-depth relationship with their ideas. There is a lot of contextual knowledge that is feeding the development of the briefs; this ranges from contemporary design and art contexts, topic specific contexts and technical conventions.

Many independently managed an in-depth investigation, which was not reliant on artist models; these performances showed a high degree of originality informed by professional contexts. Candidates' drew on a range of artistic references pertinent to the concepts and media being explored, and were selective and informed about the range of conventions utilised. It was good to see the level of invention employed in approach to format, media and conventions – they were not predictable in regard to scales, formats and collateral, as they sought to challenge conventional models.

It was excellent to see well-written briefs that make sense and clearly framed a sustainable and substantive set of phases and conditions; context, audience, purpose or problem. These propositions exude a confidence and weave in new bodies of knowledge without a reliance on other designer's exemplars, and expand ideas and visual language through an iterative design process, which is accumulative in soliciting unpredictable and surprising solutions.

This year, the role of the workbook has been critical in allowing folios to be awarded Scholarship. They not only support the level of criticality that sits behind the edited folio work, but articulate the links that exist in the moves between briefs. The range of approaches employed in workbooks produced authentic and relevant documents that clarified synthesis and the bringing together of ideas and visual language. Hence, the workbook acted as a critical conduit to the folio.

It was repeatedly noted by the panel that a candidate can't just get there by sophisticated use of media – those that are successful are able to weave in and out of new forms of application, they supply themselves with a wider set of conventions and operate at a deeper and higher level, presenting an authentic body of work. The best employed irony, satire, humour, provocation, low-fi vs. high-fi and were lively, humorous, clever and academically rigorous in their delivery. They navigate and value the design process; it is clear that the journey is as interesting as the destination (outcome).

The Design Marking panel would like to encourage more candidates to enter Scholarship. It is clear that many of the candidates that are achieving excellence or merit at L3 would be positively competitive at Scholarship, if not Outstanding Scholarship.

Part B: Report on performance standard

Scholarship with Outstanding Performance

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance commonly:

- manage an ongoing research practice that is sustained throughout the folio and evolves as ideas shift and take shape
- are able to contextualise their design ideas and employ a range of tactics to expand initial ideas into unexpected and inventive avenues for new inquiry
- able to manage and exploit parallel bodies of work, they juggle more than one idea – they formalise and synthesis links between and across bodies of works to extend concepts in non-linear (unexpected) ways
- are able to marry content with an appropriate stylistic tone whereby the synthesis of ideas and craft is fluent and seamless.

Scholarship	<p>Candidates who were awarded Scholarship commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a point of view about their topic/ query/ brand/ call to action/ spatial proposition, fashion or object design project, which is woven in as a story or set of slogans, or in other instances, manifests through media or a particular formalist design visual language • are able to brainstorm and then research the idea before they begin working with the image/ object/ spatial proposition by strategically framing the topic and asking questions of the topic • declare their intentionality and create a structure to foster iterative phases of thinking, gathering and making • approach their topic/proposition utilising research methods to deepen and widen the topic; they are like a detective strategically identifying and aligning social, cultural, political, historical, contemporary, satirical contexts by which to comment on or construct ideas.
Other candidates	<p>Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship commonly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design a brief that is too general or convoluted, hence they struggle to establish research methods that can provoke a set of ideas and produce a range of resources to sustain their inquiry • struggle to meaningfully engage in their topic, which is visible in their inability to establish enough content through research to drive ideas • lack critical and editorial authorship, noted in ideas presented that closely model design conventions and trends in terms of visual strategy at the expense of meaningful communication, message, experience or usability • can be too reliant on linear and incremental decision making, to the extent that they run out of time to employ research methods alongside a 'making' practice to create opportunities for inventive and original outcomes.