

Scholarship

2011 Assessment Report

Graphics

COMMENTARY

At the top end, the quality of Outstanding Scholarship submissions continued to match the highest levels of a select number of exceptional submissions that have been received in past years. For the top ranking submissions, their varied approach and strengths showed again that there is no single approach in attaining Outstanding success.

The use of digitally based evidence continues to improve as ready access to software increases. When used effectively, this evidence can articulate design ideas in a refined and convincing manner. However, well presented work in itself does not automatically ensure success in Scholarship. The clear evidence of high level thinking remains paramount at this level, and the use of advanced graphic and presentation skills can be beneficial in aiding the effective communication of such thinking.

Many of the successful submissions maintained a significant emphasis on manual visual communication modes, primarily freehand sketching and mock-ups, that was then supplemented by instrumental drawings (traditional and digital-based). The depth and detail of visual communication remains paramount to effective candidate evidence. The need for extensive design drawings as well as the more polished, finished drawings has been shown to be the basis for a successful submission. The comprehensive use of design drawings (whether done by hand or digitally) best expresses the design intent of a candidate in the depth and detail required.

Some submissions were prone to the excessive use of annotation and employed notes at the expense of the sufficient visual communication. Quite often, the evidence looked polished but lacked the evidence of progression of ideas and the full consideration of thinking that the candidate may have given to the project. Candidates who effectively employed visual diaries or 'free-flowing' design pages did tend to meet with greater success in terms of expressing a fuller range of ideas and a more in-depth and coherent design thinking.

In some submissions, excessive research material was gathered, to the detriment of the candidate's own evidence of design thinking and personal ideation. The pre-occupation with data gathering was often at the expense of showing extensive idea exploration and development. Such extensive information gathering and over-analysis would also quite often lead to pre-determined outcomes and limit the candidate's own ability to deeply engage with the brief situation as expressed through their own ideas.

Visual communication is not just limited to refined presentation aspects such as the polished rendering or presentation of a final solution or use of advanced drawing systems (such as detailed technical drawings); but rather, involves an ability to use the visual tools available in a highly literate way, reflexively: to initiate viewpoints, form new perspectives, and inform and begin thinking. This means that candidates are using their suited modes and media to become the fluent visual communicators of their design thinking.

In terms of refined presentation, this particular aspect is best restricted to design outcomes or key points (for example; a series of concept ideas presented to a client) rather than applied consistently at a high level throughout the complete project. The latter approach can be a time-intensive and a repetitive process that tends to create a workload burden at the expense of allowing greater time for deep and explorative design thinking. Provided that there is some evidence of high quality presentation shown, the rest of the work just needs to be clearly readable and easy to follow, to be deemed sufficient.

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 key to success remains with candidates engaging with manageable problems and/or open-ended, interpretable briefs that are not too large-scale, yet open enough to allow the freedom to explore and generate ideas creatively and thoroughly. Projects that were of a substantial scale or complexity tended to show lack of depth in design thinking as candidates were led to addressing a broad range of aspects in 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 restrictive and predictable fashion, 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, with candidates 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.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- expressed design thinking that showed a thorough grasp of the brief situation and approached it in a creative manner with an ability to gather information from a variety of sources and integrate them in a way that extended design thinking
- interpreted research and used it in ways that resulted in innovative design thinking
- applied a highly cohesive design process that synthesised design thinking and visualisation of design intentions
- explored design ideas with highly refined and in-depth thinking that was either conceptually well-considered or technically well-resolved
- showed high levels of critical thinking ('what ifs', what are the consequences, what do other people see, what is wrong with this idea) that led to innovative ideas
- articulated design ideas and thinking convincingly, with proficient visual communication skills that were highly assured and purposeful in progressing thinking from ideation to conclusion
- employed advanced presentation techniques with a visual impact that was convincing and left a lasting impression, evoking the spirit of the design as well as its physical features
- had a brief that was open-ended, allowing the opportunity to develop a creative outcome.

SCHOLARSHIP

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship but not Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- applied a cohesive and holistic design process that allowed the creative development of ideas, leading to a well-considered design outcome
- employed research material in a focused and informative manner that integrated effectively with design thinking
- made good use of the study of existing designers' work to help with initial ideas and to guide thinking throughout the design process
- generated design ideas using creative approaches (drawing from nature, word association, designers for inspiration, redrawing to simplify)
- showed clearly their own original thinking or personal viewpoints while exploring and developing ideas
- articulated the clear communication of ideas using suitable sketching, model-making and/or formal drawing (digital and/or manual) techniques
- used sketches that showed a variety of angles, that explained product function, or that related scale through referencing the human element, for the effective communication of ideas or thinking without the need to read supporting annotation
- investigated and explored alternative design ideas and interrogated these as possible solutions
- used an organised progression in thinking from ideation (initial ideas) to a final conclusion
- used advanced drawing skills as a thinking tool as well as a communicating tool, best shown through the use of exploratory design sketching
- used presentation techniques, either traditional or digital modes and media, to show final ideas.

OTHER CANDIDATES

Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship typically:

- did not provide a suitable brief; rather, it was either excessively prescriptive, too simplistic or far too substantial and complex
- applied a design process that was difficult to follow
- reached predictable solutions or pre-determined outcomes
- used a basic design process that had been worked through in a linear way, lacking the necessary depth of thinking
- showed ideas relevant to an identified design brief or problem, but overlooked major issues or aspects of the brief
- showed examples of design thinking and processes that were disjointed and did not visually communicate effectively
- did not demonstrate the ability to research effectively, showing a lack of purposeful connection between research and the development of a suitable outcome
- produced a considerable amount of research that was not used to inform the resolution of design ideas
- did not demonstrate suitable design development towards a refined solution with a lack of detail consideration, idea selection and refinement, or directed exploration and experimentation

- showed minimal or no reference to the human body in architectural or product design ideas
- showed details of the design explored independently without considering how they may affect the overall design
- used development to explain how the design idea functioned rather than exploring the idea further for the purposes of improving the final outcome
- lacked a well-considered or resolved design solution, often ending up with a predetermined solution without sufficient consideration or influence of alternatives
- lacked skills in visual communication as a key element in describing design ideas, showing design development and in the production of refined outcomes
- showed an over-reliance on notes to the detriment of effective visual communication that made it difficult to ascertain the actual visual qualities of their ideas
- showed a lack of understanding of the principles associated with composition, layout, and visual communication.