Scholarship

2012 Assessment Report

Graphics

COMMENTARY

The cut-off for scholarship was higher than previous years, this being a reflection of the standard required to attain the award. A significant area of improvement was seen in the increased use of ideation strategies used for the generation of diverse and creative ideas particularly for the strongest submissions. There was also a consolidation in the idea development phase of the project which added greater substance to many projects. Some of these approaches seem to be indicative of the evolving practice occurring as a result of the emergence of the new Design and Visual Communication standards at Levels 1 and 2. This trend is expected to continue with the introduction of Design and Visual Communication at Level 3 in 2013.

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. The top scholar in particular is perhaps seen as the strongest portfolio submission since its introduction in 2004, showing that the subject area has indeed continued to mature.

There was the increasing dominance of product design coming to the fore at the top end, with the Outstanding Scholarship category seeing more product-based projects featuring as opposed to spatial-based projects for the first time ever. Whereas in the past, architectural design projects tended to dominate, the growing strength of product design was certainly apparent. For the top ranking submissions, their varied approach and strengths reflect yet again that there is no single approach in attaining outstanding success.

The use of digitally-based evidence continues to increase and improve as ready access to software becomes more prevalent. When used effectively, this evidence can articulate design ideas in a refined and convincing manner. 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.

Even though there were more digitally-based projects emerging, there was still a very strong core of successful submissions that maintain 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.

The number of submissions that have an excessive use of annotation and/or collected research material seems to be on the decline as many candidates are more appropriately coming to terms with communicating their own thinking visually. The more extensive use of visuals, whether it be original manual drawing, photographic evidence of mock-ups, models or large format work, or digital evidence submitted as either print outs or using the appropriate file formats, is being seen and generally meeting with a greater degree of success.

Successful candidates recognise that 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 as the ability to use the visual tools available in a highly literate way, reflexively: to initiate viewpoints, new perspectives to 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, candidates can evidence this more selective manner in key sections of the project, and tends to be best suited for the presenting of the final outcome in an exhibition context. This more targeted approach allows the students to best utilise presentation skills to maximum effect, rather than take on the burden of presenting the entire project, which has the danger of becoming quite time-intensive and repetitive with little additional benefit. 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 digitally generated working and/or presentation drawings. The resolution of images and the communication and presentation of ideas is still important to ensuring success. There were examples of poor quality computer generated drawings or inappropriate software being employed in providing the evidence for presentation.

Overall, the cohort of scholarship awarded portfolios for 2012 has clearly seen the bar lifted to a higher level. This raising in standard is indicative of the positive changes accompanying the Graphics transition to Design and Visual Communication. This is predicted to continue as Design and Visual Communication embeds itself within schools. As a positive too, the overall Level 3 cohort has increased slightly, meaning the number of Scholarships awarded has also increased a little.

In keeping with the growing strength of the submissions, the assessment schedule is evolving too, in line with this improving practice, so as to maintain the equivalent grade distribution required, as well as in keeping with the changes associated with Level 3 and Scholarship Design and Visual Communication. These exemplar and assessment resources are to be found on the NZQA website and the developments auger well for a dynamic area with a growing credibility.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- produced unique and innovative ideas in response to a design brief, often with a new perspective, engaging with the design problem in a deeply personal way that resulted in a unique designer solution
- were prepared to develop and regenerate beyond a predictable outcome: they redeveloped and refined ideas even when they had already come to a logical outcome. This continued regeneration showed a preparedness to continue to think
- explored design ideas with highly refined and in-depth thinking that was either conceptually or technically sophisticated
- showed “clever” thinking: Candidates integrated their ideas, thinking processes and visual communication skills to explore ideas and develop outcomes beyond the

predictable. They showed distinct and innovative ideation derived from a range of sources; both by design and by inspiration. This ideation is an emerging theme and links positively to the new DVC curriculum

- articulated design ideas and thinking convincingly, with proficient visual communication skills that were highly assured and purposeful in progressing thinking from ideation (initial ideas) to conclusion
- used drawing as an effective tool for developing and interrogating their ideas, not just communicating them, showing an increasing level of design acuity (the ability to think visually)
- produced design ideas and outcomes that were extremely clear to understand visually without written explanation
- employed strong visual presentation techniques, working to their own personal strengths with a visual impact that was convincing and left a lasting impression, evoking the spirit of the design as well as its physical features.

SCHOLARSHIP

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

- applied a cohesive and holistic design process which 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
- effectively generated design ideas using creative approaches (drawing from nature, word association, designers for inspiration, redrawing to simplify)
- articulated the clear communication of ideas using sketching, model-making and/or formal drawing (digital and/or manual) techniques as suitable to the strengths of the candidate
- used visuals that showed a variety of angles, that explained product function, or that related scale through referencing the human element, for the effective communicating of ideas or thinking without the need to read supporting annotation
- investigated and explored alternative design ideas, considering the details within a whole idea and in relation to each other, interrogating these as design possibilities
- used an organised and coherent progression in thinking from ideation to a conclusion
- used presentation techniques, either traditional or digital modes and media, to show final ideas
- recognised and addressed major design issues associated with the brief.

OTHER CANDIDATES

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

- lacked a suitable brief, that was either excessively prescriptive, too simplistic or too substantial
- used a basic design process that had been worked through in either a linear way or disjointed manner, lacking the necessary depth of divergent thinking

- showed ideas relevant to an identified design brief or problem but overlooked major issues or aspects of the brief
- lacked in the use of ideation techniques for the generation of diverse and creative ideas with candidates tending to use very limited strategies at the beginning and not return to further ideation strategies during the development phase
- lacked the ability to research effectively, showing a distinct lack of purposeful connection between research and the development of a suitable outcome, despite the generation of a considerable amount of research in some instances
- lacked the suitable idea 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 functions 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 distinct lack of understanding demonstrated with regards to the principles associated with composition, layout and visual communication
- lacked drawing skills and were not able to use these to effectively advance their design thinking
- lacked the presentation skills and did not professionally promote their solutions
- submitted incomplete or unresolved work.