

## VISUAL ARTS

### Introduction

This report is for the May 2012 examination session and includes reference to the performance of candidates in HLA, SLA, HLB, and SLB courses. The report sets out to provide information about the examination session as well as to provide some advice to assist in improving the achievement of candidates in future examination sessions.

The visual arts subject report is organized into the following sections:

1. The studio work component
2. The investigation workbook component
3. Recommendations relating to IB procedures, instructions and forms

Although the two components for each of the four visual arts courses are separately examined, it can be difficult to separate these components when discussing the outcomes of the session due to the integrated nature of the tasks that candidates undertake in developing and creating their work. Consequently the information contained throughout the report may be relevant to either or both components.

Resources on the Online Curriculum Centre (<http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/occ/guest/home.cfm>) provide teachers with access to:

- Subject reports
- The current *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*
- Extended essay reports
- The *Visual arts subject guide* (for first examination May 2009)
- The *Visual arts teacher support material* (for first examination May 2009)
- The *Assessment clarification, June 2010* (replaces and includes the document published in November 2008)
- The visual arts online virtual gallery

It is essential that Diploma Programme visual arts teachers regularly consult with these documents, regardless of previous experience, and make appropriate information available to candidates during their course.

Candidates should have access to the assessment markband descriptors at all times.

## Overall grade boundaries

### Higher level option A

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-13	14-28	29-43	44-58	59-70	71-85	86-100

### Higher level option B

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-12	13-27	28-42	43-57	58-67	68-82	83-100

### Standard level option A

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-13	14-28	29-43	44-58	59-70	71-85	86-100

### Standard level option B

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-12	13-27	28-42	43-57	58-67	68-82	83-100

## Studio work

### Higher level option A

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-14	15-17	18-20

### Higher level option B

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-14	15-17	18-20

### Standard level option A

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-14	15-17	18-20

### Standard level option B

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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**Mark range:**            0-3            4-6            7-9            10-12            13-14            15-17            18-20

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

Although the range and suitability of work varied, there were overall trends. There continued to be an emphasis on 2D work with traditional drawing and painting techniques, including a strong focus on observation. Three dimensional works were infrequently presented, with sculptural work rarely developed; there was little evidence of digital, animation or installation art.

Some candidates presented work primarily as a response to teacher directed assignments. Directed assignments can be helpful at the beginning of the course, but the quality of work resulting from these assignments sometimes limited candidates to lower markbands. Candidates who had chosen a theme early in their visual arts course were often constrained by it, with the limited variety of work produced unable to reach upper markbands.

The open and all-inclusive nature of visual arts allows candidates to work in virtually any visual media and technique, but this did not always lead to a successful body of work. When candidates explore a wide range of media higher levels of technical mastery are hard to achieve in any one medium. Some candidates tried to work with too broad a range of techniques and ideas: more successful candidates tended to work in series that developed specific ideas and techniques more thoroughly.

Examiners frequently referred to the importance of instruction and the development of skill in drawing as contributing to successful exhibitions. Examiners also noted that there was less evidence of strong drawing skills this session.

The issue of technical competence was frequently mentioned by examiners, commenting that many candidates lacked the skills and technical competencies required to produce good quality work. Other examiners were concerned at candidates resorting to using photography and digital work that showed a very limited range of strategies, ideas and techniques, commenting that photography was generally poorly supported by investigation, technical procedures, and other relevant information.

Concern was also expressed about the number of candidates who copied contemporary artists without providing evidence of an understanding of context or technical development. Simply collecting images, rather than investigating the ideas presented by artists and imagery, did not show evidence of understanding. Examiners reiterated that technical skill in the chosen medium is paramount: candidates with little understanding of basic competencies frequently struggled to attain higher markbands.

Good work almost always reflected good teaching and sensitive guidance: the teacher's influence is intrinsic to the quality of student output.

Examiners noted a correlation between the lack of work in the IWB and poor outcomes in studio work, as well as between more successful studio work and strong IWBs. They also

reported that in some cases candidates did not choose the most successful studio works for inclusion in the candidate record booklet (CRB).

When marking electronically submitted work examiners expressed concern that in the interview teachers sometimes heavily led candidates and included their own judgments about the quality of the candidate's work. Where candidate's initial responses were simplistic some teachers provided their own commentary rather than drawing out the candidates to explain.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

As Visual arts is assessed against holistic markband descriptors and not individual criteria, the bullet points within the markband descriptors have been treated individually as far as is possible in the following section. Some crossover is inevitable:

### **Understanding of artistic expression**

Examiners were generally pleased with the performance of most candidates in relation to this descriptor. This was attributed to increased evidence that candidates had responded appropriately to personal interactions and workshops with artists, as well as visits to exhibitions. This resulted in candidates making connections with other artists' work and their own. Where performance was weaker, issues such as the understanding of composition or formal elements were identified as contributory factors.

### **Personal relevance, cultural and historical awareness**

This descriptor provoked a wide response from examiners who acknowledged that it was often problematic. Although much of the work was personally relevant, frequently it did not show any or sufficient exploration of ideas reflecting cultural and historical awareness and artistic qualities. This may reflect a misunderstanding or at least an oversimplification of what is intended by this particular descriptor.

It was noted that in general candidates were more comfortable talking about their work in terms of artistic expression than how their work explored ideas of cultural and historical awareness, or even artistic qualities. Examiners were concerned that many candidates were able to present work that was self-searching and personally expressive, but were unable to refer to relevant artists or historical periods. They often emphasized issues that concerned them, personally or globally, without being able to put them into a visual arts context with appropriate references. There was a feeling that the issue of cultural and historical awareness and artistic qualities were areas in need of greater understanding. Often cultural links needed to be explored in more depth and supported by more relevant contextual information. Examiners commented that the work of the strongest candidates showed a meaningful and thoughtful integration of cultural and historical elements. Examiners were concerned when candidates referred to their "cultural piece/s" as if these were separate from their ongoing artistic development.

Interviews revealed that most candidates were good at relating their practice to a personal context, but broadening that into an art context was more challenging, with some being unable to step back from the work and comment from an external perspective.

**Development of ideas and strategies for expression**

The best results came from candidates who understood how ideas and concepts related to the course aims and objectives. Success in this aspect was often linked to work that was inventive, innovative and original.

Some examiners noted that some candidates invested too much time in developing too many ideas and strategies, presenting a wide range of projects which tended to lack depth and synthesis. Experimentation itself does not by itself automatically lead to successful work and needs to be developed into focused or sustained development.

However, developing ideas and strategies was seen as critical. The importance of using primary sources when developing ideas and strategies needs to be stressed. It was commented that first hand reference was often lacking, with candidates relying too heavily on background information and research taken only from the Internet.

**Sensitivity to materials and their use**

Some examiners commented that even where studio work was inventive it could remain unresolved due to a lack of understanding of materials and their use. Where candidates explored a particular medium in depth, or to a level of mastery, this greatly benefitted those final studio pieces.

**Review, modify and refinement of ideas to resolution and medium**

Evidence of review, modification and refinement of work did not occur as regularly as examiners would have liked. In some schools candidates presented a series of one-off studio works with no thought of development through this process. The most successful bodies of work demonstrated appropriate evidence, perhaps through pursuing an idea in a variety of media, or exploring one medium in great depth.

**Technical competence**

The issue of technical competence provoked a lot of examiner comment. Some examiners reported that candidates were not building the skills and techniques needed to express their ideas and identified prior learning as an issue in this context. Use of and experimentation with a range of materials is important, so that skills are developed in a more limited number of media, allowing candidates to demonstrate skill in techniques.

**Confidence and inventiveness**

Where candidates had used their investigation workbooks to support the development of their studio pieces examiners felt that these pieces demonstrated far greater confidence and inventiveness than where they had been created from imagination or from Internet sources. Some examiners commented that inventiveness was a strength this session.

**Self direction and reflective judgement**

Investigation workbooks, when used effectively, were helpful to candidates in relation to this descriptor. Examiners reported that candidates were able to talk effectively about their reflective judgment and knowledgeably about the formal qualities of art, as well as demonstrating an understanding of styles and disciplines within art. Examiners were disappointed when the production of a poor IWB hindered candidates' discussion of their work, or the work of others.

Those candidates who had stretched and challenged their own personal boundaries usually displayed competence in other markband descriptors.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Many of these recommendations repeat the assistance and guidance provided in previous subject reports.

- Good teaching and the support of the teacher throughout the course was noted by examiners to be the most important factor in visual arts education, including: ongoing teaching of skills and techniques, specifically drawing techniques and the effective use of the elements of art and principles of design; exploring how artistic ideas are generated, researched and how to apply this information; relevant elements of art history, art theory, and critical thinking skills
- Provide an appropriate range of resources other than the Internet to encourage cultural and historical enquiry that strives for purposeful and meaningful exploration leading to the development of candidates' own ideas rather than copying those of other artists
- Ensure a balance between depth and breadth and between giving assignments and allowing creative freedom
- Systematically develop studio strategies and undertake appropriate experimentation so that the final outcomes are more refined in terms of skill
- Clearly explain and discuss appropriate terminology and ensure candidates use it
- The issue of the theme is still misunderstood by many: candidates should not be given, or forced to select, a theme or a topic
- Provide regular and varied formative assessment and feedback experiences, including teaching candidates to talk critically about their own work and the work of others, group discussions, and peer-to-peer critiques to consider aspects of art and the assessment markband descriptors
- Ensure that candidates are familiar with the assessment criteria and descriptors, and give advice to ensure candidates are registered for the most appropriate course and level

- Encourage school leadership to continue to support an exhibition giving motivation to candidates to present their work creatively and effectively
- Support candidates to develop their statements to focus on relevant context, media and processes as well as to give an initial impression of their own artistic endeavors
- Ensure that photographs and investigation workbook pages are accurate and clear
- Teachers should become familiar with the information available to them: read Subject Report(s), refer to the Virtual Gallery and visit the OCC Visual Arts forum
- Teachers should regularly attend professional development workshops, either face-to-face or online

## Further comments

The issue of candidates not acknowledging their use of the words or ideas of others, whether written, oral or visual was identified this session as a growing concern. Where the candidate has copied, borrowed, or appropriated work, including reworking found artworks, photographs, diagrams or illustrations, these must be acknowledged and cited appropriately. Examiners are required to report instances of suspected academic dishonesty, leading to an investigation taking place with the school.

Even where candidates do acknowledge appropriated work, as an established and recognized artistic technique, simply taking and using the images of others alone does not satisfy the requirements of the higher markbands.

There were some concerns that although the ease and immediacy of digital photography meant that some candidates used it as a quick and easy way to produce studio work, without sufficient evidence of a conceptual developmental process it was unlikely to achieve high marks.

Evidence this session again highlighted that some schools leave candidates to their own devices. Where candidates do not have a quality teaching and learning experience it is often the case that they produce work that can only meet the requirements of the lowest markband descriptors. Candidates who can thrive on their own are few and far between. Good teaching leads to good practice and good results.

## Investigation workbooks

### Higher level option A

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20

### Higher level option B

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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<b>Mark range:</b>	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-13	14-16	17-20
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### Standard level option A

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20

### Standard level option B

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-13	14-16	17-20

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

Examiners reported that the majority of candidates had developed some effective technical skills for making and investigating artists and media; their investigation workbooks demonstrated focused or reasonably organized, investigative strategies that were linked to studio work. Work by the most successful candidates was highly focused, technically skilled and individual; their studies of artists were comprehensive and did not rely on biographical information; they developed and synthesised ideas effectively and produced work with good breadth and depth. Weaker candidates lacked technical skills and analysed art superficially. They relied exclusively on the Internet and popular culture for sources. IWB pages were poorly presented aesthetically and written work lacked critical insight and reflection.

Generally speaking there were examples of a wide range of topics and projects submitted. Usually candidates provided evidence of their process and influences. Some did a very thorough job while others did not. Moderators reported that candidates were using a variety of techniques and processes in the visual arts. The quality of the work varied from very well-researched genres resulting in impressive outcomes for studio work, to poor approaches to investigation containing little analysis or reflection and generating little in terms of successful outcomes. While some candidates had strong technical skill that displayed confidence and experience in making and analyzing artworks, others had weak technical skill, thus struggling to communicate their ideas visually and verbally.

The weakest samples tended to display common problems, either through lack of teaching, in which candidates seemed to have had little or no guidance or "over-teaching", in which selected pages demonstrated assigned pieces but little or no personal development. At the higher end of candidates, work was in-depth and comprehensive, with good investigation and understanding of the work of others. The teachers in schools from which the strongest samples came, seemed to find the right balance between independence and guidance.

There was an increase in the submission of screen shots, film and photography that could and should be much better represented in the workbook pages. Some of the workbook pages were works of art in themselves; at the other end of the scale they were barely filled, with perhaps the most basic of drawings predominating. Many schools made excellent use of



visits, such as galleries, museums, cultural exhibitions and local artists. On the other hand, there was a real over-reliance on second-hand images. A few candidates submitted diary style pages rather than workbooks; others overly-descriptive formats, for example detailing the life histories of artists, sometimes in isolation.

Weaker candidates again relied too heavily on the Internet, often using websites without discretion. They tended to reflect insufficient depth and breadth in their approach to investigation. Stronger candidates absorbed themselves in analysis of artworks and artefacts and consequently presented stronger work as a result. They researched from a range of scholarly sources, including primary sources. The highest achieving candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the formal elements and principles of design both reflected in their critical and cultural investigations and also in the preliminary work evident that was later developed into studio work.

The stronger candidates had clearly understood and worked towards satisfying the requirements of the markband descriptors for this component. The weaker candidates clearly had no real understanding of the nature of the investigation work book nor did they demonstrate an understanding of the markband descriptors, and therefore did not work sufficiently towards them. The best candidates explored a range of strategies for investigation and experimented with media to resolve problems and manipulate visual ideas.

In some weaker candidates' submissions, pages seem to have been selected at random. Some pages were included more than once and others were almost impossible to read due to poor quality copies and/or over-decoration of pages. In other cases it was obvious that teachers had advised their students appropriately in the research and subsequently in the selection of pages to be submitted for assessment.

Where candidates fully understood the creative investigative process from conception, through investigation, media exploration and research into visual qualities, using source material that inspired and influenced them, the finished artwork was more resolved and IWB pages completely integrated. Where candidates showed little understanding of the entire process, the work was more fragmented, ideas stand in isolation and research into different cultures and times is often unrelated.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

As Visual arts is assessed against holistic markband descriptors and not individual criteria, the bullet points within the markband descriptors have been treated individually as far as is possible in the following section. Some crossover is inevitable:

### **Consideration, analysis and comparison of art from different cultures and times**

For the most part this remained the most difficult investigative area for candidates, with wide variation in the quantity and quality of artist studies and research. Overall a good range of ideas were explored, but for the most part there was a lack of depth in the research. Significant numbers of candidates continued merely to present and describe, rather than analyse art works. Twentieth century and contemporary western artists continue to dominate (for example Banksy, Warhol, Goldsworthy, Jackson Pollock, Jenny Saville). Some schools mandate artists (and cultures) for in-depth study and supply useful guidelines on method. The

range of art forms included for consideration varies in different education systems. UK candidates tend to draw on examples of fine art whereas American candidates tend to reference popular culture more. Generally speaking, studies of non-western art are either lacking or superficial. Too often students put their own, sometimes misinformed interpretation on the artwork. At the higher levels candidates were able to use artists or artists' techniques to inform and inspire their own work.

There was still a good deal of social studies-style factual research into different countries and cultures, which lacked any visual/artistic link to the candidate's own art work and often did not mention or show artworks, designs or artistic traditions which might have provided those links. Where candidates' own art processes were well-documented and analysed to the neglect of others' artistic output and methods the candidates could have been more successful if the same reflective approach were applied to other artists, times and cultures.

In general, the visual analysis of artworks was good, but there was often little consideration of function and significance. Many candidates lacked the skills for critical analysis, exploration or reflection and often stated they liked an artist or were amazed by a culture with no ability to give reasons for their opinions based in critical and artistic knowledge. Real analysis of art was often lacking with description or biographic pages predominating, rather than any clear attempt to make real connections with a discussion of function and significance. The cultural aspects of research remained the least accessible, often being included simply as add-ons, rather than forming a natural part of the candidate's inquiry to enrich studio work.

The use of basic art concepts alone to discuss artworks does not demonstrate cultural and art historical understanding. More consideration needs to be given to investigating symbolism, function and meaning.

### **Demonstration of skills, techniques and processes when making and analysing images and artefacts**

Again the best pages had significant evidence of such skills with weaker candidates' work showing little ability to refine and modify, explore and analyse visual sources. Techniques and skills and their development were evident in stronger candidates, where media experimentation and technical ability were supported by written analysis and different approaches were tried. Weaker students often presented images of finished pieces without any accompanying explanation or related investigation or included rough doodles as experimentation. Drawing skills were often poor and experimentation was sometimes superficial. It was disappointing that candidates creating 3D work did not generally show the breadth of skills when documenting the supporting study.

In some cases candidates included images of the final artworks and thereafter discussed the processes and materials utilised, not actually demonstrating the development of the process. There is still concern relating to the lack of process being demonstrated in relation to digital imagery and manipulation.

### **Investigative strategies into visual qualities, ideas and their contexts**

There often seemed to be a lack of understanding of art in context - why the particular piece was made and from what materials. Where schools provide a format for studying artworks this should include "context". When candidates considered this, their approach was broadened and connections with their own studies and studio work were more convincing. The best work was exciting, varied and deep: the weakest work lacked sufficient understanding.

Investigative strategies included researching artists and artworks, brainstorming ideas through writing, experimenting with visual effects and media, observational drawing, doodling and/or sketching diagrams and designs. Weaker candidates relied on pencil sketches or writing for their investigations and did not experiment with visual effects and techniques.

### **Depth and breadth of idea development; connection between the work and that of others**

In many cases breadth of investigation was acceptable but depth was lacking. Processes and evidence of development were not always included. This was especially evident where photography was concerned. Critical observation continued to be a challenge for many candidates.

The best pages showed lots of exploration, whereas the weakest pages contained little evidence and lacked any synthesis of ideas. Better candidates equally demonstrated very good development of ideas and explained connections between their work and that of other artists, whereas weaker candidates' connections tended to consist of imitation, appropriating images and documenting *their* version of, for instance, Warhol, Pollock or Banksy. In schools where class assignments were the norm, imposed imitative projects were clearly not helping candidates to find their individual way in research or studio.

Candidates who provided evidence of developing and synthesizing their ideas often were able to also explain the links between their own and other artists' work quite well. Weaker candidates put a lot of effort into writing about personal concerns but struggled to synthesise and represent them visually because of their limited understanding of art. Over-reliance on photographs as a stimulus for painting and drawing exacerbated this problem.

### **Specialist vocabulary of visual arts; range of sources and acknowledgements**

The use of the specialist vocabulary of the visual arts varied from very good to very limited depending on the academic ability of the candidate and the expectations of the teachers. At times, vocabulary was very superficial and did nothing more than describe what was in the artwork. There were isolated cases of candidates using inappropriate four letter words which were unwarranted. Schools should be aware that these instances will be investigated as malpractice cases in line with ethical guidelines.

Specialist vocabulary was generally used well where it was the candidates' first language, though less proficient candidates sometimes seemed to just scatter elements and principles words around in the hope that these would be enough to convince the reader. In some cases a teacher-directed, formal approach to the use of visual vocabulary was evident in schools. This is of great value at the beginning of the course and when candidates continued to

implement this approach throughout their research, stronger, more articulate work was developed

Sources for investigation used were sometimes appropriate and varied and some centres carried out field visits to museums and galleries for more exposure to the world of art, encouraging the use of primary sources where available e.g. local resources such as artists and environment, plus the use of a good selection of art books. However many candidates seemed to have difficulty going beyond Internet research, choosing (sometimes random) images and using these rather than a primary source, which often led to unimaginative, paraphrased descriptions of artists and movements and unoriginal practical processes. Internet sources were not always properly acknowledged. In weaker candidates' work the sources sometimes had little or nothing to do with the topics under investigation. In quite a few cases candidates simply downloaded images but failed to explain their significance and how they related to, or supported the investigations underway.

The issue of candidates not acknowledging use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual was identified this session as a growing concern. Where the candidate has copied, borrowed, or appropriated work, including photographs, diagrams or illustrations, these must be acknowledged and cited appropriately. Examiners are required to report such instances, leading to an investigation taking place.

### **Presentation of work and relationship to studio**

The best work was reflective, discriminatory and with a clear relationship, balancing both visual and written research. The weaker work lacked these qualities.

Many candidates managed very effective and attractive presentation of their work, with good examples of technique practice and development, and creative presentation. There remain many examples of over-decoration of pages which sometimes affected legibility of the work through the overuse of coloured backgrounds and ornate decoration.

There are big differences in the standard of IWB presentation and written reflective commentary between schools. Recurring problems include very large (or extremely small) untidy handwriting, poorly copied pages and poor spelling (even in word-processed scripts). Artist names and art-specific vocabulary might reasonably be expected to be correctly spelled at this level. Personalised shorthand should be avoided. The style of writing can be informal, but should be academic.

The relationship with studio was mostly focused, or reasonably focused. In some cases this was to the detriment of systematic, in-depth analysis of artworks from other places and times. In the majority of submissions, there was a clear and organic relationship between the studio work and the research: in others, that connection was somewhat artificial.

## **Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates**

Many of these recommendations repeat the assistance and guidance provided in previous subject reports.

- Provide all necessary skill-based instruction for candidates, by structuring classes in media and techniques, practical skills, ways of looking at, analysing and writing about art and discussing investigation strategies in detail
- Ensure the range of investigative strategies for each candidate stretches and extends their natural approach to investigation Mentor and guide stronger candidates toward a balanced approach to the assessment markband descriptors
- Teach candidates to analyse and critique in a variety of methods including annotated sketches, concept webs, mind maps and Venn diagrams for comparisons. Formal essays are not necessary
- Ensure the IWB is more than a sketchbook of preliminary ideas for studio work, or seemingly unrelated sketches, and countless media experimentations , includes cultural and contextual investigations, and critical analysis of artworks, artists and styles that inform and shape the candidates' studio works
- Provide a focus on different art historical models of evaluation to assist candidates toward a greater understanding of the place of the arts within cultures
- Encourage candidates to consider themselves as products of culture who go on to consume, critique, condemn, cultivate and create cultural artefacts. They should be encouraged to engage with other artists' works in light of this understanding leading to greater breadth and depth in their understanding of culture
- Encourage greater depth and breadth in the study of art from different cultures and times, with more emphasis on the analysis of the formal elements and the terms 'function and significance' and the introduction of a recognised model for critiquing artwork to candidates
- Encourage the use of specialist art vocabulary and provide guidance on researching and referencing relevant source material correctly, including images, with particular emphasis on appropriate internet use
- Emphasise the importance of clear, strong links between candidates' investigation and studio work, also that IWB pages should convey messages visually foremost, in balance with verbal content
- Motivate candidates to research and draw on their local environment. Where representational drawing is the main vehicle for developing ideas, help candidates to improve these skills
- Consistently promote familiarity with, understanding of and compliance with the requirements of the assessment markband descriptors, ensuring ongoing mentoring on an individual basis throughout the course to give feedback on IWB progress. Introduce established assignments at the start of the course and then later for weaker students to assist their progress and development
- Provide examples of good visual presentations of ideas by showing candidates examples of both strong and weak IWBs
- Ensure that pages for submission are selected carefully to include a balance over the markband descriptors in the pages selected for assessment
- Insist candidates include contact sheets for photography and screen shots of Photoshop decision-making as evidence of process in digital manipulation
- Provide regular and varied formative assessment and feedback experiences, including teaching candidates to talk critically about their own work and the work of others, group discussions, and peer-to-peer critiques to consider the visual arts assessment markband descriptors

## Further comments

Some of the teaching for this component clearly lacks direction with weaker candidates not getting the support and structure that they need to improve. Examiners felt that even the weaker candidates could demonstrate an increased capacity to respond more confidently and in a more self-assured manner to the markband descriptors.

It is difficult to achieve the necessary balance in teaching the course between setting stimulus projects and letting candidates generate their own, experimenting with a range of media and developing technical skills in more depth, and encouraging both written and visual investigation. Where these problems remain unresolved, teachers would benefit from studying examples of good IB practice and attending workshops. The OCC is again strongly recommended as a resource for teachers, together with the Visual Arts Assessment clarification document.

The standard of work in a significant number of schools was very poor. Many of these candidates appeared to be complete beginners at art with no technical skills. Significant numbers wrote about personal “themes” that they struggled to represent visually. Some of them commented that they found the writing and research elements of the course challenging. More worrying was the finding that the teacher comments did not reflect the assessment criteria and their internal marks were too generous.

The importance of the quality of the documentation contained in the CRB cannot be underestimated. Poor quality photographs, photocopying or where the number of photographs or pages exceeds the amount can disadvantage candidates in assessment.