

VISUAL ARTS

Introduction

This report is for the May 2013 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)
- Visual arts candidate interview assessment trial outcome
- Visual arts e-submission teacher guidance material and four accompanying videos
- Visual arts electronic submission user guide

- 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 & standard level option A

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

Higher & standard level option B

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

Studio work higher & standard level option A

Grade boundaries

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

Studio work higher & standard level option B

Grade boundaries

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most schools did not make use of the various upload options available through the submission process. There was little evidence of film, multimedia/new media, animation or

'walk-arounds' of 3D or sculptural pieces. Once again the majority of work was from the traditional areas of drawing and painting with other work in collage, digital photography, digital media, glass, fashion design, and installation media.

This is not to say the range was limited, the range of work presented demonstrated a variety of media explored and techniques employed. However, while candidates with stronger technical competence were able to explore ideas and generate original visual images, candidates with more mediocre skills often relied on copying photographs.

A few candidates worked in ceramics, linocut, stencil and photography. Some previous favourite media resurfaced: many candidates continue to be inspired by graffiti and street art, but this seemed to be handled more a little more delicately this year and some candidates moved beyond the well-known street artists to some more nuanced examples and concepts. Clay work was often unfired with no development of glazes or their properties evident.

Teachers at some schools recognized that candidates with limited technical competence in more traditional art making materials might better explore ideas through another media and/or technique. However, simply changing from one media to another did not always lead to a more successful outcome.

In terms of suitability, some examiners felt that some work showed evidence of being too teacher-directed. It is obviously vital that teachers teach and indeed direct candidates, but there need to be open ended projects with freedom for individual interpretation. Schools submitting work that showed each candidate exhibition almost identical to every other exhibition were not enabling their candidates' individual creativity. It is disappointing when work is consistently teacher-directed with many pieces generic class assignments with little or no personal modifications made by the candidates. Similarly there was random emulation of artists being studied with little or no understanding of how to manipulate that visual knowledge to further explore more creative, personal images.

Examiners commented on the tendency of some work to be insular, self-referencing and autobiographical, including holiday photographs or photographs and/or paintings of family and friends. This may be a result of misinterpreting part of one of the markband descriptors ("demonstrates the production of personally relevant artworks"); unless the submission also shows exploration of ideas reflecting cultural and historical awareness and artistic qualities it is unlikely to achieve highly in this aspect. In some interviews although most candidates were very good at relating their practice to a personal context, broadening that into a cultural or artistic context proved to be more of a challenge.

Examiners referred to the predictability and lack of inventiveness of some of the work submitted: little of the work encountered seemed to be ambitious or challenging. In some cases the subject matter was very stereotypical or clichéd. These candidates did not seem to understand that their art can be interesting or even challenging as well as technically assured.

There were comments from examiners about the suitability of the overall selection, with many schools seeming to feel that it was important to fill all available slots, even if many pieces were unresolved or studies and repeats of studies. Where candidates include examples of weak work it will not offer access to higher markband descriptors or increase the final mark.

There was a limited amount of photography and only a small handful of candidates used digital or multimedia work. Some schools submitted work with a heavy reliance on photography, although the investigation was not documented in the IWB (contact sheets/examples of the depth of the exploration). Some candidates stated that they used Photoshop because they were unable to achieve competence in more traditional techniques; however, their work in Photoshop was often equally weak. Using simplistic digital photography or digital manipulation as a substitute for acquiring technical competence is unlikely to contribute towards successful outcomes. Where photography was used primarily to produce additional studio works, most pieces resembled snapshots rather than work with artistic merit or message.

Predictably the range and suitability varied from school to school. Where a rigorous and challenging two year framework had been constructed that allowed opportunities for candidates to develop skills and strengths to work towards technical excellence and extend and develop concepts that articulate the expression of intentions, candidates were better supported to achieve in the higher mark bands.

Where candidates had been given the opportunity to develop independence and confidence, the work demonstrated technical excellence, self-direction and innovation often resulting in some ambitious and outstanding art. On the other hand, where a project by project format had been relied upon for the entire course, or one that left the candidate working in isolation, candidates had not had the opportunity to develop the techniques and skills that would enable them to achieve in the higher mark bands.

Most schools found a suitable balance of structured, teacher-generated projects and open, candidate-generated projects. In these schools candidates benefitted from some structure at the beginning of their course, with some initial teacher-driven assignments moving toward their own generated ideas as they progressed.

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 the ideas and techniques that underpin artistic expression: the work of stronger candidates clearly showed evidence of a good knowledge of both ideas and techniques that underpinned artistic expression, whereas weaker candidates tended to state their ideas from an emotional or personal point of view, without showing awareness of the different ideas/techniques of artistic expression. Ideas were often interpreted in a literal way, boundaries were not pushed and there appeared to be a generally weak understanding of underpinnings of artistic expression.

Drawing skills are fundamental to competence in other media and in many cases these were poorly developed.

Personally relevant artworks that show exploration of ideas reflecting cultural and historical awareness and artistic qualities: candidates at many schools struggled to

incorporate cultural awareness in meaningful ways. For many the result of cultural exploration was rather clichéd visual outcomes that informed a single piece rather than the overall body of work. Somewhat related, there was often little evidence of the use of local resources and first-hand experiences in the investigation of cultural and historical awareness and artistic qualities. There was often an over-dependency on the Internet.

Few candidates employed cultural references in developing their artworks. Treatment of culture was often superficial. Many who dealt with culture used obvious and popular symbols like costumes, flags, famous buildings/landmarks and well-known icons of a country. When cultural awareness was thoroughly integrated it did often strengthen the collection of work. Often, however, it seemed as if a 'cultural' artwork was just included in the course as a 'cultural project'. Similarly when not integrated into the holistic nature of the course, historical and cultural referencing appeared tokenistic and irrelevant to the work submitted for assessment.

Some candidates had referenced the work of other artists or cultures but did not always use the possibilities to influence on their own ideas. Candidates who had made studio visits, who engaged in personal investigation, produced work that was conceptually more developed. Access first hand to artists and practice, gallery visits and other activities introducing traditional and contemporary work were all very useful.

The *personal relevance* part of this descriptor frequently seemed to have been misunderstood. 'Personally relevant' work was often mundane with little exploration of ideas reflecting cultural and historical awareness and artistic qualities as candidates were often tempted to overdo the personal and forget the art. Consistently candidates talked about their feelings and emotions in their pieces, rather than referencing artistic qualities or the markband descriptors. Often very little emphasis was placed on the visual qualities of a piece.

Understanding and exploring cultural and historical references is a teachable skill, as is the candidate's ability to appraise the development of their works while undergoing the creative process.

Development of ideas and strategies for expression: many candidates attempted to develop their first idea, rather than trying to explore a number of them via, for example, risk-taking and brainstorming with their teachers and peers.

Some teachers emphasized the exploration of a number of ideas, others allowed candidates to follow a fairly limited developmental path. Candidates who were encouraged to explore ideas using a range of starting points such as personal photographs, thumbnail sketches, mind maps and annotated experiments in a variety of media were at an advantage.

The ways in which candidates developed ideas and strategies were often revealed during the interview: some candidates were able to articulate how their ideas had developed very well using a high level of art specific vocabulary. In a few schools it was obvious that significant time had been spent teaching the process of creating art through investigation, analysis, the development of ideas etc. Occasionally the evidence of exploration and development of ideas was stronger than the work itself.

Sensitivity to materials and their use. The body of work has been reviewed, modified and refined as it has progressed resulting in resolution of ideas and medium: disappointingly there were few submissions that had real depth in any one sustained medium. Many candidates had covered breadth in the use of media at cost to any successful realization of ideas. Some examiners commented that that candidates or schools might be "directed" to focus on developing a medium in order to develop a deeper creative response.

An ongoing process of review, modification and refinement was often not documented or evident. If missing in the IWB, this makes assessment in the studio work more problematic. There was plenty of self-directed work, but often the link to other people, places and times was missing. Many candidates seemed to genuinely misunderstand the apparent nature of relevance of their work, both in reference to the self, and to draw upon external influences in a clear and innovative manner. Even so, some of the work was very inventive.

Technical competence: candidate performance relating to technical competence was varied. In some schools technical skill was an important part of the early teaching of the course, and in these cases candidates often produced their strongest 'skilled' work when directed by the teacher at the beginning.

In other schools technical competence was one of the weaker areas where candidates followed a wide range of different areas, including fashion, photography, video, graphic design, and illustration. These candidates lacked sufficient understanding of techniques to achieve a good level of execution in any of these media.

Some schools encouraged candidates to submit work in too many media and/or to explore too many techniques. This did not allow the candidates to achieve any depth in any one media or technique.

It was disappointing when submissions copied directly from secondary sources displayed good technical competence, examiners would have preferred to see these candidates working at developing their own idea and achieving in higher markbands.

Some examiners noted that observational drawing, while fundamental to competence in many other media, was consistently underdeveloped, while others noticed there were encouraging signs of resurgence in basic observation work.

Confidence and inventiveness: it was commented that confidence was often misplaced with inventiveness absent in some work. Most candidates spoke with confidence and conviction about their work but the work itself did not necessarily justify this confidence.

It was again disappointing to examiners that candidates were able to display confidence in creating their work when the work was copied from magazines or the Internet and not generated from the pursuit of their own ideas.

Informed reflective judgement: where candidates worked to challenge and extend their personal boundaries the artwork resulted in some unusual and original outcomes, and where the body of the work had been reviewed, modified and refined as the work progressed, there

was frequent evidence of an accomplished resolution of ideas and media. The teacher can play an important part here in questioning the use of obvious or familiar subject matter.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

At some schools it is still suggested or required that candidates have a "theme" to their work. This is NOT a formal requirement of the course and can hinder a successful submission. If candidates are not taught how to investigate and internalize to make an imposed theme relevant to themselves, to have one can be stifling for the creative process.

To start the course: candidates with little prior learning in visual art have to be guided carefully and supported and receive positive teaching to ensure that they understand and develop good practice. Even after this initial period teachers may wish to return to reinforce or develop skills or teach new media. On-going teacher intervention to encourage self-reflection and critical analysis is essential to develop candidates' strengths.

Provide a structure that stimulates all candidates, allowing the stronger to continue to challenge their own boundaries and ensures that the weaker are supported in their endeavour to fulfil the requirements of the course without becoming formulaic. Consider a carefully structured approach in the first year, with plenty of room for personal expression and connections but with thorough links to art history, art criticism and art theory.

Visual arts candidates should strive for excellence in terms of all assessment markband descriptors and teachers should communicate these expectations to encourage the highest expectations.

Teach the course: more time teaching basic drawing and compositional skills is needed as a foundation for creativity. In learning to draw, candidates develop confidence, inventiveness, and a way to think in visual terms, as well as a way to document experience and develop ideas. Candidates should also be taught the techniques for a variety of traditional and contemporary art making tools and media.

Too many candidates are still directing themselves and not being supported to reach their full potential or being encouraged to successfully develop skills and through experimentation and manipulation of a variety of art making forms.

Exploring a wide range of media early in the course will allow candidates the opportunity to try different approaches to the work when they have more independence during their second year.

Culture: looking at local cultural issues is perhaps of more value than, for example, studying African art simply to fulfil the cultural awareness criteria (unless the school is in Africa).

Expose candidates to a range of artists and issues affecting art and cultural practice, and encourage them to make more meaningful and explicit connections between their learning in art and theory of knowledge.

A superficial and simplistic approach to culture can lead to superficial pieces that have nothing to do with the candidate's concepts and did not lead to or reflect any kind of understanding.

Self-direction/inventiveness: continue to emphasize confidence and inventiveness, self-direction and independent judgment as important aspects of creating artworks. Some schools seem to create all 2D work to a maximum A3 size – nothing beyond this or exciting in terms of form or scale. Candidates can be encouraged to be more confident and take on surprising and unpredictable approaches to expression. Encourage candidates to work in large scale when appropriate. Candidates should be encouraged to experiment and be motivated to extend their personal boundaries to encounter different methods of visual expression by building on and refining their skills.

Critiquing: candidates should have ample opportunity to reflect upon and critique their own work and the works of others. More time should be spent on developing critical skills to become more fluent with the use of specialized appropriate vocabulary in talking about the work. Constructive critiques do not necessarily involve praising every aspect of a work, rather, they should push a candidate to develop further and to identify artistic problems and find new or more effective solutions.

Class presentations: teachers should encourage each candidate to present their investigation findings, developing ideas, and media exploration, to the class in some manner. This practice may not only motivate candidates to become focused and involved in their creative studies, but it may also stimulate other candidates to widen their own approach during brainstorming sessions.

Visit Galleries: candidates need to be shown good quality art if they are to create good art. In some schools it appeared that candidates had not been encouraged to see any art beyond that which could be accessed in the classroom via the Internet.

- Gallery visits are very important in seeing the visual characteristics of an artist's work and to help candidates to learn and then apply these techniques.
- Artists' exhibitions, studios, and journals should be accessed as a form of investigation. Further inquiry beyond the classroom and internet is needed to help candidates to develop their own technical skills beyond a one-off pastiche and is a more significant part of the development of the candidates' work.
- Candidates with little art experience who only investigate through the Internet cannot always discern between good and poor quality art. In schools where candidates had visited art galleries, museums or had workshops with professional artists there was generally a more informed body of work. Direct experience was a motivating factor and it provided very good stimulus for the production of art work.

Exhibiting work: schools should still be encouraged to exhibit candidates' works – this can build a school culture and pride. With the online submission, it is important that candidates celebrate their achievements of being artists and for their work to merit public display. As long as the work is talked about it does not have to be expertly displayed, framing is not a

requirement. Even when work is unmounted and exhibited on chairs or clipped to screens it should be done carefully and with pride.

Preparing for the digital upload: candidates should have the highest quality images of their studio work. Candidates as well as their teachers should familiarize themselves with suitable photo editing software. Keeping an organized record of work when completed will avoid assembling materials at the end close to upload time.

Additional guidance from the teacher in the development of candidate statements would be beneficial. In some cases the statements made specific references to the names of artists and cultures, but there was no further investigation or studio work to support this stated interest. Candidates should be encouraged to look at the statement, studio work, and investigation workbook (IWB) holistically. The statement should reflect the journey of the candidate during their Diploma Programme visual arts course.

Advise candidates to carefully select the evidence for assessment. Submitting 12 strong pieces may be more powerful than an inconsistent submission of 18: not all the artworks that a candidate produces need to be submitted. Selecting one overall image for a work and supporting it with two detailed images may provide better evidence against the requirements of the assessment markband descriptors than selecting three individual pieces. In the spirit of true artistic exploration there could be more evidence of the selection and rejection of alternative ideas and pathways; experiments using a range of appropriate media, techniques and processes, annotated to give an understanding of the decisions being made.

The Interview: where candidates chose to submit an interview it is important it contributes to the assessment process, adding information or evidence rather than diluting the quality of work submitted.

- Candidates should be aware of the ways to talk about their work. Teachers could help by building in regular sessions where candidates talk about their work and that of others.
- Candidates could reference aspects of the markband descriptors when talking about their work. By the time of the interview candidates should be quite comfortable talking about their work against them as well as discussing their work with their teacher.
- Candidates should concentrate on discussing the component that is externally assessed. The moderator of the internally assessed component will not see the interview. For option A the emphasis should be on the studio work selected for assessment, for option B the emphasis should be on the IWB pages selected for assessment.
- Only talk about the work that has been selected for upload to IBIS. Some candidates spent time talking about studio pieces that were not included and would not be assessed.
- The candidate is not required to read from a script or talk uninterrupted to camera. Where necessary engage with the candidate and if helpful ask open ended questions to prompt them such as, what is this work about? Where are the strengths in your work? How did you develop your ideas?

- Ensure the interview is recorded in an undisturbed area.

Further comments

Some schools did not take care of sending well focussed or well framed images, others submitted IWB pages that were out of focussed or pixellated.

Investigation workbooks higher & standard level option A

Grade boundaries

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

Investigation workbooks higher & standard level option B

Grade boundaries

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As is to be expected, the range and suitability of the work submitted varied considerably. Some very good work was achieved, although the majority of the schools produced candidates with work in the mid ranges.

While there are different valid approaches to maintaining an investigation workbook (IWB) across the world, the vast number of workbooks shared common features. That said, there continued to be a number of submissions that failed to meet the lowest level of some of the markband descriptors when assessed as the external component of the B option course. Some workbooks submitted were essentially a collection of art history essays, while others functioned only as a sketch book, or worse a scrap book, with little or no annotations. Neither comes close to the intended function of the IWB. Biographies of artists do not meet the requirements of any of the markband descriptors, and yet many workbooks are padded-out with details of date of birth to date of death or collages of artists' works with no citations or critical/analytical engagement.

Many schools' require candidates to complete multiple different, often unrelated set projects. The candidates create many artworks with little opportunity to develop conceptually or in terms of media, techniques and processes and there is thus little potential for deeper exploration, experimentation, consideration of mistakes made, reworking of images and development of more individualised approaches to media when topics are constantly changing. More successful submissions reflected work created in response to broader ideas, often defined by the candidates, which they then developed over a series of related works.

Some IWB samples, given high marks by teachers in their IA, hardly addressed the assessment criteria at all. Some beautiful drawing skills were demonstrated in the IWB pages (although often from secondary sources) and clearly these candidates were talented and able to present their work very effectively and creatively.

Exceptional candidates produced astonishingly rich and personal investigations. They had clearly followed stimulating courses with gallery visits and serious engagement with the nature of the subject. These pages combined observational skills with media experimentation with reflective comments that were supported by critical and contextual investigations into artists that related to their own studio practice. It was evident that the workbooks were used in a sustained manner through the course.

A significant number of examiners observed a very low standard in some areas when compared to the rest of their allocation from different parts of the world. In these schools candidates had been poorly prepared with little understanding of the nature of the purpose of investigation. In several schools, candidates' workbooks were almost identical to each other giving the appearance that the teacher had a formula for how the work was to be presented and taught. There was sometimes a tendency for candidates to decorate pages with no relevance to analysis, function or meaning. IWB pages achieving against the highest markband descriptors usually demonstrated a personally relevant journey informed by relevant investigation expressed through appropriate language and terminologies. Candidates who worked only from their own emotional premise often found it difficult to infuse in-depth understanding and meaning in their work. The best samples demonstrated self-directed and open-ended investigations, excellent exploration in media (including video and digital media) and remarkable demonstration of technical skill. Candidates' growing understanding and natural shift from one idea to another was well documented in these cases.

Most sample material demonstrated the use of a range of sources relevant to the candidates' investigation and studio work. In most cases the range of media used and investigated was wide-ranging and well-documented, with pages presented creatively and effectively. In some cases candidates could have benefited more from exploring technical processes in a wider range of materials.

Informed IWB pages, visually and in words, backed up by the findings investigation completed using a variety of sources were the most successful. Schools that taught both digital and traditional art and constantly endeavoured to keep up with contemporary art practice through books and field trips were most effective: they inculcated a variety of traditional and contemporary techniques so that their concept and content was equally as important as the materials and techniques used.

As in previous years many examiners commented on candidates' over-dependence on printed images and information from the internet. In some submissions, pages were very sketchy, information was limited and superficial and candidates appeared not to view this component in a serious manner.

Class activities were often important at the start of the course in these schools and an important source for gathering information. Field trips, gallery visits, on-site drawing, photography expeditions and research projects played a significant role in those classrooms and often initiated informed pages in the IWB. The most successful candidates included contemporary art ideas and issues: - challenging traditional understandings of artworks and their significance; the choice or presentation of subject matter or medium, materials and techniques and how they reflect or challenge artistic or social traditions; social issues raised

by work made in class; the responsibilities of the artist in society; the relationships between art and craft, visuals and words, materials and techniques.

Critical analysis of their own work and the work of others and the application of this analysis to their imminent work was a skill found in a few of the candidates. Careful documentation of the decisions they made with regard to materials and technique and process was sometimes shown.

In many cases successful candidates had undertaken a structured introduction to the course, involving first-hand engagement with primary sources across a wide range of media and forms. In the weaker submissions, technical skills were lacking and sometimes very basic and there was a lack of understanding of how initial ideas are developed into final pieces. In some schools candidates were encouraged to be experimental with techniques and processes: this was often accompanied by cultural / historical investigations incorporating gallery / museum visits resulting in candidates' greater understanding. The most successful candidates emphasised that their work was above all else a personal journey, thus showing that art had become a part of their lives. Weaker candidates still relied too heavily on Internet and copy-pasting the biography of the artists, claiming their own investigation. There was very little critical analysis of work seen in weaker candidates' IWBs. The majority of works submitted by the stronger candidates evidenced the use of traditional media in unusual ways and/or used new combinations of media. Candidates expressed creative themes or focus in the work they submitted. Their personal and individual journeys were more than satisfactorily documented, creating good links to the studio work.

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:

Art from different cultures and times: some candidates manage this element easily and naturally, linking in inquiry into relevant artists and movements from different eras, old and new and their own local and ethnic culture, youth culture, world cultures and contemporary issues. Others find this area less easy to cover well, not understanding that lengthy biographies do not satisfy the requirements of this markband descriptor. Contextual investigations were too often purely descriptive, paying insufficient attention to the function and significance of art works within their cultural backgrounds. Generally, candidates readily presented and described, but rarely analysed. Function and significance were rarely seriously considered by many candidates. At the very least, candidates should be encouraged to consider the significance of the artist/artwork investigated to their own art making practice.

It is important to emphasise candidates need to focus on artworks, rather than artists, and be critical and analytical. This was not always best served by formal critical analysis, but could include evidence of visual thinking strategies such as carefully annotated copies of works, mindmaps and concept webs. Candidates needed to contextualise the function and significance of the works. To do so, candidates need to be able to consider the different ways

meaning can be conveyed and interpreted in an artwork both within the cultural and historical context in which it was created as well as the candidate's own context.

Effective skills, techniques and processes in making and analysing art: skills in making are very often more in evidence and well-documented here – planning, processes, progress in studio projects; these are generally included in the majority of cases. Analysis, comparison, critical observation and reflection upon the work of others – these skills are only well-covered by the more able candidates.

Often, candidates choose option B because they lacked confidence in their art making ability. It was noted that some candidates are more competent in writing about art than in making it and it is gratifying that these candidates can achieve a considerable degree of success in terms of the IWB assessment criteria and descriptors. Other candidates have not developed confidence in their critical practice. Most of these B option candidates relied on a very limited range of approaches to analysing and evaluating the work of other artists or their own work. This lack of range limited them from reaching the upper levels of the markbands.

Organization and focus in investigative strategies: most candidates showed some degree of focus and organization; the stronger candidates showed coherent investigative strategies and actively interlinked the development of their own ideas with the subjects of their inquiry.

As stated previously, most candidates relied on only one style of investigative strategy. Teachers need to encourage more divergent processes of critical analysis to promote higher executive functioning. These do not need to be lengthy formal essays, but could include detailed concept webs, mind maps and other visual thinking strategies. Using annotations and sketching diagrammatical representations of compositional elements on reproductions of investigated works also communicates ideas succinctly.

Depth, breadth and development, connections between the work and that of others: breadth was often present, depth less so in internally assessed samples. Some work was very superficial and derivative, as were the connections shown: these were far too often of a transcriptive nature – 'I want to use *****'s ideas/techniques to create my own studio piece...'

Workbooks often evidenced greater depth than breadth for option B candidates where many candidates struggled to find the balance of depth and breadth; the second part of the descriptor "through the successful development of ideas" should lead to greater breadth.

Teachers should guide candidates in going beyond the superficial acquaintance with artists, artworks, techniques and ideas to more profound explorations and personal investigations.

Use of the specialist vocabulary of visual arts: there seemed an absence of familiarity with recognized methods of critiquing and a well-understood art vocabulary of any depth/range. The vocabulary of analysis, reflection and criticism is often unsophisticated. Too many examples are still evident where candidates 'just love...' artworks, without justifying and reflecting upon their preference in appropriate language. The listing of the visual elements in a random manner does not fulfil this criterion appropriately or adequately.

If an annotated sketchbook is submitted as an IWB, it is unlikely that it is going to demonstrate an effective and accurate use of appropriate language.

Like the learning of any language, vocabulary acquisition is best accomplished through emersion. The stronger candidates use the specialist art vocabulary in their workbooks, in the statements and in their interviews. It is easy to imagine that they use it in the classroom when they work alongside and collaborate with their peers.

Sources and acknowledgement: candidates need to adopt a principal of "if in doubt, acknowledge it". As in other subjects, candidates must learn how to use quotation to reinforce an idea or argument in their IWB. Candidates need to choose and use their resources with care. If they have taken pictures themselves, it is helpful when "self-taken" or "my photographs" is written to leave no doubt in the mind of the viewer/examiner of the source.

The nature and range of sources continues to be a potential pitfall for candidates. An appropriate range of sources is required for candidates to reach the highest level of the markband descriptors. It is generally felt by examiners that there continues to be an over reliance on indiscriminate use of the internet where there is a wealth of information (and disinformation). Candidates need to learn how to negotiate through it, discerning reliability. Too often text was referenced but images were overlooked. All images should include citation lines.

Few candidates used a real range of sources. An appropriate range could include information gathered and synthesized from a balanced combination of reliable and scholarly websites, level appropriate classroom textbooks, scholarly books, catalogues, exhibition wall texts, exhibition floor-talks and lectures, journals and magazines.

Presentation of the work: this was often well-handled, although weaker candidates still showed poor drawing skills and careless writing. A thoughtful visual and verbal balance can be achieved with appropriate effort and guidance.

For the strongest candidates, the IWB remains an integral tool in their developing artmaking practice and was presented accordingly. It had been used as an ongoing working document that supports their artmaking, often consisting of several books that have been used in a highly sustained, reflective manner.

In weaker samples, it can appear that work has been completed retrospectively with little planning and that candidates were including most of their pages from a relatively small sample out of necessity, rather than choosing the best pages.

A small number of candidates develop pages that have fold-out flaps. These cannot be viewed by an examiner and their selection should be avoided. Writing must be legible and in a dark ink or pencil. Busy and overly fussy backgrounds should be avoided

Relationship between investigation and studio: the vast majority of candidates demonstrated some connection between their IWBs and their studio work with the best examples making connections across all aspects of the markband descriptors.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must be guided to the correct choice of option and level, and be made thoroughly aware of all the appropriate criteria and descriptors. As in previous sessions some candidates had elected the IWB as the externally assessed component and this decision was questionable: this was particularly true where statements, interviews and the sample pages concentrated almost exclusively on studio work projects, themes and media/techniques with little critical investigation into the work of other artists.
- Teachers should encourage greater depth by teaching investigation skills. Candidates need to be guided in suitable approaches to analysis and criticism, with the development of competent use of specialist art vocabulary.
- Candidates need to be guided in suitable approaches towards and strategies for formal critical analysis, including the consideration of art elements distinct to particular art forms, movements, cultures and eras, with the development of competent use of specialist art vocabulary.
- Candidates should be encouraged to collect primary resource material to inform their studio project development, and comment on why they chose to select specific resources and how they intend to use them.
- Page selection needs to be careful: appropriate to the criteria and must conform to IB limits by option and level. Candidates should be taught to select and choose strong IWB pages to answer the markband descriptors at the highest appropriate level. The successful digital reproduction of IWB pages is also vital: clarity of text, continuity of orientation should be facilitated.
- Copy quality is paramount, to show candidates' work clearly and to best advantage.
- Statements should be focused and avoid vacuous generalised commentary: ideally they should reference investigations and influences including a brief mention of studio work.
- Effective presentation needs encouragement and modelling by example: teachers should encourage a balance of written and visual material throughout the investigative process, with candidates placing relevant explanatory text beside visual material, and relevant visual material beside related text: examples of good visual presentation should be shown
- Provide exemplar pages for reference, ensuring that both strong and weak IWB pages are available to show standards for each markband descriptor.
- Individual investigations, approaches and development of ideas need to be encouraged and facilitated by teachers so candidates can show more individually-conceived work based on themes centred around their own interests, rather than purely teacher-prescribed subjects of inquiry.

- A critical approach should be included organically throughout the investigation. Examples of varied reference materials, along with how to properly acknowledge them, should be made available to candidates at the beginning of the course. They should be encouraged to look beyond the computer and into the community, toward primary sources. This needs to be reinforced throughout the course.
- The issue of appropriation and acknowledgement needs much more consideration and guidance. Each school's policy on referencing and academic honesty should be followed and the IB's recommendations in this regard heeded.
- Candidates using any digital media or photography need to show evidence of choices being made in the IWB. Contact sheets or series of images taken of a particular subject should be included in the IWB pages if candidates use photography as a medium.
- Candidates who show more initiative and understanding in the subject should be encouraged to explore personal concepts and ideas whilst candidates with less understanding and skill may need more direct guidance and support.
- A formulaic approach to deriving ideas from artist research should be avoided.
- The Online Curriculum Centre is a valuable resource for teachers. Teachers should check the OCC periodically to read latest published resources and subject reports, engage in the forums and make use of the Teacher Resource Exchange.

Further comments

For HLB/SLB candidates the interviews, when well conducted, and focused on the correct component (that is, the IWB), helped examiners to make connections between the IWB pages and the studio work. Many schools went to lengths to show IWB pages while candidates talked about them, including over-the-shoulder and overhead shots while the candidate and the interviewer sat at a desk in their exhibition space, so they were able to relate their investigation to the studio work they produced. It was also possible to follow the pages that candidates referred to when they mentioned the page numbers.

The quality of the audio is of the utmost importance, as examiners make judgements about the contents of the workbook from the sample pages included in the uploaded material and not the video recording. Interviews should be conducted in an area free from interruptions and distractions. Background noises, such as bells or classes moving between periods can severely compromise the sound quality of the recording. Audio recordings were equally successful as video recordings. Candidates must ensure that they only discuss the pages selected for assessment.

If candidates are working in workbooks larger than A4/letter, the text may appear small on screen, this needs to be considered, particularly by candidates with smaller handwriting. Most computer screens are horizontal, so working in this format, rather than vertical allows for more

of the page to fit on an examiner's screen at a larger size. Candidates should also ensure that the pages are all correctly oriented before submitting.