VISUAL ARTS

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-12	13-25	26-40	41-54	55-70	71-84	85-100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-12	13-25	26-40	41-53	54-70	71-84	85-100

Please note that as a consequence of an adjustment to the grade boundaries for the process portfolio component both at HL and SL level, which appeared necessary following the re-wording of the assessment criteria applied for the first time in this examination session, the overall visual arts course boundaries have also been adjusted.

Higher level exhibition

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-8	9-13	14-17	18-22	23-26	27-30

Standard level exhibition

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-8	9-13	14-17	18-22	23-26	27-30

The range and suitability of the work submitted for moderation

The May 2017 examination session for the exhibition component brought a wide variety of responses ranging from outstanding exhibitions well supported with eloquent and articulate rationales to some weaker exhibitions that may have reflected some misunderstandings of the criteria and requirements of the new course. It should be noted that for what concerns the range and suitability of the exhibitions submitted in May 2017, there was no significant change noticed from the previous sessions for this visual arts course in the overall quality of the artwork, but the quality and suitability of the curatorial rationales seems to have improved. In terms of media, 2D work was predominant, with relatively few 3D examples presented by candidates, and although photography was frequently submitted, it was rarely explored in adequate depth.

The best work showed evidence of good understanding and study of artistic techniques and concepts, and attempts at refining and fully resolving the artworks. The weaker work often looked rushed or as though little thought had been put into it.

Strongest submissions had both thematic and stylistic relationships between the pieces displayed, showing sustained development of both concepts and medium.

Exhibition photographs: These were not always as helpful as they could be. In some cases, these photographs showed crowds of people in the exhibition space with their bodies obscuring views of the artworks. In other cases, the photographs showed the candidate standing in front of their collection of artworks. It may be that some teachers misunderstand the purpose of these photographs. The exhibition photographs should show clear and uninterrupted views of the candidate's exhibition, without inclusion of the candidate, giving the moderator the opportunity to get an idea of the whole display, including scale, arrangement, presentation, colour and impact.

Some exhibition photographs showed more art than had been submitted by the individual candidate: for example, the photograph may have included the work of other candidates, or other artworks by the candidate that were not among the submitted artworks. Either way these images did not help the moderation process. In a few cases one exhibition photograph showed a series of photographs collated as one image. It is clearly stated in the *Visual Arts Guide*, that only two exhibition photographs should be submitted.

Exhibition text: in some cases, the details accompanying the artworks images were not detailed and precise enough: in particular, many entries in the "Medium used" text box were unhelpful. The examiner needs to know exact details about the technique of the work submitted. When examiners cannot easily detect what the artwork is made of, it is difficult to assess it. In the case of photography, it should also be made clear if the image is digital or film-based, and if digital, which editing programs/effects were applied.

Many candidates correctly used the exhibition text to mention their source of inspiration or their artistic intentions for the specific piece: this information along with the curatorial rationale is very useful to the examiners moderating the work. Influences and appropriated images were sometimes effectively and accurately referenced in the exhibition text or in the curatorial rationale but this needs still to become a more common practice.

In some cases, the text appeared to have been written by the teacher, discussing the aims and intentions of the candidate. This is not appropriate to the purposes of this element: the exhibition text should always be written by the candidate.

Optional additional supporting photographs: the file slots dedicated to the two optional supporting photographs were sometimes used unnecessarily or inappropriately. For example, candidates submitted photographs of themselves working on their artwork or photographs of their visual arts journal: this is irrelevant information. In some cases, it seemed that teachers felt that they had to use all slots when it is absolutely not necessary to do so. These photographs are optional and can be very helpful to the examiner, for example, for viewing a 3D piece from different angles or to show detail that reveal technical mastery. In a few instances, extra artworks were submitted using these slots. These were ignored by examiners as candidates must select work within the maximum quantity allowed according to level of the course they are entered for.

Teacher's supporting comments: the IB requires teachers to upload a comment, explaining the marks awarded to the internally assessed work of each candidate. The teacher's comments should support the examiner in making their judgement and provide information which is useful to support the moderator in identifying what evidence in the candidate's exhibition matches the assessment criteria.

These comments must be written referring to the artworks and to how the candidate's exhibition achieved in relation to the specific assessment criteria. Some teachers took the time to carefully compose and upload thoughtful, articulate and frequently honest appraisals of their candidates' work. However, some comments were not as helpful as they could be and in the worst case no comments at all or very brief comments were uploaded.

It is difficult for the moderator to understand the logic behind the teacher's mark if too little information is provided. At the other extreme, it is not helpful if teachers include details that are not relevant to the moderation process: the mention of the candidate's love of art or of their punctuality to the art lessons, negative comments about the candidates or comments about the externally assessment components are examples of completely unnecessary pieces of information. Just copying and pasting the descriptors that match the marks awarded is also not very useful.

Exhibition candidates' performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Coherent body of works

Performance relating to a "Coherent body of works" was variable. Weaker candidates produced very repetitive works, which used very similar imagery that was not developed or altered. There is a difference between having a theme - with works that are slight variations of the same subject matter - and creatively exploring linked ideas. Sometimes the exhibition was not coherent and contained very diverse ideas and media, but the candidate still tried to persuade the viewer that there was, in fact, a theme, often with unconvincing reasoning. At the other extreme, some outstanding exhibitions showed creative, authentic and sometimes surprising relationships between pieces within a coherent body of work.

Some candidates appeared to have a simplistic approach and may have assumed that it was sufficient just to have a "theme". These candidates often found it difficult to create dynamic links between groups of works. In some cases, the idea of coherence seemed to be a stretch or an afterthought as to how the artworks could be connected.

Candidates must be reminded that criterion A mentions 'thematic or stylistic relationships'. Formal or stylistic relationships between the works are also acceptable when considering coherence. There still seem to be a great number of schools working on the assumption that "a theme" is needed but this is not the case.

As with the previous sessions, some exhibitions built around a single theme or idea were successful but there were many cases that indicated the opposite: the theme in effect limited success and the candidate's artwork looked contrived as if to keep in line with their 'theme'. The negative impact on the candidates' achievement was more significant when it was obvious that the teacher had forced a theme on to the candidates: the visual arts course is student centred and students must have a free choice to identify, select and explore artist, artworks, cultural contexts and media and forms for study which interest and engage them.

Exhibitions with interesting and imaginative themes, areas of study or proposed artistic intentions were often the strongest. Candidates had more trouble when they did not define their artistic intentions clearly.

Criterion B: Technical competence

It might be worth starting this section reminding teachers that there are no requirements relating to how many or how few art-making forms should appear in the exhibition: exhibitions can feature work in one or more art-making forms, what is important is that the artworks selected for the exhibition represent the candidate's most successful achievements against the assessment criteria.

An unnecessarily wide variety of media may have hindered achievement in this criterion: many exhibitions contained work in a wide range of art making forms, and this sometimes had an impact on the overall quality of the exhibition, in the sense that the variety of media sometimes reflected a lack of sustained development in any single process. This was still most noticeable in the submissions in Spanish.

Photography was rarely explored in adequate depth: there continue to be examples of very basic "snapshot" digital photography with a little evidence of preparation, editing and refinement. Darkroom photography was rarely seen. Candidates who presented most or all of their artwork through digital photography often demonstrated little or no exploration of other photographers or lens based artists in their associated rationale or exhibition texts. The printmaking work submitted was also often simplistic, not showing a full understanding of the medium and its process and possibilities.

Criterion C: Conceptual qualities

This criterion was mostly addressed at an adequate level, but few candidates presented work that showed subtle use of complex imagery required to reach the top level of marks in this

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criterion. Many candidates had trouble understanding how to use symbolism, or the imagery lacked originality and/or complexity.

Symbols were frequently unclear or cryptic, and to understand the artwork the moderator had to rely on the written descriptions. In some cases, stated artistic intentions were too vague, too descriptive, too complicated (or simplistic) or too ambitious and in these cases, there was often a disappointing contrast between the exhibition text or the curatorial rationale and the actual artwork.

In too many exhibitions conceptual aspects were developed to a minimal level with little evidence of the use of subtle or sophisticated imagery, even where candidates demonstrated very good technical skill and an interesting development of ideas. Often it seemed that candidates perceived that the mere inclusion of symbols denoted subtlety or complexity, when the symbols used were actually quite simplistic

The effectiveness of concepts based in "issues based work" was variable. In some cases, this was encouragingly thoughtful. The environment/planet, body image, identity, the pressures on teenagers, etc. recurred as themes across all areas of the world but the level of sophistication of the actual work varied enormously: in some cases, the exhibition became a profound, serious and conceptually exciting event – a strength – but in other (and more frequent) cases the degree of creative thought applied was marginal with the overall result being weak with simplistic and predictable approach to issues based art.

Criterion D: Curatorial practice

There was generally a better understanding of the purpose and requirements of the curatorial rationale this session, compared to May 2016.

In some cases, candidates explained their intentions, justified the selection and arrangement of their art and (at HL) explained the relationship between the art and the viewer within the space made available.

However, many HL candidates still only responded to part of this criterion, for example, focusing on aims and intentions with little or no mention of the viewer, the arrangement, or the relationship between artworks and viewer.

Very many wrote about their theme, with apparently little awareness that examiners are more likely to be looking for relationships across individual pieces, application of media, processes and techniques and the considered use of imagery – not to the choice of a 'theme'.

The most frequently seen shortcomings in the submitted curatorial rationales were the following: some candidates found it hard to explain the purpose of their exhibition, and tended to just describe it. In some cases, the relationship between the works and the viewer was summarized in a too generic statement, such as "I want the viewer to feel free or serene" or "I want the viewer to enjoy and understand my work". Some curatorial rationales were extremely ambitious, with bold claims about the creative and imaginative nature of the artwork and the impact it would have on the audience, but, unfortunately, the poorly-made and predictable artwork presented did not live up to expectations. Some rationales attempted to link completely

unconnected artworks (for example, the results of different class assignments) as if there was some underlying intended (but invisible) relationship between them. Some candidates wrote about their artworks, piece by piece, duplicating the exhibition texts.
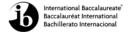
Some candidates were obviously confused with the HL and SL requirements and often SL candidates unnecessarily spent time explaining the viewer experience. Like in November 2016, this was mostly noticeable in the submissions in Spanish. The majority of candidates at SL were able to describe, but not fully explain, their reasons for arrangement of their exhibition, and this impacted the mark they were awarded for this criterion.

Once more, Spanish speaking schools seemed to find more difficult to match the requirements of criterion D. Some candidates also inserted photographs of their art into the rationale: this is not a requirement and it is the teacher's role to offer candidates guidance about accurately preparing and submitting their work for assessment.

It was noted that during this session less candidates mentioned that their artwork had been informed by gallery and museum visits or by looking at art and in general candidates seemed to focus less on what had been important artistic influences in the preparation of their exhibition.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Prescriptive and set projects: these can have value in the first year, but the resulting artworks should not fill the exhibition. Allow sufficient time for candidates to develop their own ideas.
- Encourage candidates to consider and explore art from all areas, not just recent and contemporary. Artworks from other periods, styles and approaches were apparently ignored by many candidates and/or their teachers.
- Provide workshops to provide candidates with the experience of working with a variety of media/techniques.
- Work from observation can improve candidates understanding of their work and the work of others.
- For criterion A, explain to candidates that repetition and using similar images does not constitute coherency. Candidates can explore sub themes and different topics or ensure that the works produced explore a range of ideas.
- For coherence, remember to also consider "selection and application of media, processes and techniques" and the use of imagery.
- Technical competence comes from continued practice. It is not a good idea to include a 'one-off' artwork or first-time experience with a technique as a resolved exhibition piece.
- Focusing on in-depth development of a few skills may lead to stronger final artworks than dabbling in a variety of media/techniques.
- For Conceptual qualities, avoid predictable, obvious or clichéd ideas and images.
- For the curatorial rationale, ensure that candidates address all strands of the rationale as appropriate to the level (SL or HL), not just the candidate's aims and the selection process.
- Visits to galleries and exhibitions can give candidates better understanding of curatorial practice (and writing) for their own exhibition.
- Do not include any photographs in the curatorial rationale.

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- Do not show people and/or the candidate posing in the exhibition photographs: the purpose of these photographs is to show the scale and arrangement of the artworks in the candidate's exhibition.
- Ensure that all photographs submitted are in focus and correctly oriented. Artworks, especially photographic work, should not be photographed behind glass where possible.

Academic Honesty

In general teachers must remember that it is their role to ensure that all candidates understand the basic meaning and significance of concepts that relate to academic honesty.

Teachers must ensure that candidates acknowledge all sources used and reference them effectively and appropriately. In the work submitted for assessment there must always be a clear distinction between what constitutes the candidate's work and what are the ideas or the work of others.

In some cases, candidates did acknowledge and reference images that influenced their artworks and/or body of work, and used the exhibition text to clearly cite original images etc (for example, taken from the internet) that had been used as inspiration.

However, some artworks consisted of unacknowledged images frequently in the form of collages made up of photographs either torn from magazines or downloaded/printed from the Internet. In some cases, candidates may have simply painted a copy of an image from the Internet, which needs to be acknowledged. A failure to acknowledge a source will be treated as potential academic misconduct.

To better understand the expectations in relation to academic honesty and referencing, teachers must refer to the guide and to the resources available on the PRC, including the IB publications about academic honesty in the DP Programme.

Uploading the exhibition files

Generally, the uploading of all the candidates work occurred in the correct slots, but unfortunately, sometimes other files were uploaded. Teachers need to verify carefully all the electronic files before submitting them to IB.

Higher level comparative study

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-5	6-11	12-17	18-23	24-29	30-35	36-42

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The range and suitability of the work submitted at higher level

The comparative study enables candidates to gain knowledge and understanding of artworks. Most candidates demonstrated the ability to answer this task appropriately and well.

Often comparative studies were insightful and supported by thorough research. Many presentations were of a high standard with sophisticated discussion and innovative analysis. In the work of many higher-level candidates the connections with their own art making were creative and the study had clearly been investigated in parallel with studio and process portfolio work. These studies effectively addressed the criteria and exceeded expectations.

Candidates who analyse art works, rather than simply describe them, are the most successful. Giving a brief account, or citing a fact, is not analysing and this is the reason that many candidates do not achieve beyond the mid mark level. The ability to use evidence to support the interpretation and evaluation of art works is a feature of good responses. Evidence comes from accurate observation of the selected art works and from related contextual research; these are skills that some candidates are well taught. However, many lack the ability to evaluate evidence and to make an appropriate selection of knowledge.

A common fault is to compare artists rather than artworks. Selecting art works that lead to a meaningful comparison is important. Poor choices resulted in simplistic bullet point lists, often presented in Venn diagrams. Candidates often involve extra works in the study; this is successful when it enhances the contextualisation of the principal selected artworks. However, a lengthy sequence of works all analysed at the same level does not achieve depth of understanding. It is advisable to concentrate on three clearly defined artworks.

While candidates must link art history or artist biography in the comparative study to the analysis of the selected works, too much unrelated and irrelevant information can be detrimental. Using research and analysis to support opinion was difficult for some. While there were some very good responses, a number were primarily descriptive, or highly opinionated, based on conjecture and misunderstanding rather than referenced evidence. Unfortunately, there were still a number of candidates who had not been taught the necessary research and analytical skills to tackle this task well.

Some candidates fill the first screens with illustrations and titles to little effect. The guide asks for an introduction, and the best candidates realise that this is the moment to introduce the nature of their comparison, just as they also realise the importance of drawing their discussion of similarities and differences to a considered conclusion. These responses indicated the focused thinking required by the top-level descriptors.

Repetition of ideas and information was frequent. This is particularly the case on screens dedicated to comparing and contrasting, which often simply repeat earlier points. The best candidates understand that the whole study is a comparison and develop this discussion from the start in the manner of a well-argued presentation of ideas.

Sometimes candidates used fewer than the minimum number of screens and so were unlikely to have meet the criteria well: this is particularly true for the 3-5 additional HL screens (criterion F).

Standard level comparative study

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-18	19-22	23-26	27-30

The range and suitability of the work submitted at standard level in English

Many standard level candidates successfully engaged with research, analysis and comparison of selected artworks. These candidates showed good or very good understanding and had planned well balanced and focused presentations.

Some studies benefitted from including a clear introduction and some used a theme to link artworks, which were then thoughtfully developed to provide a meaningful basis for comparison across cultural differences.

Describing the subject of an artwork is not analysing it. Disappointingly, some candidates wrote detailed descriptions of image content, or presented general information about the artist's lives, without addressing function, meaning or formal qualities - the assessed criteria. Sometimes too many works (15-20 artworks) were considered, limiting the depth of analysis and making meaningful comparison difficult. It is strongly advisable to concentrate on three artworks. Some studies showed little research, or research from unreliable sources.

Many candidates made connection to their own art-making process (3-5 pages used), but this is not the requirement for SL studies.

At the top end, there were some excellent submissions with evidence that the candidates were aware about the requirements needed to gain high marks for each criterion. These candidates ensured that the content of their submission was analytical, thoroughly researched and based on well informed opinion.

In certain cases, the understanding of the requirements of the criteria seemed limited and the large amount of biographical information was evident rather than relevant.

The range and suitability of the work submitted at higher and standard level in Spanish

There were few very good studies in Spanish this session. Most of the work submitted showed a medium to low level of achievement. It was clear when candidates were familiar with the new requirements and the assessment criteria and when, on the contrary, the key aspects of the new task were not fully understood failing to address the criteria effectively.

Generally, the studies showed descriptive work examining general matters, such as artist's life or art movement's outlines, and were not focused on the analysis of the selected art pieces. Other studies examined several works and this made it difficult to develop in depth analysis. Examiners noted that still too many candidates lack the necessary research and analytical skills to tackle this task well.

Criterion A was the strongest of the criteria, evidencing some analysis with adequate use of visual arts vocabulary.

Most studies showed little research, or reading from inadequate sources. Candidates often did not understand the importance of research or how to apply new knowledge to the selected artworks. As a result, portions of art history or cultural context were presented in the study but not linked or applied to analysis. This was more evident when assessing against criteria B and C as they were addressed generally with little relevance to the selected art pieces.

Academic honesty issues were still very common: missing, poor or insufficient referencing of third party images and of the sources of written information was still widespread, with many instances requiring investigation for breaches of academic honesty. It was difficult to point between what was from research and what was the candidate's personal voice. This was even more frequent with the images used. A failure to acknowledge a source is treated as potential academic misconduct.

The selection of the works was not always appropriate for effective comparison, ending in forced connections and basic comparisons. Better studies often presented a selection of works with a similar theme which connected the art pieces and contributed to draw the investigation together.

The choice of artworks was interesting: while some selected "worldwide known" artists such as Frida Kahlo, Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso, other studies focused on a choice of contemporary and local artwork.

Comparative study candidate performance against each criterion

The best candidates synthesised their knowledge by answering all of the criteria throughout the study. Many chose to use criteria headings, which can be an effective way to organise the study. However, if the candidate does not understand the criteria properly this does not result in a good response.

Criterion A: Analysis of formal qualities

There were excellent examples of focused written analysis. The combination of text with clear graphics to explore key formal aspects was also effective. However, the descriptive outline of art works is common (brief accounts or summaries) rather than the analysis of art works (breaking down the formal qualities in order to bring out the essential elements or structure). A framework of formal terms using subject-specific language helped many candidates. However, this can be formulaic with little consideration of the relevance of terms to the chosen work. Some candidates do not understand that the identification and analysis of formal qualities

(criterion A) is a different task from analysis and understanding of function and meaning (criterion B)

Criterion B: Interpretation of function and purpose

Candidates often interpret, or give their personal opinion of the artwork without supporting their understanding of function and meaning with evidence. This evidence comes from the formal analysis of the artwork (criterion A) and from other sources of knowledge such as research into the cultural significance. Both criteria C and B require reference to 'cultural context' and candidates can forget this. Wider research is essential to gain understanding of purpose. Some candidates were knowledgeable and effectively selected information to support their ideas. Candidates particularly struggled if they had chosen a little known contemporary artist that they were unable to effectively research and place in a cultural context. Balancing such choices with related, but contrasting, material is a useful way to develop understanding of function.

Criterion C: Evaluation of cultural significance

This was among the weakest areas for most candidates. Some referred to art movements in a generic way without highlighting their significance to the artwork. Only the best candidates were able to make convincing links between the evidence in the selected artworks and a wider context. It is important to understand what an evaluation of cultural significance is. Cultural significance will probably include an art historical context, as well as the cultural, socio-political and historical significance of the works. It should consider the original audience and purpose, as well as a contemporary audience. The cultural significance of the artwork is the subject of the comparative study, not the life and times of the artist. There are instances when aspects of the artist's life are significant to the production of the artwork, hence biographical events can be relevant to the selected artworks, but this does have to be evident through explicit connections in the text. Some candidates were over reliant on aids such as the Mc Fee conceptual framework without understanding how to make meaningful links to the artworks. Juxtaposing facts is not an evaluation.

Criterion D: Making comparisons and connections

Many candidates understood that the comparison was the essence of the study. The best candidates used the comparison screens to develop a discussion. Often candidates gave an overview of the comparison in their introduction and developed this throughout. Comparisons were most effective when the artworks selected made for meaningful contrasts; for example, a similar subject from different times and cultures. Less successful responses simply listed information from earlier pages with no consideration of its significance. There were many cases where unnecessary biographical information was included rather than ideas about the selected artworks. The use of Venn diagrams in strongest studies provide a useful summary of similarities and differences with critical analysis that developed the ideas coherently and clearly. However, the use of Venn diagrams in weaker submissions had limited connections and comparisons with no evidence of critical analysis. Placing information on a screen is not developing a discussion of similarities and differences.

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Criterion E: Presentation and subject-specific language

The accurate use of subject-specific language is the key to developing critical understanding and success throughout the study. Many responses used terminology very effectively. Others were limited in their range of subject specific language, relying instead on description of a general nature. In particular, there was a lack of process specific terms. Candidates would benefit from greater use of glossaries to expand their understanding of art terminology.

Generally, presentation was clear and frequently creative. Many studies communicated successfully through visual means as well as with words; adding significance to a comment by a visual link - an appropriate arrow or juxtaposition to make it a meaningful analysis. However, showers of multi-coloured arrows do not bring clarity to the analysis of art works.

Some excellent studies had confused presentation. Candidates should avoid using small fonts (less than 12 point) and complex graphics that did not communicate ideas well. Intrusive backgrounds also interfere with legibility. Similarly, an overuse of arrows can be unhelpful. Occasionally candidates used sketches and visual explorations very effectively.

Criterion F: Making connections to own art-making practice: (HL only)

The best responses made insightful links, whether conceptual, stylistic or technical and sometimes a combination of all three. These candidates outlined the outcomes of their investigation clearly.

However, there is a tendency to fill these final screens with descriptions of process and idea development that are unconnected to the selected art works. Sometimes there were clear visual links between art works, but the candidate failed to make these explicit; for example, by using annotation to show that they had understood the nature of the relationships.

Many candidates do not understand the connections task. The task is not to compare their art making with the selected art works, it is to consider how the comparative study has influenced the candidate's own development by identifying connections between one or more of the selected works. Few were able to reflect on the developmental aspect of the connection.

Higher-level candidates often:
- Do not consider the outcome of the investigation in a meaningful way as an opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt from the investigation or as a way to make links with their art making.
- Describe their own art work without making connections with the selected artworks
- Describe the practical process of their art making, rather than consider how the creative process connects to the artworks studied.
- Do not situate artists in the context of their own artistic development.
- Struggle to find any association with their own art making and hence make superficial comments
- Are unable to translate conceptual aspects into their practice as artists. This is because they have not analysed the artworks beyond their personal impression so their conceptual understanding is weak.
- List similarities and differences in a simplistic manner.

- Introduce new works not considered in the comparative study.
- Make a pastiche or even a copy of one of the artworks. Imitation is not the intention of this component; the task is to reflect on creative connections.
- There must be visual evidence of the candidate's art making to support the candidates text on the connections screens.

Academic Honesty

Many candidates are using effective academic referencing both in their list of sources and at the point of use. There was improved citation of sources from previous sessions. However, some candidates still believe that if they have included the source in the list then they can use content without citing at the point of use: this is not the case. Some candidates lift short phrases from references without citing the source or acknowledging that they are using the words verbatim by using quotation marks. Citation of all supporting images, such as contextualising photographs and candidate's own images is a requirement. A failure to acknowledge a source will be treated as potential academic misconduct.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must understand the formal requirements and the assessment criteria before they start their comparative study.
- Teachers should discuss with each candidate their choice of selected artworks in order to ensure that it will lead to a meaningful comparison.
- Ensure that candidates write an introduction.
- Teachers should introduce a subject specific vocabulary. They should teach how to analyse formal qualities, how to research and how to apply research to support an evaluation of an artwork.
- Remind candidates that they are comparing artworks, not artists.
- Ensure that candidates understand the meaning of cultural significance in relation to their selected artworks.
- Teachers should dissuade candidates from addressing criterion D with bullet lists in tables since this practice hinders critical analysis of connections, similarities and differences.
- Citation of sources at the point of use and academic honesty in the referencing of all sources, including both text and all images should be checked by teachers and guidance about effective referencing should be offered in class.
- Teachers should read and give advice to candidates on one draft of the comparative study. It is the teacher's role to provide oral or written advice but the teacher must not edit the draft.
- Teachers should ensure that SL candidates do not submit their own artistic practice.
- Teachers should review studies with candidates prior to upload to ensure legibility. Visual presentation should be clear (not less than 12pt text).
- Candidates should ensure that the connections with their own art making for criterion F (HL only) are explicit in their text.

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Higher level process portfolio

Component grade boundaries HL

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-17	18-23	24-28	29-34

The range and suitability of the work submitted at higher level

In this second May session of the course, the process portfolio component, both in terms of approaches to addressing the requirements and criteria, as well as the quality at which the criteria are addressed, presented a complete range. Overall, at higher level, there seemed to be few submissions that failed to meet the minimum requirement of expressive forms. There seemed to be fewer examples at the bottom of the mark range overall. Increasingly, submissions are looking less like Investigation Workbook submissions and candidates appear to be making the most of the options that the process portfolio submission affords them in terms of how best to represent their art-making practices to an examiner. At the lower end, there continues to be submissions where it is clear that either candidates or their schools have not understood the nature of the process portfolio. In some of the poorer submissions, very few screens were submitted, sometimes consisting entirely of rough sketches scanned from a visual arts journal, with no evidence addressing the assessment criteria. While at the highest levels of achievement, candidates demonstrate an awareness of the course requirements and present a clear and coherent range of evidence that supports their art-making practices across at least the minimum number of forms.

As in previous examination sessions, in the lowest examples, weaker candidates generally reveal a process of art-making that includes few or no strategies for using some form of visual journal which impacts and informs the process portfolio significantly. Also, teacher directed projects or tasks continue to be prohibitive in candidates attaining the higher mark levels. These rarely progress beyond technical exercises and prevent the candidate from demonstrating their own individual skills, thought processes and developing art-making practice.

Mid-range submissions tended to attempt to cover too many of their artmaking undertakings shallowly rather than focussing on the works that met the minimum number of forms in greater depth. Otherwise, they failed to address one or more of the assessment criteria with the same attention as the others. This was most noticeable in Criterion B, where some candidates failed to provide any evidence of some critical investigation into the works of other artists that related in meaningful and significant ways to the candidate's own art-making practices, or otherwise in Criterion C and/or D where, more often, only part of the assessment criteria is addressed.

Stronger submissions considered the process portfolio as a distinctive task, rather than an assemblage of supporting evidence to support the exhibition component that remains unseen by the process portfolio examiners. They focussed on fewer works from their oeuvre and were thereby able to show more of the ideation, experimentation, processes, refinements and

reflections. Their critical investigations were not used for the purpose of appropriation, but an opportunity to explore another's technical or conceptual practice and add greater refinement to technique or sophistication to representation within their own art-making practice.

Standard level process portfolio

Component grade boundaries SL

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-11	12-16	17-22	23-27	28-34

The range and suitability of the work submitted at standard level

In the second year of the new guide, candidates undertaking the course at the Standard Level may still find themselves adjusting to the fact that while the submission requirements are less than Higher Level, the criteria for assessment are the same. While it may seem to be a challenge to fully meet the top mark levels with less screens in which to present evidence, the high performing portfolios did so effectively with good organization of visual and textual content. The weaker portfolios on the other hand, often struggled to even meet the minimum screen count with sufficient evidence.

The post production nature of the assessment task, along with the requirement of only two art making forms from two of the art making columns allows for a number of strategies that were used to great effect in this session. Candidates often selected a limited number of projects and presented in full and great detail the development of the works, from ideation and critical investigation, to experimentation, revision, refinement, greater manipulation of chosen technique and reflection. There seemed to be a magic number of four to five projects, which afforded candidates the space to evidence the criteria in 3-4 screens per project, meeting the art making forms confidently and clearly showing the sustained manipulation of processes. The strongest portfolios presented an engaging narrative that guided an examiner through the mind of the candidate. These portfolios often had an overarching theme or idea that they were exploring, but these themes were just as often material concerns as they were conceptual. Portfolios reaching mid-levels, often presented too many projects with not enough supporting evidence. At times, there was an over reliance on teacher led tasks that prevented the candidates from fully demonstrating their own ability to develop ideas and make informed and intentional choices about materials and techniques. In the weaker portfolios, it was felt that candidates were not fully aware of the assessment task, sometimes not addressing entire criteria. Other times portfolios presented as the only evidence either initial sketches or a portfolio of completed works.

Meeting the required art making forms still proves to be a challenge. In the Standard Level, there were also several instances in which the portfolios were presentations of classes that covered a single art making technique in depth, such as a photography or ceramics class. These portfolios very often failed to meet the art marking forms requirement or did so by

presenting one final "token" screen of a form from another art making column. Most often candidates engaged in only two-dimensional forms and presented one final screen of photography or sculpture to meet the required forms. This last screen very rarely reached a purposeful level of experimentation and manipulation, nor was there evidence that these material choices were consistent with intentions.

Another element visible through the post production nature of the task, is the tendency to present ideation and reflection after the fact. In these cases, criterion C and D became conflated into one long descriptive review of what the idea was, how it was undertaken and what the results were. In high performing portfolios, the evidence was ongoing, and often came directly from the *Visual Arts Journal*, in the form of mind maps and brainstorming, fully annotated small sketches and plans, material experiments with accompanying reflections and consistent refinement. It is important to stress that this level of engagement needs to be recorded throughout the two-year course, and it is very difficult to go back to at the end and produce the evidence.

Examiners reported an ongoing symptomatic issue with proper citations and referencing. The revised guide for 2017 states the requirement to cite all works, including own, at point of use and in a list of references.

Process portfolio candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Skills, techniques and processes

Examiners reported that fewer candidates failed to meet the minimum requirement of media and forms but two issues remain.

Firstly, a significant number of candidates submit portfolios which amply document their processes within one of the form columns and show some development of technical competency, but a second form is only covered in a tokenistic or superficial way with limited technical development. This negatively impacts on candidate achievement against this criterion in that examiners are instructed to consider the highest level the candidate has achieved against the mark level descriptors for each criterion with the most consistency. Candidates should aim to cover each of their art-making forms that they are documenting within the process portfolio with some consistency in depth and detail. They need to invest sufficient time to develop skills in each of the media they explore.

Secondly, candidates need to demonstrate that they have considered, or better, evaluated the properties of chosen media and forms in terms of how they will allow the candidate to realise their intentions. Thorough documentation of experimenting with media and reflecting on the outcomes and evaluating the suitability of the materials for the work to be undertaken is critical here.

The current course guide does not restrict candidates from submitting images of resolved work that is also included in the exhibition component. Examiners reported that in three-dimensional forms and in lens-based, electronic and screen based forms the visual evidence submitted was lacking in comparison to work submitted in two-dimensional forms.

For three-dimensional forms, examiners cannot credit a candidate for having engaged in three-dimensional art-making based on some investigation into a few sculptors and drawings of a proposed sculpture. While sketches are useful in planning, evidence of maquettes, experimentation with different materials and finishes and some form of photographic log of progress and an outcome are means by which a sculptural practice can be documented.

Likewise, in lens-based, electronic and screen-based forms it is critical that candidates thoroughly document their processes in these forms to demonstrate their personal level of engagement with the form. Examiners expect to see evidence of contact sheets/proof sheets, test sheets, outcomes of experiments involving changes in depth-of-field and/or shutter speed, darkroom experimentation, screenshots of screen-based work in development, photographs or diagrams of studio or improvised lighting set-ups. The possibility of generating process portfolio screens electronically gives candidates working in electronic or screen-based forms greater access to accomplish this.

Criterion B: Critical investigation

Critical investigation continues to be the criterion for which the largest number of zero marks are awarded, indicating that a number of candidates either neglected to investigate any artist's art-making practices, assumed that an influence may be evident, or just presented biographical information about artists. These all fail to meet the minimum requirements for this criterion.

What constitutes critical investigation in the processes portfolio is very broad, allowing for a range of approaches where critical investigation of the work of other artists is authentically integrated into the candidates' studio practices.

What is essential is that the works that are explored are relevant to the candidates' art-making. This can be in terms of the medium, the style or the technique with which the medium is applied, the concepts or subject matter explored through the work. The investigation needs to be critical rather than biographical or historical. In some way, candidates need to deconstruct the work, analysing how the work has been constructed and interpreting how meaning is created.

Weaker submissions, achieving in the 1-2 mark level only include presentations of artists or artworks, with limited critical analysis and/or limited connection to what the candidate hopes to accomplish in their own practice.

Mid-range submissions might include some critical investigation, often following a contrived set of generic guiding questions with no connection to the candidate's material or conceptual practice, or otherwise, the artwork provides a template or model to either replicate or appropriate.

Stronger submissions are thorough in their investigations, sometimes experimenting with the technique or imagery used in the investigated artwork, and use this in new ways to create original work.

A number of samples include reflections or critiques of exhibitions and museum or gallery visits attended. While usually not contributing specifically to the assessment of this criterion, this continues to be very valuable, particularly when candidates serendipitously stumble upon artists

that they have previously been unaware of, but stimulate some material or conceptual connection to the candidate's own practices. However, the ability to view artworks in person and make studies from observation was indispensable to some portfolios with high marks in this criterion. Candidates who created artist copies with clear intentions at comprehending an aspect of artist work or process were clearly focused as investigation.

Importantly, candidates must not try to address this criterion by reusing work from their comparative study component or work from their extended essay. This amounts to duplication of assessment which is a form of academic misconduct.

Criterion C: Communication of ideas and intentions

Overall, this criterion was addressed well at both standard and higher level and across English and Spanish submissions. There were particularly strong examples where candidates considered how a work might be perceived by an audience, articulating how their imagery, the signs, symbols or visual codes they have employed is intended to communicate their ideas visually.

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, visual and word, materials and techniques in their portfolios and how this related to intent. Many of these were then linked to theory of knowledge.

The weakest aspect of this criterion continues to be in the documentation of the ideation or inception stage of the art-making process. Candidates also need to show evidence that they are considering their imagery, the signs, symbols or visual codes they employ to communicate their ideas visually, and the appropriateness of the techniques and materials they choose to use. Candidates seem to more comfortably demonstrate the development of ideas once a process has begun, and discuss how meaning is conveyed through a synthesis of media, idea and imagery.

In the weakest submissions, candidates seem to start documentation once the processes towards realising the artwork as a physical object has commenced. This may be a result of some schools continuing to present to candidates overly prescriptive projects with limited scope for candidates to come up with their own ideas and concepts to pursue. This is often denoted by candidates in annotations such as "For my still-life project….". Where starting points, genres or themes are prescribed by overly didactic instruction, candidate achievement in this criterion can be limited. While this might be an appropriate introduction to the course, it is not the best practice for candidates preparing for final assessment. Similarly, there was an over reliance on found images from the internet and pop culture in order to communicate ideas. This resulted in superficial idea development and basic use of imagery and symbolism.

Where candidates are given sufficient scope to approach their art-making with some creative autonomy, evidence of ideation and inception should be able to be reproduced from the visual art journal where this has been used in an authentic and sustained manner through the art-

making process. As identified in May 2016, evidence of initial brainstorming using any form of strategy such as concept webs, mind mapping or lists is useful for examiners to see and understand the starting points for work covered in the process portfolio. Equally important is evidence of an awareness of how a work might be perceived by an audience.

Criterion D: Reviewing, refining and reflecting

The wording of the mark level descriptors for criterion D infer ongoing reflection and evaluation throughout the art-making process.

This is not accomplished solely through the documentation of stages of an art-making process. While such documentation might demonstrate the refinement of an image from start to finish, reviewing and refining as a creative discipline requires artistic intervention from the candidate. In the successful submissions, candidates include considered annotations that evaluate the appropriateness of a technique or media, or how well a work is progressing while suggesting ways to improve a work, or new directions for the body of work to take.

The second part of the mark level descriptor continues to be the weakest area of the criterion where a significant number of candidates fail to consider and reflect upon their development as an artist. In weak submissions, candidates are unrealistic in their evaluations, justifying poor work with elaborate intentions, or otherwise are very superficial. Stronger submissions are often able to identify qualities they have learned about themselves, even when they consider a work to be unsuccessful.

As in Criterion C, prescriptive tasks set by teachers for a class of candidates, or overly didactic instruction can severely limit candidate achievement against Criterion D. Many teacher prescribed projects did not allow for the natural revision of ideas and refinement of techniques that comes out of independent artistic research, investigation and artistic interventions throughout an art-making process.

Criterion E: Presentation and subject-specific language.

Many examiners commented that the reviewed mark levels for this criterion made the work easier to mark with consistency. Unfortunately, some candidates continue to focus on the criterion heading (or at least half of it – presentation), and not on the mark level descriptors.

Presentation marks are not awarded for decorations and highly stylised fonts or elaborate backgrounds. Examiners are looking for submissions that have considered the "screen" as the format, and kept handwriting clear, or chosen well-proportioned fonts that contrast sufficiently from the background.

Stronger submissions are coherent. Candidates need to carefully choose the content of the screens and the order in which they are presented to provide a cohesive exposition of their art-making practice.

As already stated for Criterion A visual evidence is critical for presentation. This is now reflected in the mark level descriptors for this criterion.

Good screens were often dense without being over crowded. Screens were correctly oriented, and text direction was mostly consistent. Where samples relied on reproductions from visual journals, the reproductions were sharp and legible. The stronger digitally produced samples often included a large number of samples from a hand-written visual journal, sometimes using smaller extracts, rather than complete pages, that were more pertinent to what the candidate was trying to communicate. The content had a coherence to it. The process portfolio, with the use of the "screen" nomenclature compels candidates to be cognisant of the notion that their final outcome will be viewed electronically on screen. This is not a prescription for candidates to generate each screen electronically. Excellent examples of process portfolios had been assembled consisting almost entirely from reproduced handwritten pages from the visual arts journal.

In weaker samples, it was appeared that neither the visual journal nor the process portfolio had played a significant part in the candidate's artmaking practice or had been considered as an afterthought. Writing was illegible, either through poor handwriting, or poorly selected fonts entered over excessively busy backgrounds, or poor contrast between text and page. No consideration was made for the examiner, with pages shifting in orientation. Where examples were drawn from a visual journal, these were sometimes included as illustrations or thumbnails, preventing close inspection.

Proper use of subject specific vocabulary was an issue, with many portfolios demonstrating very little knowledge of the elements and principles, or portfolios that would sprinkle the text with keywords without evidence of having understood or properly applied them. Often the only evidence of subject specific vocabulary was in the completion of teacher directed tasks that included tonal values, or compositional studies. The transference of this knowledge through use of language to independent work was often absent.

Academic honesty and recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Missing, poor or insufficient referencing of third party images particularly, but sometimes also of the sources of written information were still widespread, with many instances requiring investigation for breaches of academic honesty. Practicing academic honesty in the process portfolio is important. Every image used must be appropriately referenced to acknowledge the title, artist, medium, date (where this information is known) and the source from which the image was retrieved, following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by the school.

Candidates must ensure that their own original work is identified and acknowledged in the same way to ensure examiners are clear about the origins of the materials. When the candidate is aware that another person's work, ideas or images have influenced his or her conceptual or developmental work but it has not been referred to directly in their work, the source must be cited at point of use and must also be included in a list of sources.

Candidates must declare when an image in the final version of the work is also used in part 3: exhibition assessment task. When deliberately appropriating another artist's work, candidates must fully acknowledge the original work and make explicit reference to the appropriation

process. Any found object or image (including those taken from the Internet) used as inspiration by candidates when creating their artwork must be appropriately referenced.

The updated *Visual Arts Guide* (2017) requires candidates to include citation details alongside images of their own work - this requirement includes media/medium and should result in examiners having a clearer understanding of what forms and media are used in each work documented. However, candidates are encouraged to maintain some anonymity in their submission, as so should use a phrase such as "my own work" rather than their name when citing their artworks.

Also, in the updated guide, a list of sources is required for the process portfolio, but please note that this alone is inadequate and citations are required in text, at point-of-use. If the list of sources uses a screen, this will not be included in the screen-count when assessing the process portfolio component.

Assessing the process portfolio requires examiners to consider a candidate's art-making processes, and evaluate them against the published criteria. Therefore, the process portfolio needs to be considered as a portfolio of evidence of a candidate's artmaking processes and development as an artist. It is critical for the examiner that they are given the clearest and most detailed picture of this process from the start to as near to the finish, with the knowledge that the examiner has no prior experience of the candidate's art-making intentions and concerns, or the processes that they have engaged in.

There is no compulsion for candidates to document the development of *all* works that are bound for the exhibition component. A better strategy for many candidates may be to focus on a smaller number of works in greater detail, addressing all criteria for all included works – and just ensure that all the minimum number of forms requirements are met. This allows for candidates to be more judicious in selecting the works which the processes used to create them better address the assessment criteria, and provide greater detail and more evidence for the examiner to better make an informed assessment.

The criteria are ordered according to their respective weighting rather than in an order that resembles a creative process. Discourage candidates from organising screens in the order of the assessment criteria. Rather, organise screens in a manner that gives the examiner the clearest, most coherent narrative of the development of the works included in the submission. Using headings to direct the examiner to content that a candidate believes addresses a particular criterion is acceptable – but it is important that the candidate's understanding of the criterion is adequate. It is critical that teachers make the most recent version of the assessment criteria to candidates and that these are referred to frequently when providing feedback, and unpacked for better candidate understanding.

In ensuring that the process portfolio addresses a sufficient range of forms and media, it is critical to realise that the forms are denoted by the bold text (thus oil painting and acrylic painting come under the same form "painting"). At higher level candidates must work across at least two of the columns and in three different forms. It is important that teachers are familiar with the most recent version of the forms and media table published in the updated version of the Visual arts guide (2017) and make this available to candidates.

Ensure that when candidates work in Lens-based/Electronic/Screen-based forms that they include sufficient evidence of their involvement in the process. Examiners expect to see evidence of contact sheets/proof sheets, test sheets, darkroom experimentation, screenshots of screen-based work in development, photographs or diagrams of studio or improvised lighting set-ups. The possibility of generating process portfolio screens electronically gives candidates working in electronic or screen-based forms greater access to accomplish this.

Where candidates have used a visual arts journal well, discourage them from unnecessarily editing and "publishing" a perfectly acceptable visual journal into a digital version for the process portfolio. This creates additional unwarranted work. Rather, encourage candidates to consider every page completed in their visual journal as a potential process portfolio screen. Encourage candidates to work digitally when it best suits their learning style or the form that they are working in at the time (for example, it makes perfect sense to begin a digital visual journal while working in Photoshop, where candidates can cut and paste screenshots directly into their journal and annotate them with critical reflections.

Encourage candidates to develop their process portfolio screens horizontally. This better fills the screens upon which examiners will ultimately view and judge their work (and avoid writing in spirals or in various directions as desktop computers can be difficult to rotate).

On occasion, submissions had been uploaded in such a low resolution that pages were illegible. Candidates need to ensure that their process portfolio screens are captured in sufficiently high resolution so that text and images are not rendered illegible.

Limit overly prescriptive tasks to the early stages of the course to give the candidates a firm grounding in art-making practices and critical investigation but then increasingly give the candidates greater opportunities to pursue genres, media, forms and ideas that interest them. Provide opportunities for formal and informal critiques with their peers, but then give some directed time for candidates to consider and reflect upon the critiques in their visual journals.