

Studio Arts GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

A total of 5344 students presented for the written examination, 5.56% of students were awarded A+ while 39.69% achieved a score of B or higher. An analysis of the data revealed that the overall performance of students was comparable to 2000.

The examination under the revised study required students to address short-answer and extended-response questions. The inclusion of visual material in Section A required students to respond to artworks previously unseen.

The most common areas of weakness were:

- a lack of understanding of basic terms such as ‘subject matter’, ‘techniques’, ‘materials’, ‘artistic influences’, ‘work environments’ and ‘presentation of art works’ resulting in the questions being partly or largely unanswered. Students need to have a fundamental understanding of all art terminology within the context of the study design in order to understand and apply them
- misinterpretation of the question or making a superficial response revealing a lack of understanding of the issues raised by the question. These were typically narrow responses with no detailed discussion pertinent to what was being asked or ignoring some components of the question asked
- factual inaccuracies in relation to the interpretation of given terms
- repetition of the same information provided in the question as part of the answer
- inappropriateness of some examples and ‘issues’ used for discussion
- the selection of visual examples used for discussion where the student had little understanding of the art form or the production methods used
- lack of preparation for the examination resulting in an inability to use specific art works in the extended response section.

Quality responses were characterised by a fluency of language and addressed all issues raised by the question and all components required for discussion. These students were able to provide all the relevant information with a perceptive, critical and aesthetic awareness, and to effectively use correct art terminology. There was little, if any, superfluous information or material. The responses were well articulated and revealed a wide range of knowledge about the areas of study. Many responses were refreshing and creative in approach with interesting ideas and comments on the selected visuals, artists and issues. Students who were able to provide detailed information in the context of exhibitions or current art industry issues invariably scored highly. Issues that were frequently discussed included: Tunick, ‘After Cezanne’, purchased by the National Gallery, Elgin Marbles, Taliban monuments, Censorship, Appropriation and Fraud.

The most common faults in Section A were:

- responding to a familiar art form in Question 1 whose origins and production methods students knew little about
- simply providing a description of the visual image in Question 1 and using the title of the piece to introduce a response rather than an interpretation of the subject matter
- limited understanding and unfamiliarity with the techniques associated with the various materials and media used in the visual examples chosen for discussion and lack of appropriate terminology
- misunderstanding of terms such as ‘appropriation’, ‘copyright’ and ‘plagiarism’ when answering Question 3
- inability to move beyond the basic background data of an issue and providing superficial responses to articulating two points of view when answering Question 3
- lack of understanding of the roles of people in the presentation of art works to the public (Question 4).

The most common faults in Section B were:

- limited preparation for the extended responses evidenced by factual inaccuracies, superficial discussion and no reference to specific art works
- pre-prepared responses that did not answer the questions
- life stories of artists rather than a discussion of relevant information and works pertinent to the question asked
- discussion of the student’s own work in relation to the influence question.

Some students were unprepared and unaware of the fact that they could no longer discuss their own artworks in the examination.

The inclusion of visual material created difficulties for many students who were not able to do anything other than describe what they saw. As examples selected change each year it is important students develop an ability to analyse art works and develop an art terminology that can be drawn on to articulate their knowledge clearly and competently.

Short answer responses clearly need to be handled in a different manner to extended responses. Students need to be succinct and very clear about what is being asked. There should be no need to reiterate the question as part of the answer in the space provided. As questions reflecting the different areas of study and outcomes will change from year to year it is important that this paper is not seen as providing a model for examination papers in future years.

The important point to be emphasised is that Outcome 2 in Units 3 and 4 of the study should be covered comprehensively each year to allow students to display their knowledge in different ways and in different forms. Throughout the year teachers should consistently monitor students and ensure that they have covered all components of the course and that students have had adequate preparation in respect to examination technique and content.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section A – Short-answer responses

Students were required to answer four compulsory questions from this section. Students needed to use information directly related to the focus of the question.

Students were required to demonstrate:

Question 1

- an understanding of the methods used by artists in their interpretation of subject matter
- a comprehensive and informed discussion of the chosen example
- an evident capacity to analyse technical and visual characteristics expressed using relevant terminology and vocabulary

Question 2

- a clearly articulated understanding of the different factors involved in the displaying of art works
- relevant terminology and detail
- correct use of names and terms

Question 3

- clearly expressed responses displaying a knowledge and understanding of a contemporary art industry issue
- terminology and vocabulary that is specific and correctly used
- clear reference to two points of view relating to the specific issue chosen

Question 4

- an understanding of the roles involved in the displaying of art works to the public
- a clear insight into the specific tasks associated with the different roles
- relevant terminology and vocabulary

Section B – Extended responses

Students were required to answer one question from three alternatives provided.

Depending on the question chosen students were required to demonstrate:

- an understanding of the methods used by artists to develop distinctive style/s and approach/es to their subject matter
- an understanding of the effect of materials, techniques and work environments on artistic practices
- a comprehensive and informed discussion of two influences that have contributed to a particular artist's style.
- a knowledgeable discussion of how particular influences – personal, artistic, technological and/or cultural are discernable in an artist's work with specific references.

Each question required students to demonstrate:

- a range of appropriate and relevant examples related specifically to the issues raised in the question using relevant vocabulary and terminology
- coherent and specific responses using names and terminology correctly
- a clear grasp of the question.