

Visual arts

Comparative study assessment criteria clarification

When approaching the task of marking the comparative study, it is important that examiners are accurate in the application of each of the assessment criteria and resist the temptation to respond holistically.

Teachers and examiners must note that the visual arts syllabus demonstrates a clear distinction between the course at SL and at HL, with additional assessment requirements at HL that allow for breadth and greater depth in the teaching and learning. In the comparative study the assessment tasks require HL candidates to reflect on how their own work has been influenced by exposure to other artists.

Therefore:

- criteria A, B, C, D, E are the same at HL and SL
- criterion F for the comparative study applies only to HL submissions

The assessment criteria for the comparative study specifically state that candidates who fail to meet the course requirements cannot achieve the top marks. The following must be taken in account when marking:

- candidates who do not examine and compare at least three artworks by at least two different artists will not be awarded a mark higher than 3 for criteria A, B, C, D.

Please be also aware of the following:

Level descriptors: where a range of marks is available for a criterion level, the nature and extent of the evidence for each level descriptor will of course determine the mark to be awarded. A comparative study which has strong evidence for one element of a descriptor, yet where the other elements are poorly represented will not achieve the top mark. The mark chosen within a level will reflect the extent to which the work has met that level descriptor: the lowest mark if it has only just exceeded the previous level, the highest if it is approaching the next.

Methodology: for what concerns critical methodologies, there are no prescribed or preferred approaches. The comparative study is not an academic paper. Comparative studies should be assessed as to the effectiveness with which they meet the criteria, irrespective of the methodologies adopted.

Range of works: there is no maximum number of works studied. While some examples of comparative study will be sharply focused on the minimum number of works, other candidates will want to discuss a range of works linked to their exhibition development. However, irrelevant works might affect the consistency of the study.

Cultural contrast: teachers and examiners should be satisfied that the approach taken to the study engages with more than one cultural context. This may be achieved within a similar time frame or cultural tradition provided that there is depth to the consideration of how each work is seen within the different cultural contexts in which they were created.

If the works chosen are from the same cultural origin then they will receive 0 in criterion A.

Academic honesty in visual arts: compliance with the academic honesty requirements is still an area of concern in the visual arts course.

According to the *Visual arts guide - First examinations 2016*, teachers should ensure that the candidates are acknowledging all sources used and referencing them appropriately. Overall there should be complete clarity in the submission about what constitutes the candidate's work and what inspired the work. Teachers and candidates must refer to the *Visual arts guide* and may find useful to consult the publication *Effective citing and referencing* available on the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC). Additional details about complying with academic honesty in the

comparative study submission are listed below, but 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.

All work submitted to the IB for assessment must be authenticated by a teacher and must not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed academic misconduct.

There is no marking criterion that rewards or penalises candidates for their referencing as this is a matter of academic honesty but failing to appropriately acknowledge sources could potentially lead to an investigation for breach of regulation which could have serious consequences for candidates.

Academic honesty in the comparative study: On page 35 the *Visual arts guide - First examinations 2016* (March 2014) states that “Students must support their interpretation with reference to sound and reliable sources. A recognized system of academic referencing must be used in line with the school’s academic honesty policy” and as stated on page 36 students at both HL and SL must present a list of sources used during the study. This implies that:

- when selecting the artworks to analyse and compare in their study students need to make sure there are sound and reliable sources that they can access and to which they can refer
- a list of sources needs to be compiled for the comparative study, but this is not in itself enough to fulfil the academic honesty requirements: every source must be referenced at point of use
- any work – text or image - and idea of others that has contributed to the completion of the comparative study should be referenced following a recognized referencing system.

On page 38 *Visual arts guide* also says that:

- every image used must be appropriately referenced to acknowledge the title, artist, date (where this information is known) and the source, following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by the school
- when HL candidates include any images of their own original work these must also be identified and acknowledged in the same way to ensure examiners are clear about the origins of the materials.

In addition to this it is worth clarifying that:

- the visual arts guide requires candidates to acknowledge the title, artist, date (where this information is known) and also to cite the source of every image that they include in their comparative study, but details about the medium of the cited artworks can be very useful and should therefore be mentioned in the captions
- where deliberately appropriating another artist’s image HL candidates must fully acknowledge the original work and make explicit reference to the appropriation process.

A judgement will sometimes need to be made by examiners between occasionally confused or incomplete citation (sloppy referencing) on screens and an academic honesty issue.

When marking a comparative study that has incomplete referencing or is suspected of academic misconduct examiners do not need to spend time investigating the issue in any detail but need to complete the marking of the work at face value and then refer the case to the IB following the examiner instructions.

Clarifications about the application of the assessment criteria

CRITERION A: analysis of formal qualities

There are many different acceptable approaches to the analysis of formal qualities. There will be various approaches to the relationship between description and analysis. While many comparative studies will demonstrate a clearly structured and sometimes explicit approach to the analysis of formal qualities, in others evidence of analysis of formal qualities may be contained in broader descriptions that also relate to the interpretation of mood or context. Where relevant, the analysis of technique and media is to be rewarded as part of this criterion.

There are significant interconnections between criteria B and C. However, the below may help to differentiate the criteria:

CRITERION B: function and purpose

The focus is on the specific artwork, the artist's intentions, and the context of its original production as well as the cultural context.

CRITERION C: cultural significance

This might include the cultural, socio-political and historical significance of the works with respect to the original audience and purpose, as well as to a contemporary audience.

CRITERION D: compare and contrast

It is not a requirement that all three works should be compared with each other. It is sufficient to compare each work with one other.

CRITERION E: presentation and subject-specific language

There are two different elements to balance here in assessment: presentation and subject specific language. Note the "visually...engaging" phrase on the 5-6 descriptor that refers to appropriate, clear and creative presentation such as the candidate's practice. "Appropriate" in this instance means that the presentation enhances our understanding of the qualities of the art works studied.

CRITERION F: connections to own art-making practice

It might be worth clarifying that when applying criterion F to HL submissions, examiners are judging the analysis and reflection that the candidate has made in relation to his/her art making practice, not the quality of the art works, which will be assessed if these are submitted as part of the exhibition or the process portfolio. This assessment criterion concentrates on how the candidate reflects and makes connections in the 3-5 additional screens dedicated to this HL task. Analysis might be evident through drawing and other visual means as well as text, but reflection will only be evident through text.

It might be appropriate for a candidate to make connections with their own artworks at an earlier point in the study, but it is on the final 3-5 screens that they should analyse and reflect on these links. Teachers and examiners need to check carefully that the correct number of screens has been included.