



The following report gives feedback to assist assessors with general issues and trends that have been identified during external moderation of the internally assessed standards in 2025. It also provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year and outlines the Assessor Support available for Art History. Please note this report does not introduce new criteria, change the requirements of the standard, or change what we expect from assessment.

Insights

91485: Examine the impact of media and processes on art works

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to explain and evaluate how the use of at least two different media and processes influence both the style (i.e. the appearance resulting from the use of stylistic characteristics) and meanings of specific art works.

The standard was met when students selected art works that employed distinctly different media and processes and where the effects of these choices were clearly identifiable in the features of the art works. For example, examining how Rauschenberg's use of found objects and mixed media impacted on his 'combine' style, and Neo Dada meanings such as challenging notions of high art, would provide an appropriate scope for meeting the standard requirements.

Evidence that met the standard established clear and explicit connections between specific aspects of media and process and the resulting stylistic features and meanings of the selected art works. For example, making direct links between the use of Boltanski's sound recordings of heartbeats in 'Personnes' to its philosophical meanings of existentialism, as well as their impact on the contemporary art style (inviting personal interpretation from the viewers) would serve an appropriate level of explanation and evaluation.

Practices that need strengthening:

Students must ensure that their chosen art works represent at least two different media and processes. Selecting multiple art works that all employ the same medium, such as three oil paintings, does not provide sufficient breadth to meet the requirements of the standard (even if produced by different artists and in different styles). By contrast, selecting works created through distinctively different methods, such as combining two oil paintings with a sculpture, offers an appropriate scope for examining how media and processes influence style and meaning.

Another area for improvement is the need to focus on analysing the impact of media and processes rather than providing lengthy, descriptive accounts of how these were used. Students should prioritise explaining specific, explicit connections between the chosen media or processes and the resulting stylistic features and meanings. Generalised or overly detailed descriptions of the making process do not demonstrate the level of understanding required by the standard.

91486: Construct an argument based on the interpretation of research in art history

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to research a topic relevant to Art History and select and discuss points of view from the research in order to construct an argument that reaches conclusions.

Evidence that met the requirements of the standard presented a clear argument, either framed as a debate (agreeing or disagreeing with a proposition) or a piece of persuasive writing. Responses that explored more than one point of view on a specific aspect of art history were better positioned to develop nuanced arguments and draw meaningful, well-supported conclusions.

The standard was most effectively met when students based their argument on a debatable, thought-provoking topic or question. Strong questions challenged thinking and created opportunities to articulate different perspectives, enabling more insightful conclusions to be drawn.

Practices that need strengthening:

Developing more focused research topics will provide a clearer scope for students to form their own responses and draw insightful conclusions. Broad or generalised topics, such as explaining why an artist or artwork is famous or discussing how selected works display typical characteristics of an art movement, tend to limit opportunities for argumentation and do not encourage deeper evaluative thinking. More specific, debatable topics support students in constructing stronger arguments and reaching more meaningful conclusions.

This calls for the use of appropriately worded questions that naturally prompt the exploration of different points of view. Questions with prompts such as “To what extent...?” or “How significant was...?” are more likely to open up space for critical discussion, allowing students to weigh evidence, consider alternative perspectives, and justify their conclusions more convincingly. Such question structures help guide students toward the analytical and evaluative depth required by the standard.

91487: Examine the different values placed on art works

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to use evidence to explain and analyse the importance or lack of importance placed on art works by groups or individuals.

The standard could be met where supporting evidence, such as meanings, stylistic features, or contextual background of the art works was linked to the discussion of the specified values. Evidence that met the requirements explicitly identified the different values that were placed on art works and clearly articulated the reasons for these values with supporting evidence. For example, by identifying and explaining how artistic value is demonstrated in Duchamp’s ‘Fountain’ through the ways in which the artist presents a readymade object to raise questions about art itself.

Practices that need strengthening:

Adopting a more focused approach when examining how specific values are placed on art works enhances opportunity for higher levels of achievement. Students need to ensure that the supporting evidence they provide is clearly and directly connected to the particular values they are discussing, rather than offering general commentary.

Additionally, students should avoid lengthy background information about artists or art works that is not directly linked to the identified values. Such information does not contribute evidence towards meeting the requirements unless it is explicitly used to support the analysis of those values.

Furthermore, when discussing values that appear across multiple art works, students should explain how each value is demonstrated in each artwork using specific supporting evidence, rather than applying a generalised explanation across all works. This approach leads to more precise, well-evidenced analysis and strengthens the overall quality of the response.

91488: Examine the relationship(s) between a theory and art works

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to explain and evaluate the key principles or ideas of a theory related to art and to demonstrate how these principles connect to specific art works.

Evidence that met the requirements of the standard established clear and explicit links between the theoretical principles and identifiable features within named art works. This required a focused discussion on how the selected theory, such as Feminism, operates in relation to the art works chosen. For example, analysing the use of pronouns in Kruger's 'We Won't Play Nature to Your Culture' demonstrates how the work challenges patriarchal power structures, directly reflecting a core Feminist principle. Responses that clearly articulated such relationships provided the level of explanation and evaluation expected for this standard.

Practices that need strengthening:

Ensuring that the selected theory offers multiple principles that can be clearly and appropriately linked to the chosen art works is a key aspect of the standard. Theories with an overly narrow focus limited students' ability to meet the requirements of the standard. For example, while Alberti's theory of perspective is too restricted for meaningful application at curriculum level 8, examining Alberti's concept of 'Istoria' provides a broader and more suitable scope for establishing relevant connections.

Additionally, students should avoid lengthy explanations of the selected theory that overshadow the essential discussion of how its key principles relate to specific art works. To meet the standard, the emphasis must remain on explaining and analysing how the theory informs or influences the ideas expressed through identifiable features within the art works, rather than on providing an extended theoretical overview.

91489: Analyse texts about art

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to analyse the ideas and views expressed by the author(s) of selected texts and to identify interpretations about art, using supporting evidence drawn directly from those texts.

Evidence that met the requirements of the standard clearly identified the key ideas presented by the author(s) and explained how these ideas were reflected in the features of the chosen art works. Strong responses broke down the author's viewpoints into specific components, demonstrating how they informed or shaped particular interpretations of the art works. Responses that evaluated how these ideas connected, with precise supporting evidence, and considered the significance of the interpretations being made were able to draw more insightful, well-reasoned conclusions.

The standard was met most effectively when the selected texts provided an appropriate scope for students to contribute their own interpretations. Texts in which the author(s) directly articulated their viewpoints on specific aspects of art created opportunities for students to engage critically with these ideas, compare them with their own perspectives, and develop a more nuanced analysis.

Practices that need strengthening:

The consistent use of supporting evidence drawn directly from the selected texts and (where relevant) additional sources should be made apparent. Students need to clearly demonstrate how specific ideas raised by the author(s) connect to identifiable features of the artworks and should support these points with explicit references such as direct quotations. This evidence should then be analysed in detail to explain how the author(s) interpret the art works and why these interpretations are significant.

Additionally, greater attention is needed when selecting texts to ensure they offer sufficient scope for students to develop their own responses, whether by agreeing, disagreeing, or presenting an alternative interpretation. Texts in which the author(s) express clear viewpoints or opinions about particular aspects of art provide stronger foundations for analysis than texts that offer general descriptive information about art works or movements, which tend to limit opportunities for deeper interpretation.

To give feedback on this report click on [this link](#).

Assessor Support

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- Exemplars of student work for most standards.
- National Moderator Reports.
- Online learning modules (generic and subject-specific).
- Clarifications for some standards.
- Assessor Practice Tool for many standards.
- Webcasts.

Exemplars, National Moderator Reports, clarifications, and webcasts are hosted on the NZC Subject pages on the NZQA website.

[Subject Pages](#)

Online learning modules and the Assessor Practice Tool are hosted on Pūtake, NZQA's learning management system. You can access these through the Education Sector Logon.

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We also may provide a speaker to present at national conferences on requests from national subject associations. At the regional or local level, we may be able to provide online support.

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