

Assessment Specifications

Level 3 Visual Arts 2026

Published in October 2025

General information

Domain:	Practical Art
Standards:	91455, 91456, 91457, 91458, 91459
Assessment method:	Body of work / portfolio
Assessment medium:	Digital or physical submission (For 91459, digital submission only)
Final date for submission:	5 November 2026

[Visual Arts subject page](#)

[National secondary examinations timetable](#)

Information relating to achievement standards

Standards 91455, 91456, 91457, and 91458

Candidates are to produce a portfolio of individual student-led evidence consisting of EITHER a three-panel portfolio (folio board) OR a moving image portfolio, representing the requirements of the standard.

Physical portfolio specifications:

- THREE-panel, hinged portfolio. See Submission requirements on page 3.
- Three-dimensional or large-scale work should be represented by good quality photographs and, where appropriate, be accompanied by work details, sketches, or diagrams.
- With photographs of artworks, the candidate should provide typed labels with contextual information about the work. For example, descriptive information about materials, media, processes, and scale, as well as durational and participatory aspects attached to performance, time-based, or social art practice.
- Work that is not securely attached, or is bulky, wet, fragile, or includes sharp objects or materials that might cause injury during handling, will not be assessed.

Digital portfolio (moving image) specifications:

- The body of work for a moving image portfolio should be equivalent to the body of work required for a three-panel portfolio.
- A moving image portfolio is NOT merely a digital representation of a three-panel portfolio.
- The portfolio should show evidence of actual time-based work and / or documentation of time-based art or design practice.
- The portfolio must be submitted as ONE video file no more than 180 seconds in total length (see Permitted file types above). The portfolio may comprise several individually edited video files or a combination of moving and still images.
- Sound included in a moving image submission must be either be original field recordings, original composition(s) or music for which copyright has been obtained, and must be referenced in credits at the end of the submission.
- Expected modes within moving image include:
 - performance
 - kinetic
 - animation
 - interactive design
 - motion graphics
 - time-based documentation.

See Submission requirements on the following page for permitted file types.

Standard 91459 (Sculpture)

91459 (Sculpture) is a **digitally submitted portfolio ONLY**. See specific information for the individual achievement standard.

Conditions of assessment relating to all achievement standards

Candidate's work should be developed between January and November of the year of submission.

Candidates will be required to disclose the use of generative AI. This requires a clear and detailed description of how AI has been integrated in the visual arts practice including the tools, the role, and specific tasks performed by AI, and the extent to which AI has contributed to the final artwork.

- identify the specific AI software used in the creation of the artwork
- describe the functions performed by AI, whether in generating visual elements, assisting with composition, or enhancing existing artwork.

Candidates will use the authenticity disclosure form that accompanies the portfolio to detail AI use.

Authenticity

Teachers must closely supervise the process of evidence collection to ensure that candidates:

- do not copy from another person or source (such as stock imagery) without appropriate acknowledgement
- do not receive guidance, scaffolding, instruction, assistance, or assessment conditions beyond what is specified as permissible in these Assessment Specifications.

Where a teacher cannot verify that the assessment submitted is the authentic work of the candidate, they must notify NZQA of a possible Candidate Breach of External Assessment.

Submission requirements 91455, 91456, 91457, and 91458 ONLY

Note: for 91459, see Submission requirements on page 6.

Physical evidence must be submitted as:

ONE portfolio:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• THREE-panel portfolio (folio board) must be free-standing and consist of three 820 × 610 mm panels of cardboard, joined down the long edge (portrait in orientation).• the three panels must be hinged with adhesive tape or a glued binding cloth, and fold inwards to ensure the artwork is not damaged.
Weight:	no more than 1 kg and should be no more than 15 mm thick when folded.

Digital evidence must be submitted as:

A maximum of TWO files (one being the authenticity statement)

Permitted file types:	video: AVI, M4V, MP4, MOV, WEBM, MTS authenticity statement: PDF
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File size:	maximum of 5GB each
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Note that only these file types may be submitted, and that other file types may not be able to be marked.

Schools are required to securely store a backup copy (or originals) of all digital submissions.

Refer also to other resources on the [subject page](#) of NZQA website.

Further submission instructions and authenticity requirements will be provided for schools Term 3.

Special assessment conditions

Refer to the NZQA website for further information:

[Aromatawai special assessment conditions](#)

Specific information for individual achievement standards

Standard:	91455
Title:	Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within design practice
Version:	2
Number of credits:	14
Assessment medium:	Digital or physical submission

Candidates are required to begin their Design portfolio with a clearly articulated Design Brief. This brief must outline the parameters within which the candidate will generate and develop ideas toward a range of resolved outcomes. The Design Brief must be printed and securely affixed to the top right-hand side (RHS) of Panel One.

All visual material submitted within the Design portfolio must consist of original, self-generated imagery. These images are to be produced in direct response to the candidate's Design Brief and must form part of the documented art-making process.

On Panel One, all image-based resources must be clearly labelled as "Student's Own Images." Acceptable formats include, but are not limited to:

- contact sheets
- photographs captured by the candidate
- hand-drawn or digitally rendered illustrations
- collage
- maquettes or scale models.

The inclusion of a mood board is not required.

Stock imagery, internet-sourced visuals, or images derived from other artists, designers, or photographers will only be assessed if used within a recognised design convention – such as appropriation, modification, substitution, montage, or collage – as part of the candidate's clearly articulated design strategy. The sources of the imagery must be clearly identified on the authenticity sheet. In all other cases, such imagery will not be assessed.

Standard:	91456
Title:	Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within painting practice
Version:	2
Number of credits:	14
Assessment medium:	Digital or physical submission

Candidates must ensure that all work submitted for assessment reflects original thinking and individual creative development. The direct reproduction of existing artworks, where the intent is to present such work as the candidate's own, is not permitted.

The use of existing imagery from other artists may be acceptable when employed within a practice of appropriation, wherein the source material is intentionally modified to generate new meaning or commentary. Examples of this approach can be observed in works by artists such as Marcel Duchamp (L.H.O.O.Q), Shane Cotton (Sold), and Roy Lichtenstein (Whaam).

Candidates are expected to generate and use their own imagery. Where stock images, internet-sourced visuals, or photographs by others are incorporated, these will only be assessed if they are used within a recognised painting convention – such as collage, or montage – and clearly integrated into the candidate's painting strategy. All sources must be clearly identified on the authenticity sheet. In all other instances, such imagery will not be assessed.

The practice of working directly over photocopies is discouraged, as it may inhibit the candidate's ability to fully engage with drawing and painting processes. Such limitations can restrict the development of a distinctive and personal visual language.

To ensure the safe handling, transport, and assessment of submitted work, candidates must adhere to the following presentation protocols:

- all artworks must be completely dry prior to submission. Wet or tacky surfaces may result in damage to the work or adjacent panels, and may impact assessment
- the application of mediums, varnishes, and other surface treatments must be carefully controlled to preserve the integrity of the work during handling and transit
- to prevent artworks from adhering to one another, candidates must place protective plastic sheets between panels when transporting the portfolio
- the inclusion of three-dimensional components or sharp materials is strongly discouraged. Such elements may pose safety risks or cause damage to other works within the portfolio
- the use of glitter may interfere with the marking process and compromise the clarity of the artworks within the portfolio.

Standard:	91457
Title:	Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within photography practice
Version:	2
Number of credits:	14
Assessment medium:	Digital or physical submission

Standard:	91458
Title:	Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within printmaking practice
Version:	2
Number of credits:	14
Assessment medium:	Digital or physical submission

Standard:	91459
Title:	Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within sculpture practice
Version:	2
Number of credits:	14
Assessment medium:	Digital submission ONLY

Candidates are to produce a portfolio of individual student-led evidence consisting of EITHER a still image portfolio OR a moving image portfolio, representing the requirements of the standard.

Still image portfolio specifications

- The still image portfolio must be a high-resolution PDF file that replicates the work of a physical three-panel portfolio board.
- The PDF file will present the entire body of work as a single-landscape format, high-resolution image 1850mm x 610mm. Along with photographs of artworks, the candidate should provide contextual information about the work where appropriate. For example: descriptive information about media, processes, and scale, as well as durational and participatory aspects attached to performance, time-based, or social art practice.

Moving image portfolio specifications

- The body of work for a moving image portfolio should be equivalent to the body of work required for a digital still portfolio.
- The portfolio should show evidence of actual time-based work and / or documentation of time-based sculptural practice.
- The moving image portfolio must be submitted as ONE video file no more than 180 seconds in total length. The portfolio may comprise several individually edited video files or a combination of moving and still images.
- Sound included in a moving image portfolio must be either be original field recordings, original composition(s) or music for which copyright has been obtained and must be referenced in credits at the end of the submission.
- Candidates must include contextual information about artworks where appropriate. For example: descriptive information about materials, scale, site as well as durational and participatory aspects attached to performance, time-based, or social art practice.
- Expected modes of practice within moving image format include:
 - performance
 - kinetic work
 - video documentation of durational work

Submission requirements for 91459

Portfolios must be submitted as:

A maximum of TWO files (one being the authenticity statement)

Permitted file types:	still image portfolio: PDF
	moving image portfolio video: AVI, M4V, MP4, MOV, WEBM, MTS
	authenticity statement: PDF

File size:	maximum of 5 GB each
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Note that only these file types may be submitted, and that other file types may not be able to be marked.

Schools are required to store securely a backup copy (or originals) of all digital submissions.

Candidates should refer to [Further Guidance for Submission Responses](#) for further information.

Refer also to other resources on the [subject page](#) of NZQA website.

Further submission instructions and authenticity requirements will be provided for schools in Term 3.