

State Examination Commission respond to queries regarding Examination Coursework

Each year, following the issue of coursework briefs in various subjects including DCG, the SEC receives a small number of specific queries in relation to individual candidate responses to the brief for the current year and moreover how these responses will be addressed through the marking scheme. Following the issue of such briefs it is not possible to engage with individual schools, teachers or candidates regarding further interpretation of any aspect of that particular design brief as to do so could potentially confer advantage and would breach a fundamental principle of inter-candidate equity.

However, following a number of recent queries and without reference to the 2018 coursework briefs in particular, the following generality pertains. The purpose of Student Coursework is to assess those elements of the course that cannot be readily assessed through a written terminal examination. In the case of DCG this refers in particular to elements of design and communication and the utilisation of ICTs in design.

The primary purpose of the marking scheme is to credit candidates for knowledge and skills presented and demonstrated. In doing so, more advanced criteria such as factor of difficulty, economy of design and design intent are also considered.

While a draft marking scheme is prepared in advance of the examination, the scheme is not finalised until examiners have applied it to candidates' work and the feedback from all examiners has been collated and considered in light of the range of responses of candidates, the overall level of difficulty of the examination and the need to maintain consistency in standards from year to year. Examiners receive training in the correct interpretation and application of the scheme. This training involves, among other things, marking samples of student work, including non-standard or novel responses in any given year and discussing the marks awarded. This clarifies the correct application of the scheme in these and all instances.

The syllabus and its assessment components are structured to facilitate the full expression of each individual candidate's attainment. Each candidate is expected to demonstrate this attainment through the production of an individual coursework response, produced in school, under the supervision of the class teacher. In responding to the coursework brief, and while not required, it is accepted and acknowledged that some candidates will avail of the opportunity to explore more advanced approaches in the use of sketching techniques, presentation techniques, software features and modelling methods etc. As outlined above, all such novel responses are duly credited.

Assumptions about future marking schemes on the basis of past schemes should be avoided. The Chief Examiner in any given year has the responsibility to determine how best to ensure the fair and accurate assessment of candidates' work and to ensure consistency in the standard of the assessment from year to year. Accordingly, aspects of the structure, detail and application of the marking scheme for a particular examination are subject to change from one year to the next without notice.