



**2004 Visual Communication and Design GA 2: School-assessed Task**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Teachers should note that the comments made in this report are based on the Visual Communication and Design Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design, 2004–2007.

Teachers need to check the VCAA website each year for any amendments to the Assessment Handbook, as these publications are updated on the VCE section of the site rather than reprinted.

**SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

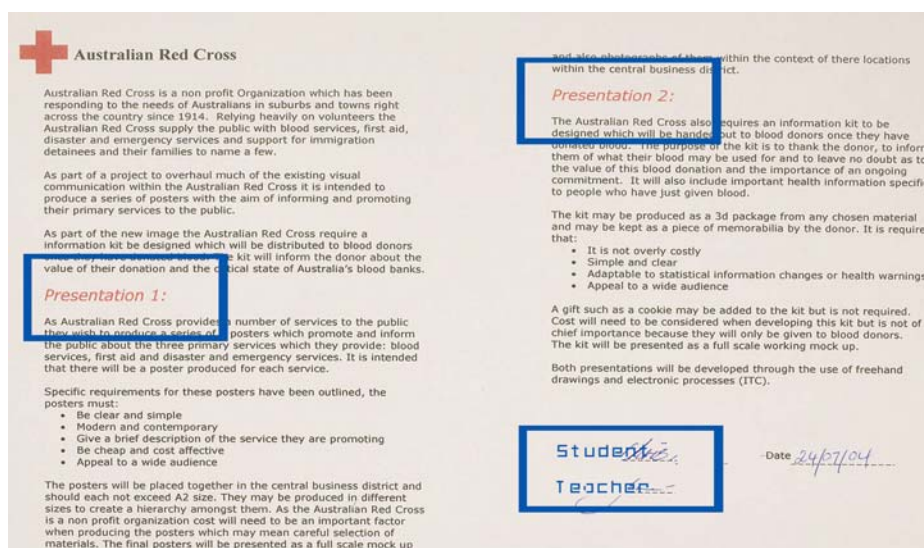
**Outcome 1**

Students need to prepare a single brief that describes a client’s communication need(s) and specifies resolutions and final presentations suitable for a stated audience(s). The Assessment Handbook states that the brief should clearly identify the communication need(s) of a client, including the context(s), purpose(s), audience characteristics, and presentation format for two proposed final presentations. Two distinct pieces of visual communication should be proposed, each piece separate and discernibly different in presentation, format and intent. The differences between the two presentations should be evident in the description of each presentation. While there is no set word limit, it is recommended that students’ briefs be between 200–400 words.

Students consistently located their brief at the beginning of the developmental folio. A well-conceived brief typically began with clear information that described the client and client characteristics. This was followed by a sub-section titled ‘Presentation 1’ which contained detailed, relevant information specific to the communication need, and a further sub-section for ‘Presentation 2’, which was again supported by insightful information.

The inclusion of possible resolution strategies was also evident in high-scoring folios, with students understanding that these were starting points, perhaps set by client expectations and initial thoughts on the brief. In the beginning stage of the design process, students should actualise a number of possible resolutions, from which final visual solutions can be developed and refined for production.

Figure 1 below is an example of a well laid out design brief. More effective briefs ensured that all dot points in outcome 1 were evident for **both** of the final visual communication presentations.



**Figure 1**

Both student and teacher are required to sign and date the completed brief prior to the commencement of outcome 2, which provides the teacher with the opportunity to check that the student is on task. Furthermore, it means the student cannot ‘put off’ writing the brief. Students need to ensure that the document is structured so that the teacher can effectively apply assessment criteria for outcomes 2 and 3 while concurrently establishing an effective quality control device from the outset. Students can determine the focus of the brief in consultation with their teacher, and it is at this



point the teacher should ask questions to help students clarify and form clear descriptions of the communication need(s).

An area of concern continues to be where students split the brief and produced a second document for Presentation 2, which was sometimes located further into the developmental work. Students who did this incurred penalties in both criterion 1 and other criteria that relate to outcomes 2 and 3, as many 'very high' to 'medium' descriptors contain the words 'for two final presentations'.

Areas of concern arose when:

- Presentation 1 was thoroughly considered and Presentation 2 was barely mentioned
- it was difficult to distinguish between Presentations 1 and 2
- only one presentation was described
- outdated proformas were used that took the form of a simplistic design brief. These are no longer relevant and should not be used.

Topic selection was diverse, reflected current issues and often took on a thematic approach. Students produced works that used humour, shock, or even informative tactics to gain the audience's attention. Another popular approach was to select a youthful market niche and produce branding applications to launch a new product or service, perhaps in competition with existing brands. This reflects a growing understanding of professional design practitioners and their contribution to the business and service sectors. The example shown throughout this report was based on a fictitious brief for an existing service organisation, the Red Cross.

Students are more confidently selecting topics that reflect their own creative strengths and technical abilities. They are tackling topics that promote experimentation with a broad range of manually applied media and methods, and they are working with increased levels of confidence with ICT (information and communications technology). The introduction of multimedia software is slowly being taken up in schools and is translating into an expansion of topic choices, particularly in the information design category.

## Outcome 2

Students need to prepare development work that explores design concepts that are relevant to and fulfil the requirements of the brief. The criteria should be applied by looking at the stages within the design process; each criterion is structured so that different work is focused on each time. The following diagram uses a sliding scale to visually demonstrate the way the criteria should be applied. Because each folio is unique, teachers need to use their judgment on where each section falls.

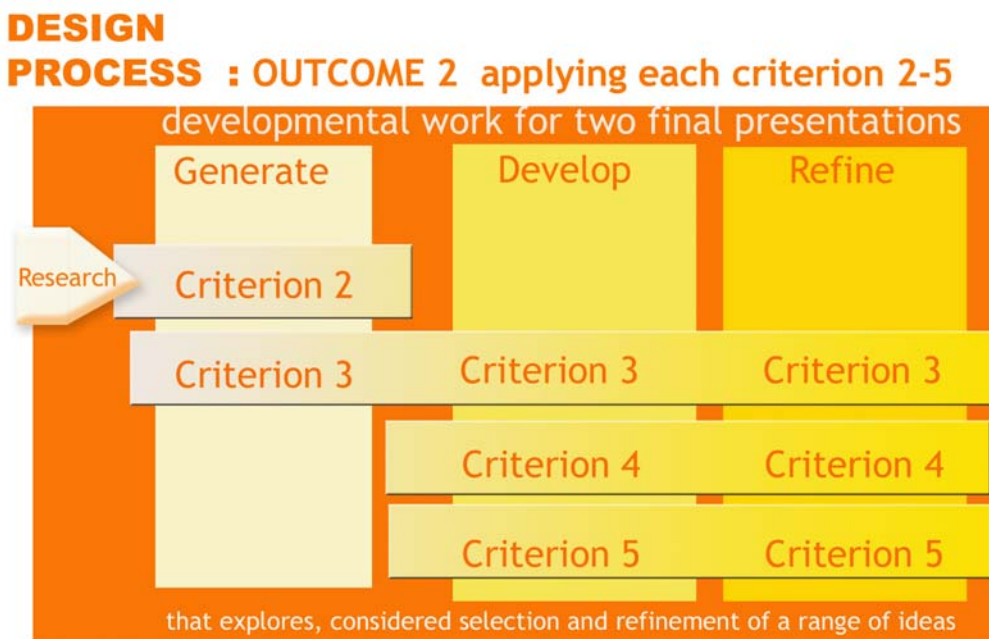


Figure 2



A number of teachers continue to request clarification of the criteria in this outcome, with issues arising from having to work through a separate and distinct process for each final visual communication presentation. This concern is driven by the question of 'branding links' or establishing continuity between the presentations, given the client's expectations. Students need to be careful not to use too much material from Presentation 1 in Presentation 2 in order to prevent the two pieces from being deemed not 'separate and distinctly different in intent'. At the same time they should be aware that some continuity between the presentations can be beneficial. Figure 3 below shows how one student controlled their 'branding link'.

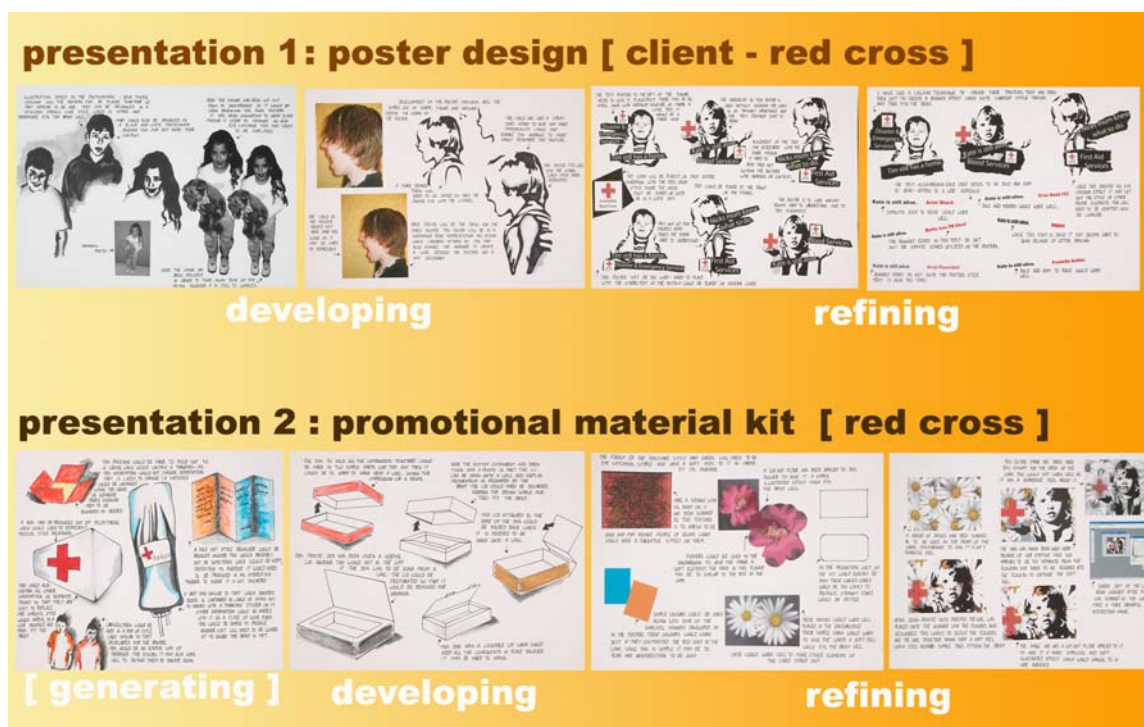


Figure 3

**Criterion 2**

Criterion 2 requires students to use manual freehand drawing, with annotations, to generate ideas relevant to the brief for **both** final presentations. The focus is on using drawing to respond to research and to establish a broad range of directions appropriate to methods, media and materials, with insightful annotations that generate original and diverse ideas that focus and direct further exploration.

This criterion does not assess manual freehand drawing at the development and refinement stages of the design process. Instead, it is the substance and clarity behind the drawings/annotations which is the central focus in this criterion, rather than the quality of the drawings. Criterion 2 requires that a 'very low' be awarded if there are minimal freehand drawings for both final presentations.

The quality of the drawings, if a chosen method of production, is assessed in Criterion 4 at the development and refinement stages of the design process.

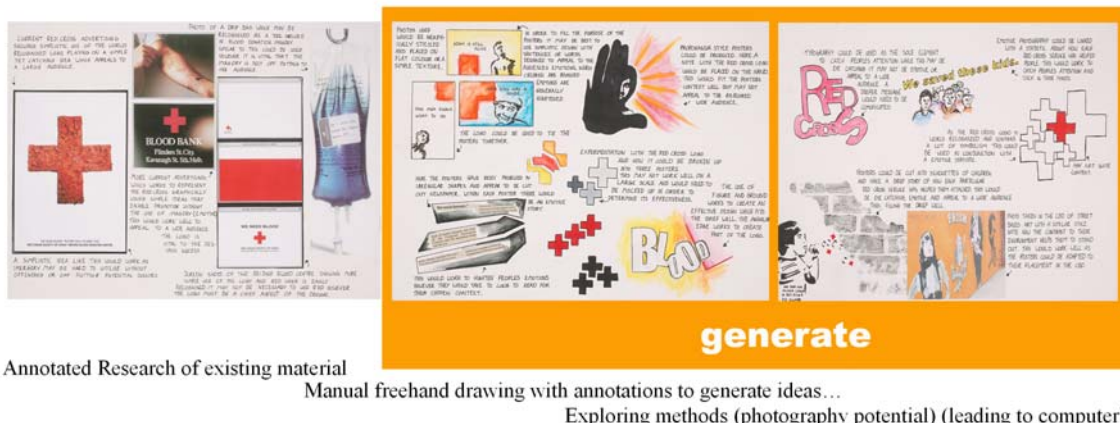


Figure 4

### Criterion 3

Criterion 3 assesses the student’s ability to apply the design process throughout the generation, development and refinement of each of the two final visual communication presentations. This criterion assesses how well the student resolved the client’s needs and how effectively they explored every stage of the design process for both of the final visual communication presentations.

Some students had difficulty in demonstrating the application of the stages of the design process. There was some evidence of disjointed processes, or processes where gaps were evident and, as a consequence, final solutions seemed to just ‘appear’.

Some students attempted to adapt the first presentation to meet the needs of the second presentation with minimal changes. This practice is symptomatic of a breakdown in the process and can partly be attributed to poor definition in the brief.

### Criterion 4

Criterion 4 focuses on the student’s ability to select appropriate materials and media, relative to the directions established in criterion 2.

Successful folios showed great strength in the use of at least two methods, with extensive trials and experimentation in related media and materials. These students selected the best methods to develop clear visual communication messages, using these to deliver the imagery and/or text best suited to meet the client’s needs. Weaker folios tended to stay predominantly with one method, or even use only one method.

The number of students who took risks through experimentation with combining both traditional and non-traditional approaches appeared to have increased. Where conventional drawing methods require observance of Australian Standards Conventions, the drawing method continued to be of some concern. Students are advised to ensure conventions are applied as appropriate.

### Criterion 5

Criterion 5 focuses on how the student applies specific design elements and design principles to resolve visual communication needs. Given that these work collaboratively, it is important to observe how their use changes relative to their position within the design process. At the generative stage these contribute to design concepts and ideas, while at the refining stage they work to resolve layout considerations by using mock-ups to test visual solutions on presentation formats.

Areas of concern were:

- minimal, or no, annotations
- research that was not used to launch the generation of initial ideas
- tracing or scanning, with minimal modification
- accepting initial concepts, rather than developing a broad range of ideas before commencing the development and refinement stages



- minimal exploration of media and materials relevant to methods chosen
- incidental use of design elements and principles
- failing to print and annotate progressive representative copies of computer-generated development work. Teachers and students are advised that development work submitted on disk is not considered, as it does not indicate position in the development process, and has no annotated comments that indicate decisions made, thoughts at the time, or projected decisions for further exploration.

### Outcome 3

Students need to produce two final presentations that satisfy the requirements of the design brief developed in outcome 1; two separate and distinct final presentations are required. A final presentation may have one or more components, and it should be possible to link the two presentations and their components to those described in the design brief. Students must clearly label the final presentations on either the base or the reverse side of each format. Where digital presentation(s) are submitted, a hard copy is required as well as the electronic file.

Most areas of concern involved poor timing, poor technical skills, and misinterpretation of the scope of the task and/or outcome descriptor requirements. Most of the concerns can be traced back to confusion or a lack of definition created in the design brief, and in a number of cases, no design brief.

Significant areas of concern included:

- not defining the separate components of each final presentation in the brief
- not labelling each presentation on the reverse side or base of each presentation format
- combining both final presentations onto one presentation board/pocket. Even if placed in context on an appropriate presentation format, these were deemed to be one final presentation
- placing the final presentations in pockets in the developmental folio book. These students were deemed to have produced no final presentations
- losing direction and producing final presentations that did not reflect the client's need(s).

Figure 5 below shows two final presentations which related to a design brief for the Red Cross. Presentation 1 consisted of three posters which promote each Red Cross Service, while Presentation 2 is a promotional kit that consists of a box kit/sticker and a postcard. These presentations have been combined for the purpose of this illustration. The folio presented each presentation quite separately.



Figure 5

### General Approaches

Students generally selected interesting topics and produced design briefs that enabled them to tackle areas of design that interested them and built on their personal design skills.

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Students' topic selections reflected three areas of design: information design, product design and environmental design. Students frequently tended to select from two of these broad categories, both to ensure the two dimensional/three dimensional requirement and to put a clear point of difference in the brief. This also allowed the two final presentations to be distinctly different in intent. Animation and product design tended to be less evident in the work that was reviewed.

Examples of the wide range of folios were:

- Presentation 1: a signage set for an electrician to be applied to his van and business stationery. Presentation 2: a poster to promote the specialist electrical service in domestic installation to be placed in lighting/home designer stores
- Presentation 1: a novelty tour – an architectural model of a reception leaving/landing zone. Presentation 2: a brochure to launch this new service
- Presentation 1: a stage/set design for a school production. Presentation 2: a poster campaign for the production
- Presentation 1: a website to promote a new fashion label. Presentation 2: a sample garment.

High-scoring folios established a clearly defined direction in a well-considered brief, which was paramount to a great start. Students who presented unique final presentations had often worked hard at researching and thinking up original and diverse approaches, then followed through by developing and refining concepts and testing the layout with a number of mock-ups. Exemplary students tended to focus on a diversity of ideas rather than on many repetitive ones.

The technical skill shown in the selection and application of media is continuing to increase, and strategies to gain and maintain audience interest are increasingly being built into possible solutions. Students took advantage of the opportunity to explore new directions, as observed from design practitioners in the industry.

When undertaking this School-assessed Task, students should:

- attempt to construct briefs that have enough latitude and insight to take risks
- define the client's needs in such a way as to allow students to explore the diverse range of available media and methods
- be inventive
- observe conventions where appropriate
- remember to time their project carefully
- recognise that the use of mock-ups is important, but scaling up preferred solutions is also important because this can significantly change the visual impact
- check their final solution with someone who is unfamiliar with the brief to ensure they are still on task. This will assist in ensuring the visual messages remain on task and are well delivered to the specified audience.