Examiners believed that candidates would benefit from practice in:

- how to read the question, what is specifically (content, application and format) being asked for in the response in contrast to I know something about this topic;
- prioritising what needs to be stated and shown, and the layout, how will the examiner read this first and not have to search for it in a dense page of text; and
- understanding the purpose of scaled drawing in contrast to a diagram, and how annotations are placed off the drawing, but relatively close with a thin line connecting to the drawing or diagram.

These comments emerged from all examiners experiencing difficulties in clearly reading candidates’ responses, as lengthy passages were written that either hid the relevant repose, disconnected from the drawing, or in conflict with the drawing. Consequently, these candidates would often receive lower grades as their explanation demonstrated their lack of knowledge or application to the question.

**Question 1**

Examiners involved in question 1 reported that candidates demonstrated a good use of landscaping, strong understanding of east and north sun properties and insulation in a cool temperate climate. The candidates who were brave enough to replace walls did it with justification and conviction. The negatives identified in candidate responses were related to the lack of relationship to Trish and her problem, the use of principles to solve her dwellings problems in temperate conditions. A lot of responses demonstrated a misunderstanding of the requirements for west and southern orientation. Candidates also thought that thermal mass in this climate was always appropriate, even if the thermal mass would never have the opportunity to heat up as it was in continuous shade, or not connected to a heat source in the first instance, so therefore it would perform the role of a fridge. Further the use of thermal mass in an outdoor location such as deck would provide limited advantage at night, as the heat would escape into the environment. Examiners were surprised by the lack of drawings presented to explain the advice to the client in relation to the design provided.

**Question 2**

The majority of responses to Question 2 reflected a satisfactory understanding of the features and principles that contribute to environmental sustainability. Candidates whose response reflected an ‘A’ award demonstrated an accurate and broad knowledge base that was transferred to the given environment and design requirements of the question, including capably utilising all the elements of passive design. Candidates who received a ‘B’ award demonstrated a sound response, but in most cases provided some misapplied or extraneous information, for example, listing the principles for a cool temperate climate rather than focusing on the specific hot/humid environment. This seemed to be a case of the respondents wishing to provide as much information as they could, rather than providing only the information that was accurate for the given environment (hot/humid). Those candidates who received a ‘C’ award, showed some knowledge of the principles and their application contributing to
environmental sustainability. However, they had difficulty in transferring this information to the given environment and design requirements of the question.

Some respondents chose to utilise water (small ponds or water features) to create a cooling effect on the dwelling. The Examiners discussed this response and felt that this minimal effect would only apply in a hot/arid climate and not in a hot/humid climate such as Darwin, as moisture is already in the air. Other respondents to the question chose to utilize double glazing and insulation to prevent heat gain in the dwelling. This response, not a passive solution, would only have been acceptable if used in association with mechanical air conditioning. To ensure a positive result, respondents must take time to read the question, tease out what is being asked and:

- apply their knowledge only to the requirements of the question; and,
- ensure that they only use the design principles that apply to the given climate.

**Question 3**

Questions 3 and 4 that address criterion 4, were the most poorly answered questions.

Candidates who were awarded a ‘D’ could not draw or state the ramp length required from the house to the garden, which had a 450mm drop, and few did not recognise the need for a ramp. A range from 1:14 to 1:20 was deemed an acceptable response for the ramp gradient, even though the stated requirement is 1:14. A number of responses stated that 1:8 or less was appropriate and its frequency suggested it was common misunderstanding. Other compounding problems were the lack of attention or responses provided for the covered workbench and storage, and the raised garden beds.

To achieve a ‘C’, the response nominated the 1:14-1:20 ramp gradient in an annotation and/or drew the ramp a suitable length. They typically referenced the importance of a 1500mm turning circle and showed an understanding of scale, even though many candidates drew at 1:100 instead of 1:50 and most did not include a section. Candidates who did include a section usually did not demonstrate how the owner would place himself under the workbench or be able to reach the overhead shelves or across the depth of the raised garden bed. A lot of candidates did not attempt or understand the purpose of designing the position, width and height of raised garden beds for a wheelchair user.

Responses in the A and B answered the question by providing a 1:50 scaled plan and section according to the brief requirements, as well as considering flow and its connection to other function within the house and garden.

It was thought that for candidates to improve in this type of question they needed to understand that there was limited success in memorising a lot of key dimensions, the purpose of the question was understand the principles of applying universal design in different scenarios, ie a kitchen or in this instance a laundry, which has similar requirement to a kitchen. Key priorities and concepts were:

- addressing universal access to house, garden and shed how a change in level would require the calculation of a ramp and showing this in a drawing. e.g. 1:14 is for every 1m drop at least 14m of ramp is required, including a 1m landing every 12m.
- understanding a turning circle of 1500m and how this would allow access to different furniture and appliances
- the height required for wheelchair to fit underneath a bench top/ sink
Question 4

The following observations were made of question 4, candidates generally demonstrated an accurate use of scale, applied drawing conventions (sections, door swings, windows.) and understood the functionality and order of pathways. In contrast, candidates did not appropriately address child safe play area, as some candidates thought play pens or cages necessary or the provision of soft fall around BBQ areas. As emphasised earlier, examiners stressed that the drawings should be the focus of the answer and annotations were for clarification. Many candidates did not complete a section drawing, or chose an inappropriate section to draw. A section was required by the question. Given the change in level between the existing house and ground level, the section should have been used to communicate how the candidate had addressed this.

A strong design answer contained useful links to the existing house and the location of the apple tree, showed clear circulation paths and ordered the zones and spaces. Strong responses integrated the apple tree in to their designs, effectively used space and fully justified their design decisions.

The weak design responses generated a lot of undefined and ‘wasted’ spaces, relied on gates and pens for child safety and provided limited descriptions, opportunities or understanding through section drawing. Annotations were brief and concentrated on detailing what was there, not why the design decisions had been made and relating them back to the question.

DESIGN FOLIO

Folios produced encompassed a wide variety of topics. Candidates and teachers need to ensure that the topics chosen will allow the candidate to meet the folio guidelines and to demonstrate their achievements on all assessed criterion. The folio guidelines state that topics chosen must focus on the built environment incorporating spaces designed for human use.

If candidates are interested in working on folio topics that relate strongly to landscaping or animal use, then it is important they meet the folio guidelines by incorporating buildings and also relating their justifications to the manner in which the space will be used by humans.

Overall, referencing has continued to improve but there is still some way to go with this, especially in correctly in-text referencing all images. Many folios contained basic selling errors which could have easily been overcome with attention to detail and proof reading.

Ideally photos should be compressed before folios are submitted. Folios which are of a large digital size often take longer to load and are more likely to be problematic when marking so should be avoided.

Brief and aims

Most folios had a short concise brief with aims following. A few confused aims and the brief, in some cases what were titled the briefs were actually descriptive paragraphs. User needs were often not articulated. This makes it very difficult for candidates to later demonstrate that they have met the needs within their final design. A few briefs and aims sections actually described the finished design using words like ‘I will design this with .....’ or ‘ the house has a large....’, language that should not appear in the brief or aims.
Precedents

Precedents should incorporate design precedents as specified in the folio guidelines, not just be a catalogue of products that a candidate may use in their final design. Strong precedents sections contained images from a wide range of relevant sources. Those that relied on single web sites generally did not contain the depth of others which were sourced from a wider variety. Images taken by the candidates from relevant precedents they were able to visit and analyse added depth to folios.

Context

The context section is an important one, however this was a weaker point of many folios. A number of folios did not have context sections, but instead made context statements. This is a concern as a lack of context section has been an issue with folios over the past three years. Candidates and teachers need to ensure the folio guidelines are followed regarding the content of a context section.

Site Analysis

Candidates generally completed site analysis sections for new builds satisfactorily, or at least showed they had some understanding of the possible impacts on design. Weaker site analysis sections may have shown aspects such as sun and wind, but not explained in detail how these may effect impact on the possible design or how they might need to be considered.

Site analysis sections for people doing internal renovations and interior design were often weaker. If a candidate is working within an existing building it is the existing building that is the site and should be analysed in the site analysis section. Several concentrated on analysing block details which were not relevant when their site was internal. Some external factors may impact on design, especially if it involves and extension, but the site analysis section should include photos and floor plans (original or re-drawn) of the structure which is the site the candidate is working on. If this is not possible then another site should be chosen.

If a candidate cannot obtain, or draw plans or get pictures or information about the inside of a building it is better to choose a different building for an internal renovation as there is no way of showing the existing, therefore examiner cannot tell if proposed changes are realistic or appropriate.

Design Development

The design development section of the folios overall seemed to be slightly stronger than previous years. Nearly all folios had three pages of design development, some did this very well and continually referred to aims and precedents.

Design Resolution

Some folios presented this very effectively, showing progression from the precedents, through design development to final design. Unfortunately many folios did not demonstrate these links. Sometimes final designs, which candidates claim meet all the aims and brief, appear almost out of nowhere and show little resemblance to the work in the body of the folio. Final designs need to be justified, regardless of whether these points were made throughout design development.
Referencing

Whilst there is still some way to go, there has been some improvement in the standard of referencing this year. Candidates need to be reminded to use one system throughout and to always include in text referencing where required.
## Award Distribution

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## Student Distribution (SA or better)

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