

NCFE Level 1 Technical Award in Interactive Media (603/0851/5)
NCFE Level 2 Technical Award in Interactive Media (603/0852/7)

Assessment window: 20 January 2020 – 28 February 2020

Paper Number: P000921

This report contains information in relation to the external assessment from the Chief Examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment window.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally perform well as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- grading information
- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- evidence creation
- interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria
- planning in the external assessment.

It is important to note that learners should not sit the external assessment until they have taken part in the relevant teaching of the full qualification content.

Grade Boundary Information

Each learner's external assessment paper is marked by an Examiner and awarded a raw mark. During the awarding process, a combination of statistical analysis and professional judgement is used to establish the raw marks that represent the minimum required standard to achieve each grade. These raw marks are outlined in the table below.

Max Mark	Level 2 Distinction	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Pass	Level 1 Distinction	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Pass	NYA
90	61	46	31	25	20	15	0

Grade boundaries represent the minimum raw mark required to achieve a certain grade. For example, if the grade boundary for the Pass grade is 25, a minimum raw mark of 25 is required to achieve a Pass.

Max UMS Score	Level 2 Distinction	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Pass	Level 1 Distinction	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Pass	NYA
160	128	112	96	64	48	32	0

** In order to ensure that levels of achievement remain comparable for the same assessment across different assessment windows, all raw marks are converted to a points score based on a uniform mark*

scale (UMS). For more information about UMS and how it is used to determine overall qualification grades, please refer to the qualification specification.

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment. Learners may require additional pre-release material in order to complete the Tasks within the paper. These must be provided to learners in line with our Regulations.

Learners must be given the resources to carry out the Tasks and these are highlighted within the Qualification Specific Instructions Document (QSID).

Standard of learner work

This was the third external assessment for this qualification and the standard of learner work has continued to improve and mostly at the expected level and this had positive impact on the overall achievement of the external assessment. This was very positive to observe as there was also a significant increase in the amount of learner registrations in this assessment window.

In addition, there continued to be a good understanding from centres regarding what is expected for each assessment task and this was positive to observe. There has continued to be submissions of incomplete tasks or learners not submitting any evidence at all for some tasks and this limited marks to lower mark bands.

There was a significant increase in learners not submitting their actual interactive media product and this limited marks for Task 2, as examiners were not able to make a fair judgement on the functionality of the product, or the accurate use of file types and folder structures.

Overall, most centres submitted digital evidence and this was very effective and aided the efficiency of the examination process. A minority of learners produced hard copy evidence to support digital evidence and this was also collated and submitted effectively.

As in previous assessment windows, there was also evidence of centres still duplicating hard copy evidence digitally and this is not best practice as this meant examiners had to spend additional time reviewing multiple documents and files.

Learners responded to the theme 'Language Buddy' well, they seemed inspired and demonstrated creative interpretations for their intended products. The theme and target audience seemed to be accessible for both levels of learners and a wide range of responses were submitted.

Most learners produced a website and PowerPoint presentations have continued to be popular. A minimal number of learners produced interactive presentations for kiosks and there was an increase of some learners experimenting with authoring 2D games and this was pleasing to observe.

There were some minimal examples of learners misinterpreting the brief requirements, in these cases learners submitted quite unrealistic and disconnected responses and most cases not their

own ideas. Learners must be taught how to interpret a design brief prior to undertaking the external assessment as this is a key skill that is required for all three tasks of the paper.

Higher achieving learners demonstrated thorough interpretations of the brief leading to focused research that had been collated to purposefully inform the planning and development of design ideas. This was followed by purposeful experimentation and an outcome clearly linked to initial intentions. Final evaluations were also well justified in response to the brief and included valid improvements.

As in the previous window, there was some evidence of learners not responding individually. Centres are reminded to encourage learners to interpret the theme and requirements of the brief individually. In these cases learners produced quite similar interpretations of the theme, used similar research sources, experimented with the same materials, processes and techniques and produced similar final outcomes. Although it is inevitable that learners may apply skills that they have been taught and that this may result in similar processes used, the actual evidence and quality of the evidence produced should be clearly attributable to each individual learner and their ability and personal interpretation.

There were some minimal submissions that were not considered to be at the creative or technical standard consistent with the level of the qualification. Centres are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the content of the unit is delivered in its entirety, prior to learners undertaking the external assessment. In addition, it is the centres responsibility to recruit with integrity.

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment

Malpractice

There have been some issues of malpractice raised in this assessment window. The Chief Examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise learners that instances of malpractice will affect the outcome on the assessment. It is imperative that centres and learners adhere to the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment to ensure the integrity of the qualification and that malpractice does not take place

Maladministration

No instances of maladministration were reported in this assessment window. The Chief Examiner would like to highlight the importance of adhering to the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment document in this respect.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

Referencing of the three assessment tasks was mostly effective and most submissions were digital, this aided the efficiency of the examination process.

Most learners were able to organise folders within which to submit their work appropriately in clearly labelled folders per task. It is best practice to include one folder for each task, in some cases learners submitted copies and / or multiple versions of documents within folders and this is not good practice as this significantly slows the examination process.

There were also some examples of learners duplicating evidence, however this was mostly in cases where they had also submitted hard copy evidence and simply scanned this as well to include within their digital files. In addition, there was some submissions that contained the same evidence in multiple formats (e.g. a PowerPoint presentation and a PDF) and this is not required.

There has continued to be an increase in submissions that did not include a clear final outcome for Task 2 (the interactive media product) and this proved very difficult to award marks for this task. Centres are strongly reminded that the actual product must be included to demonstrate learner's technical ability, even if only producing a prototype in this task there should be a clearly accessible outcome to demonstrate the required interactive content and functionality. In addition, locating the final product was also difficult in some cases, this was mainly due to learners not naming files as a particular task or using incorrect naming conventions. Such details should be taught during the teaching and learning of the unit content, prior to learners undertaking the external assessment.

Learners are clearly informed to label each task separately within the Regulations for the Conduct of the External Assessment document. Failure to follow this requirement may have significant implications for the awarding of learner grades. If examiners are not easily able to identify which evidence relates to which task, this may limit the marks awarded for that task. Teachers and the Invigilator/s must ensure learners are prepared how to label evidence correctly, per task. This should also include clear reference to the final outcome.

Learners should also be instructed to attempt all tasks in the paper, and these should be clearly referenced. Any tasks not attempted or not referenced cannot be rewarded and may limit the marks awarded for the associated task/s.

Evidence creation

The external assessment is based on internally assessed units 1, 2, 3 and 4. Therefore, learners should only be registered for the external assessment after sufficient mandatory unit content of these units has been delivered. Most learners seemed to be well prepared and demonstrated valid understanding from all units and this was positive to observe.

Centres are free to choose a single discipline or multiple disciplines within the Interactive Media subject area for classroom delivery; however, the discipline chosen for the external assessment should demonstrate a good standard of learner knowledge and access to all required resources.

Some submissions suggested that learners had not been taught the required skills in order to produce an outcome for Task 2 (e.g. use of authoring software) prior to the external assessment and this may have disadvantaged these learners. This was also evident in evaluations and annotations were learners clearly stated they did not know how to use particular software in order to prepare assets or create their intended final outcome.

There was also increased evidence of learners making incorrect references to their products, for example planning to create a website in Task 1 yet actually creating a PowerPoint presentation and consistently referring to the PowerPoint presentation as a website. Centres are reminded to ensure learners have the skills and access to the resources to create an interactive media product that best demonstrates their understanding and technical competence.

There was some evidence of the use of templates within the submissions for all tasks and this is not permitted for any assessment task.

Most learners evidenced valid research sources that were used effectively to inform the development of ideas. However, there has continued to be some irrelevant evidence (e.g. reviews of existing products) that are not required and cannot be awarded marks in any assessment task. Learners should only produce evidence that is requested in each task.

There was good evidence of practical experimentation using hardware and software. Most learners had access to a range of appropriate resources to demonstrate the use of sources, techniques and processes. Some learners also used a production diary approach to record their experimentation and this worked well.

The use of annotation within all tasks was useful to verify learners understanding and choices made during the planning, design, development and production stages. Higher achieving

learners did this very well, annotations were informative, and they made consistent links to the project brief. However, lower achieving learners had limited or no annotation at all, and this proved difficult to follow the creative process and choices made.

There was an improvement in the standard of evaluation skills and most learners submitted good, detailed and well-presented evaluations. Higher achieving learners used the bullet points within the assessment task to guide the evaluation and this ensured all required areas of review, inclusive and focused on improvements were addressed.

Some evaluations were basic, bulleted lists or very descriptive statements of the stages undertaken, some also did not include any reference to improvements and this limited marks awarded for this task. Centres are reminded that the focus of the evaluation for Task 3 is on improvements to the interactive media product rather than personal improvements such as time management or personal ability. In many cases learners demonstrated valid evidence in other tasks, for example annotations in Task 2, and this was positively awarded.

As it is not mandatory that learners create a final completed product in this assessment, teaching and learning of the unit content should be extensive with regard to interpreting a brief, experimenting with appropriate interactive media techniques and processes (including authoring), finalising a product to allow for functionality (even if a prototype) and evaluation of the product in response to a brief.

Some submissions proved difficult for examiners to access, this was mainly due to damaged DVD/CDs or files not being accurately copied across to a USB or other devices and this delayed the examination process.

Centres must check all learners' folders are included on the USB when transferring from their own machines. Further to this, it is best practice to transfer all learners work per batch or per centre on to one device.

Centres must ensure all submissions are thoroughly checked prior to submitting these to NCFE.

Responses of the Tasks within the Sections of the external assessment paper

Task 1

In this task learners are required to consider all aspects of the brief and create a plan for the content and layout of the interactive media product.

There was a significant improvement in the standard of evidence for this task and most learners demonstrated planning very effectively using written notes, mind maps, mood boards, design sketches, storyboards, navigation diagrams and layout designs.

There was generally an effective and creative interpretation of the theme Language Buddy, learners seemed to engage with the theme well and higher achieving learners demonstrated interesting and original interpretations. Lower achieving learners although did not seem to struggle with the concept of the theme, responded in a basic way and at times with very disconnected interpretations.

There was good evidence of learners engaging with the target audience and all learners were able to demonstrate valid understanding of this and how this informed their ideas. In very limited cases, some learners did use the target audience form the project brief.

Most learners provided valid evidence of their intended application of sources, processes and techniques. However, some learners did not evidence any planning of these.

There was a significant increase in the volume and detail of planning documentation submitted for this task, higher achieving learners used the bullets in the task effectively to ensure they included all required planning evidence, and this was very positive to observe. However, centres are reminded of the suggested allocated hours for this task. Learners who seemed to spend more than the suggested allocation of time planning, seemed to be less successful in Task 2, the creation of their product. This was unfortunate as some potentially good products were unable to be completed.

There was also some evidence of learners explaining what each planning element is (e.g. what a storyboard is and what a layout design is) rather than actually creating their own planning evidence. The focus and time allocated to this task is for learners to produce the planning documentation to clearly inform the product they will develop and produce in Task 2. Further to this, any evidence created that has not been requested (e.g. reviews of exiting products) or that does not inform learners own ideas is not required and cannot be awarded any marks.

There has continued to be some evidence of learners being provided with templates or suggested heading to use within their planning and this is not permitted in this external assessment.

Task 2

In this task learners are required to create their planned interactive media product from Task 1. This might not be a completed version, but learners must demonstrate evidence that the product shows sufficient functionality.

There was a significant increase in the quality of evidence of review in the annotation within this task that was valid to support the review in Task 3, in particular, regarding solving problems and improvements.

Many learners demonstrated practical experimentation of hardware and software as part of their development and this was very successful. Centres are reminded that even if learners have access to the same resources and may use similar techniques, the presentation of this evidence should be individual to each learner.

Higher achieving learners experimented with a wide range of processes and techniques (creating / editing images, authoring, saving / exporting file types, testing etc) and annotated their evidence to show development and thought process in response to the brief and initial intentions.

However, lower achieving learners shown minimal evidence of development and some submitted just the final outcome and this limited marks awarded for this task.

Most learners successfully completed a functional outcome even if a prototype, more successful learners completed a fully functioning final product that was clearly reflective of their intentions.

There was an increase in learners not submitting their actual product and in these cases marks for this task were dependent on screenshots or other evidence, this limited the marks for this task as learners were not able to demonstrate their skills to produce a functional interactive media product, the focus of this assessment.

Centre are reminded to ensure learners have access to all resources required to create a functional product that can be fully accessed by examiners externally. This may require centres checking that all details of how to do this are included within each submission.

There has continued to be an increase in the submission of websites and learners should clearly evidence how they authored the site as well as prepared assets appropriately in order to demonstrate their understanding effectively and achieve higher mark bands.

There has continued to be a significant amount of PowerPoint Presentations submitted, this is as expected and entirely acceptable. However, some learners were limited to achieving in lower mark bands if the presentations had no interactivity, there is still a substantial amount of linear presentations being submitted and these do not demonstrate the required level of skill for this subject or external assessment.

Task 3

In this task learners are required to evaluate their interactive media product in relation to the brief. The evaluation should include a review of how the product has met the brief and how to improve the interactive media product.

There was a significant improvement in the quality of work submitted for this task. Most learners did this well and were able to provide a good evaluation of how the product met the brief, however most learners also submitted extensive reviews of their strengths and weaknesses overall and this is not required.

Higher achieving learners focused on the improvements of the product and this is best practice. In addition, there was clear and consistent links to the brief throughout the evaluations.

Lower achieving learners, although providing an evaluation or evaluative statements within their work, tended to describe the stages undertaken and what went well and not so well. There was

minimal if any review of what could be improved with the product and this severely limited marks awarded for this task.

Learners should be discouraged from describing each stage of their production in this task, this is not only time consuming for learners but also not assessed in this task.

In addition, centres are reminded that this is an invigilated task and learners should not be seeking feedback from their peers or in any other form.

There was a significant increase in the volume and detail of evidence submitted for this task, although only one hour is suggested to spend on the evaluation, it was clear learners were able to draw on previous tasks to inform their review (e.g. initial intentions in Task 1 and the development and production in Task 2). In cases where these were also consistently linked to improvements of the product; these were particularly strong evaluations.

Unfortunately, there was evidence of lengthy and detailed evaluations that had limited reference to improvement of the interactive media product and this limited marks for this task.

Chief Examiner: Lesley Davis

Date: March 2020
