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

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

Assessment Window: 10th January 2022 to 18th February 2022

Paper Number: P001386

This report contains information in relation to the external assessment from the chief examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of candidates' work within this assessment window.

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

Key points:

- grade boundary Information
- administering the external assessment
- standard of candidates' work
- evidence creation
- regulations for the conduct of external assessment
- responses of the tasks within the sections of the external assessment paper

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

Grade boundary information

Each candidate'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.

NYA	Level 1 Pass	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Distinction	Level 2 Pass	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Distinction
0-13	14-18	19-23	24-29	30-44	45-59	60-90

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.

Maximum UMS Score*	Level 1 Pass	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Distinction	Level 2 Pass	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Distinction
160	32	48	64	96	112	128

* 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. Candidates may require additional pre-release material in order to complete the tasks within the paper. These must be provided to candidates in line with our regulations. Candidates must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the qualification specific instructions document (QSID).

Standard of candidates' work

The external assessment is completed by candidates alongside internally assessed units. Therefore, candidates should only be registered for the external assessment after sufficient mandatory unit content of these units has been delivered.

The standard of candidates' work was mostly at the expected level, and this had positive impact on the overall achievement of the external assessment. Most candidates submitted or attempted all three tasks. There was evidence of the standard improving in some tasks, and slightly reducing in other tasks. However, this is to be expected based on this external assessment being the first available since March 2021 and that some candidates may have experienced periods of absence as result of the pandemic.

In addition, there continued to be a good understanding from centres regarding what is expected for each assessment task as well as the formats of evidence submitted, and this was positive to observe.

There continued to be submissions of incomplete tasks, very limited evidence or candidates not submitting any evidence at all for some tasks and this limited marks to lower mark bands.

There also continued to be evidence of candidates 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.

In addition, some candidates submitted links to products that had not been checked, this caused significant delay to the examining process whilst centres were contacted for correct links.

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

As in previous windows, there was also evidence of centres duplicating evidence both digitally in different file formats and hard copy and this is not best practice, as this meant examiners had to spend additional time reviewing multiple documents and files for no additional marks to be allocated.

Candidates responded to the theme 'Emerging Talented Creatives' very 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 candidates and a wide range of responses were submitted. There were some minor examples of misinterpretation of the theme where candidates seemed to create products with no relevance to the theme other than the title, and marks awarded reflected these submissions. Candidates 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.

Most candidates produced a website and PowerPoint presentations have continued to be popular. A minimal number of candidates produced protypes for mobile applications and there continued to be some evidence of some candidates experimenting with authoring 2D games and 2D animation and this was pleasing to observe.

Higher achieving candidates demonstrated thorough interpretations of the brief leading to focused research that had been collated to purposefully to inform the proposal document and development of design ideas. This was followed by purposeful experimentation using appropriate hardware and software 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 candidates not responding individually. Centres are reminded to encourage candidates to interpret the theme and requirements of the brief individually. In these case candidates 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 candidates 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 candidate, 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 candidates undertaking the external assessment. In addition, it is the centres responsibility to recruit with integrity.

Evidence creation

Most candidates submitted digital evidence, some candidates submitted hard copy evidence of planning to support Task 1, and this was clear to identify and access.

Referencing of the 3 assessment tasks was mostly effective and as most submissions were digital, this aided the efficiency of the external assessment process. Most candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates duplicating evidence, however this was mostly in cases that contained the same evidence in multiple formats (for example, a PowerPoint presentation and a PDF) and this is not required.

There were some 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 candidates' 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 candidates 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 candidates undertaking the external assessment. In task 2, there are 50% of marks available as assessment objective 2 assesses candidates' application of knowledge and understanding. Unfortunately, some candidates only submitted evidence of creating their product and/or screenshots of their product yet did not submit the actual interactive media product in its original format (for example, website or PowerPoint).

Candidates should be instructed to attempt all tasks in the paper, and candidates' evidence should be clearly referenced in line with the best practice indicators in the qualification specific instructions for delivery (QSID). Any tasks not attempted or not referenced may not be able to be rewarded and may limit the marks awarded for the associated task(s).

Regulations for the conduct of external assessment

Malpractice

There were 3 instances of malpractice in this assessment window. The chief examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise candidates that instances of malpractice (for example, copying of work from another candidate) will affect the outcome on the assessment.

Maladministration

2 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.

Responses of the tasks within the sections of the external assessment paper

Most candidates seemed to be well prepared and demonstrated valid understanding from all internally assessed units and this was positive to observe. Most candidates evidenced valid research sources that were used effectively to inform the development of ideas, followed by a range of planning documentation such as mood boards and navigation charts.

Some candidates have continued to provide evidence that is not required and cannot be awarded marks in any assessment task. For example, general explanations of hardware and software and reviews of existing products. Candidates should only produce evidence that is requested in each task.

In many cases candidates demonstrated valid evidence in other tasks (for example annotations in task 2) and this was positively awarded.

There was some good evidence of practical experimentation using hardware and software, in particular regarding the preparation of assets. Most candidates had access to a range of appropriate resources to demonstrate the use of sources, techniques, and processes. Some candidates also annotated their thought process of their experimentation to record their approach, and this worked well and aided their evaluations. However, some candidates provided no supporting evidence with their product, and this was reflected in the awarding of lower marks.

The use of annotation within all tasks was useful to verify candidates understanding and choices made during the planning, design, development, and production stages. Higher achieving candidates did this very well, annotations were informative, and they made consistent links to the project brief. However, lower achieving candidates had limited, very descriptive or no annotation at all, and this proved difficult to follow the creative process and choices made.

There was some improvement in the standard of evaluation skills and most candidates submitted honest, sufficiently detailed, and well-presented evaluations. 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. Therefore, candidates who provided minimal evaluations yet focused on improvements of their product were still able to be awarded sufficient marks for this task.

The majority of candidates attempted and submitted evidence for all tasks, however centres are reminded that they must check all candidates' folders are included on the chosen storage device (for example, USB) when transferring from their own machines. Centres must ensure all submissions are thoroughly checked prior to submitting these to NCFE in their chosen format.

Task 1

In this task candidates are required to consider all aspects of the brief and create a proposal for the content and layout of the interactive media product, the proposal should include reference to relevant planning of the production of the interactive media product in task 2. Not all candidates submitted their evidence in a proposal document, but rather multiple planning documents and this was not requested in this task.

There has continued to be a good standard of evidence for this task and most candidates collated written notes, mind maps, mood boards, design sketches, storyboards, navigation diagrams and layout designs into one clear proposal document.

There was generally an effective and creative interpretation of the theme and candidates seemed to engage with the target audience well. In limited cases, some candidates did not use the target audience from the project brief and created their own. There were also some minimal examples of candidates also creating their own theme for the product.

Most candidates provided valid evidence (even if minimal) of their intended application of sources, processes, and techniques. However, some candidates did not evidence any planning of these areas at all in the proposal and this is a requirement that is awarded marks for this task.

Higher achieving candidates submitted extensive and highly detailed planning documentation for this and although positive to observe, centres are reminded of the suggested allocated hours for this task. Some candidates who seemed to spend more than the suggested allocation of time planning and creating the proposal, 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 or they were of a more basic standard than expected in response to the proposal.

The focus and time allocated to this task is for candidates to produce a proposal inclusive of the planning documentation to clearly inform the product they will develop and produce in task 2. Centres are reminded that only one format of evidence is required, it is best practice to collate all planning evidence in one proposal document, for example a PDF, rather than multiple separate documents.

Task 2

In this task candidates are required to create their proposed interactive media product from Task 1. This might not be a completed version, but candidates must demonstrate evidence that the product shows sufficient functionality. Evidence of functionality is a significant allocation of marks awarded in this task.

As it is not mandatory that candidates create a final product that is complete and fully functional, the teaching and learning of the unit content should be extensive with regard to experimenting with appropriate interactive media techniques and processes (including authoring), finalising a product to allow for functionality (even if a prototype) and recording the processes undertaken in response to a brief. Following this process should ensure candidates can demonstrate understanding and skills to allow for marks to be awarded even without a completed product.

There has continued to be significant and valid evidence of annotation within this task that was valid to support the preparation of assets and production process, this also contributed effectively to the review in Task 3 regarding solving problems and improvements.

Many candidates also demonstrated some valid practical experimentation of hardware and software as part of their development. Higher achieving candidates experimented with a wide range of processes and techniques (for example, creating/editing images, authoring, saving/exporting file types, testing) and annotated their evidence to show development and thought process in response to the brief and initial intentions. However, lower achieving candidates showed minimal evidence of experimentation and development, and some submitted just the final outcome and this limited marks awarded for this task.

There has continued to be evidence of candidates 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 candidates were not able to demonstrate their skills to produce a functional interactive media product, the focus of this assessment.

There has continued to be an increase in the submission of websites and candidates should clearly evidence how they authored the site as well as how they have prepared assets in order to demonstrate their understanding and achieve higher mark bands. This is of particular importance when candidates have used website builder applications or customised templates.

There has continued to be a significant amount of PowerPoint presentations submitted and this is acceptable. However, some candidates were limited to being awarded marks in lower mark bands if the presentations had no interactivity, or if they had not selected appropriate options in the slideshow settings to enable full interactivity. There has also continued to be many submissions 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 candidates are required to evaluate their interactive media product created in task 2, The evaluation should include a review of the technical skills used and the choices made, the processes used and why they were used and how they could improve the interactive media product in relation to the brief.

There was a significant improvement in the quality of work submitted for this task. Most candidates did this well and were able to provide a good evaluation of how the product met the brief inclusive of valid improvements.

However, some candidates also submitted extensive reviews of their strengths and weaknesses overall and this is not required, in particular as they made limited refence to improvements and this limited marks for this task.

Candidates should be discouraged from simply describing each stage of their production in this task, this is not only time consuming for candidates but also not assessed in this task

Chief examiner: Lesley Davis
Date: April 2022