

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Creative Studies: Craft (P000414)

Assessment window: 5 February - 27 April 2018

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:

- 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's important to note that learners shouldn't sit the external assessment until they've taken part in the relevant teaching of the unit to ensure they are well prepared for the external assessment.

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment (both supervised and invigilated) must be independent from the teaching of the unit. Work completed during the teaching of the unit cannot be used in the external assessment. Any stimulus materials used by the centre during the teaching of the unit cannot be used in the external assessment. Learners must complete all of the tasks independently.

The completion of the supervised tasks must be supervised by the Teacher and can be sat in the normal classroom environment. The tasks within the supervised period do not need to be invigilated, however, they must be conducted in line with the conditions set out within our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment. The supervised tasks must be treated independently from the teaching of the unit and learners must complete all tasks independently. This means the supervised tasks must not be Teacher led.

The completion of the invigilated tasks must be invigilated and sat in accordance with the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment.

It's important that the external assessment is sat in accordance with the specified conditions within this document.

Standard of learner work

There was a significant improvement in the standard of work for this marking window and this has had a positive impact on the overall achievement of the external assessment.

There was some evidence of tasks or subtasks not being completed in their entirety and this did not allow all mandatory Pass assessment criteria to be achieved, therefore resulting in a Not Yet Achieved (NYA) for the overall unit. Learners must be advised that if there are multiple parts to a task (eg A and B) then all parts of the task must be attempted.

There was further improvement of digital evidence submitted and this was particularly effective for Tasks 4 and 5 where learners had used a software program to visually represent their idea's development.

Some evidence included handwritten annotation from learners and at times this was very difficult for Examiners to read and understand. Learners should review and proofread their written work to ensure that this is clear and relevant to the associated task to ensure accurate assessment criteria can be awarded. If using a word processor to improve this, then learners should have access to these resources.

There were some excellent examples of creative work submitted during this marking window and most learners responded to the theme well.

Higher achieving learners demonstrated thorough interpretations of the brief, a broad range of focused research, practical skill development and refined presentation skills within their craft discipline.

There was a significant increase in less-individual responses, many learners produced quite similar interpretations of the theme, used similar research sources and produced similar final outcomes and this is not best practice. The unit and external assessment paper encourages individual interpretation of a design brief and learners must be encouraged to do this. In addition, learners must clearly identify each source used as this was not always clear.

There was a significant improvement in evidence of collating research findings to inform learners' own work and some learners did this very well and in detail.

There was improvement of practical experimentation and for most learners this was engaging and effective to demonstrate relevant skills. However, there was also clear evidence of learners being guided with regard to what craft techniques to experiment with and in some cases it was unclear if the practical experimentation was the learner's own. All evidence should be clearly attributable to each individual learner.

Some submissions were not considered to be at the creative or technical standard which is consistent with the level of the qualification. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the content of the unit is delivered in its entirety prior to learners undertaking the external assessment. This allows learners to interpret and respond to a brief independently and provide opportunity to achieve across all seven assessment criteria.

In addition, it is the centre's responsibility to ensure learners are recruited with integrity at the correct level. It was evident in this window that some learners were more suitable for the level 1 qualification where they are not required to pass an externally assessed unit.

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment

Malpractice

Examples of malpractice, although not extensive, may include evidence of learners being provided with templates in order to respond to the Tasks within the External Assessment, identical responses to the brief and associated tasks and feedback within evidence.

Maladministration

Examples of maladministration will include evidence that the centre hasn't administered the external assessment in line with the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment.

Centres are reminded of the conditions within our regulations associated with the supervised sessions, this should not be Teacher led and learners must independently approach the brief and associated tasks.

All incidents of reported malpractice and maladministration will be investigated to ensure the integrity of the assessment.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

Referencing of the tasks has continued to improve and most learners labelled their work effectively by task and/or assessment criteria. It was also positive to see a range of formats of evidence (sketch pads, A3 design sheets, digital printouts etc) to best reflect the craft disciplines learners worked in.

There were a small number of submissions that consisted of multiple evidence formats and no clear referencing; similarly, there were a small number of submissions where evidence had become detached. Teachers and the invigilator must ensure learners are aware how to label evidence correctly per task, as if tasks are not clearly labelled a Not Yet Achieved may be awarded.

Learners are clearly informed to label each task separately within the Regulations for the Conduct of the External Assessment document. This must also include reference to multiple parts of any task.

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 then a Not Yet Achieved grade may be awarded.

Learners should 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 a grade of Not Yet Achieved will be awarded. This will result in an overall grade of Not Yet Achieved for the external assessment unit.

Evidence creation

In this unit, centres are required to deliver 30 hours of teaching and learning guided by the unit content. This must be done prior to learners undertaking the external assessment. Most learners seemed to be well prepared and more prepared for the external assessment than previous windows.

Centres are free to choose a single craft discipline or multiple disciplines within classroom delivery; however, the craft discipline chosen for the external assessment should demonstrate a good standard of learner knowledge. In addition, any evidence that is produced within the 30 hours' teaching and learning of the unit, cannot be used in the external assessment.

Most learners provided a good interpretation of the design brief and they responded well to the theme, there was also good evidence of learners demonstrating how they explored the limitations and challenges of the brief. However, there were some common and obvious interpretations of the theme and there was substantial evidence of submissions having the same or very similar product ideas.

Most learners submitted a valid and sufficient range of research sources that were relevant to their chosen craft discipline. There were still some learners who did not clearly reference different sources and this is a mandatory part of the research tasks. In addition, there was evidence of some sources being prompted and at times this limited learners' individual responses. There was also an increase in practical exploration and this was highly effective, however some of the craft techniques explored were similar and possibly guided more than expected.

In most cases learners used visual techniques (design sheets, samples, maquettes, photographs, sketch pads and printed digital works) to present their ideas and final designs. Not all visual evidence had been annotated to show development or the reasons for choosing their final idea, and these are mandatory elements of the tasks. Overall, the visual representation of design work and final ideas was much improved. There was also, as in previous windows, a substantial number of submissions that demonstrated very low-level drawing and design skills. Centres are encouraged to allow learners to submit evidence in a format that best represents their craft discipline and personal strengths to communicate their idea(s) effectively. In cases where learners submitted digital evidence alongside weaker drawings, the awarding of assessment criteria was much more positive.

The majority of learners submitted sufficient costed project plans, most were detailed and reflected their selected final idea effectively. There were some excellent examples of well-presented, thorough and detailed plans to allow for higher-end grades to be awarded. There were some minimal submissions of lower-level plans that had been poorly presented, showing limited refinement and often did not reflect their selected craft item.

As learners are not required to create an actual craft product in this assessment, teaching and learning of the unit content should be extensive with regard to interpreting a design brief, comparing and evaluating relevant craft techniques, research using a range of sources (primary and secondary), collating information and presenting findings, developing ideas, selecting final ideas, presenting/communicating ideas and producing a costed project plan. The delivery of all learning outcomes is mandatory prior to learners taking the external assessment paper.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1 - AC 1.1

In this task learners are required to interpret the requirements of a craft brief. Most learners demonstrated this very effectively using mind maps, mood boards, rough design sketches and written notes. There was some evidence that simply repeated the external assessment brief rather than communicating an individual interpretation and response and this provided limited analysis to achieve higher grades.

There was generally an effective interpretation of the theme – Treasure. Learners seemed to engage with the theme well and higher achieving learners attempted to look at interesting and less obvious sources.

The majority of learners interpreted the theme to relate to a treasure chest and this was not always effective as they were limited with design ideas of their own. Some learners also seemed to misinterpret what they were required to create (a craft item) and focused too much on the window display.

Most learners demonstrated effective exploration of the creative opportunities and challenges they may be faced with. This was mostly evidenced via bulleted lists and written notes. Higher achieving learners made good reference and full consideration to resources, personal skills, potential problems and the realisation of their ideas that could best meet the brief requirements. This was also clearly linked to their intentions for development in Task 4 and was highly effective.

Task 2 - AC 1.3 and 1.4

In this task learners are required to research information using a range of different sources, then collate and present research findings to inform their own craft ideas.

Most learners used a minimum of three relevant research sources and it was good to see that the sources were also relevant to their craft discipline. There were some learners who submitted evidence of fewer than the requested three sources or did not reference their sources, and these submissions proved very difficult to examine. As in previous windows, learners' responses were at times limited by overdependence on online sources.

Many learners used practical experimentation as part of their primary research and this was highly successful. However, there was an increase of many learners in a cohort using the same sources, possibly Tutor-led, and at times limited learners' responses and achievement for this task.

The collation of research findings was mostly good. There were also some good examples of presentation skills, in particular where learners had refined their work prior to collating.

Although many learners collated their findings effectively they did not fully demonstrate how these would be used to inform their own idea development which is a mandatory requirement of AC 1.4 limiting the awarding of higher grades.

Higher achieving learners did this very well and fully related their research findings to the requirements of the brief and how they would use these in their idea development in Task 4.

Task 3 - AC 1.2

In this task learners are required to compare and evaluate different craft techniques; the craft techniques should be relevant to their chosen discipline.

Most learners did this effectively via practical experimentation and recorded this via annotated photographs and samples. However, there was an increase in learners using the same craft techniques in their experimentation; learners should be experimenting with techniques that reflect their individual initial intentions in Task 1 and how they might use the research (eg practical experimentation) in Task 4.

There was some improved evidence of comparing at least two craft techniques and how these related to their own work. However there remained some limited comparison in many submissions, in these cases the evidence focused on strengths and weaknesses of the craft techniques rather than comparing at least 2 techniques.

Task 4 - AC 1.5

This task requires learners to demonstrate the development of a range of ideas for their craft item, most learners submitted the requested 3 ideas for the task. There has continued to be quite a lot of written evidence rather than visual evidence and this task requires both design ideas and the development of the ideas to be communicated.

Learners with weaker drawing skills who were able to represent their ideas digitally, for example using an appropriate software package, were more successful at visually communicating their intentions. This was further supported by annotations to demonstrate thought process and how ideas have derived from research.

Evidence for this task was variable, there was some excellent and well-presented evidence that demonstrated a clear development process in response to valid research. However, there was also evidence of weak visual representation that was not consistent to the standard of this qualification. There was also significant evidence of some learners producing similar ideas for a product, learners must be encouraged to interpret the external assessment independently.

Task 5 – AC 1.6

In this task learners are required to select and present at least one final idea, giving reasons for their choice. Reasons should be valid and consistent with the development in Task 4.

As in Task 5, evidence was variable; there was some excellent visual representation that was well justified and highly presented compared to very weak evidence not consistent with the standard of this qualification. There were quite a lot of final ideas presented poorly and did not demonstrate refinement or sufficient presentation skills reflective of the chosen craft discipline.

Most learners that did not do well in Task 5 due to the level of the work were generally also unsuccessful in Task 4. Some learners also presented a relevant final idea but did not give reasons for their choice and this is a mandatory part of the task and assessment criterion.

Higher achieving learners effectively used previous tasks to clearly inform the selection of a final design idea and presented this very well. In addition, reasons given were wholly valid and justified. In these cases, learners had taken more time to refine an idea based on thorough research and the requirements of the brief.

Task 6 - AC 1.7

This task requires learners to produce a costed project plan inclusive of all resources and stages of production required to make their intended craft item.

Most learners submitted well-presented plans inclusive of realistic costings that had been well researched and collated, costs had also been referenced in Task 3 effectively.

Most learners also clearly stated the stages of production relevant to their craft area.

Presentation of the costed project plans was mostly good and improved from previous windows, higher achieving learners included an excellent amount of detail such as contingency plans.

Not all learners effectively stated the order of activities or the resources they will require within the project plan. These are both mandatory elements of this task and should clearly reflect the production stages associated to the chosen craft discipline and selected idea in Task 5.

Most learners who did not achieve this assessment criterion did not submit any evidence at all.

Planning in the external assessment

Centres are reminded to give due attention to the assessment windows of the external assessment. It's not advisable for learners to sit the external assessment early in their programme. It's far more appropriate to enter learners once they have taken part in the relevant teaching to ensure they are well prepared. Centres would be in a better position to prepare their learners for the external assessment following the support of an external moderation visit for the internally assessed units.

Chief Examiner: Lesley Davis

Date: June 2018