NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Creative Studies: Interactive Media (600/6906/5)

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 including 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, 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 further improvement to the standard of work for this marking window and as with previous windows this was differentiated and reflective of the subject.

As in previous windows there was also evidence of some low-level entries. However, this was based on learners not submitting sufficient evidence of a task or part of a task rather than the submission not being of an appropriate level.

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

There was significant improvement of digital evidence submitted and this was very effective for all tasks, hard copy documentation was also useful to support digital evidence where required.

There were some good examples of technically competent work submitted during this marking period, and an improvement to the understanding of interactive media design and processes.

Higher achieving learners demonstrated excellent skill development within their design work and technical application and final outcomes were clearly individual. These were equally supported by well-justified annotations and design/technical notes to demonstrate their understanding of the subject and applying skills at an appropriate level. They were also successful based on their evidence of understanding of all processes (valid research, planning, design, production and review) rather than just completing a final functioning product.

A minority of 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 unit content 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 five assessment criteria.

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 whereby 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, these 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

Most learners labelled their work effectively per task, and this was much improved. This very much aided the examination of digital evidence.

There were a small number of submissions where tasks were labelled incorrectly or more than once and this proved difficult to examine. Teachers must ensure learners fully understand how to reference their work correctly per task to ensure examiners are fully aware for which task evidence has been submitted. All submissions should be labelled and checked regardless of the format to aid the examination process.

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.

Learners should check that their work is correctly saved prior to submission. Once the work has been transferred to suitable storage devices learners should also then check that their work can be opened. This process must be undertaken by the learner, centres should be aware that the demonstration of learners testing and saving the product correctly is a mandatory requirement of Task 6.

The acceptable file formats are clearly stated in the external assessment instructions provided for each marking window. If a file type is not on the list of acceptable file formats as detailed in the External Assessment Instructions document, it will not be accepted. This is because Examiners may not be able to open certain file types.

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.

The brief and the tasks in the external assessment are to provide a context, it is therefore important that during the teaching of the unit, learners understand the assessment criteria and the grading descriptors. The tasks are to guide the learners to complete the assessment criteria and if the tasks are not completed fully then the assessment criteria might not be achieved, and a grade of NYA would be recorded.

The use of templates within the assessment is not permissible. Students must not be given templates or prescribed instructions that have clear teacher input. No further information such as prompts regarding types of content or questions to the learners is permitted.

The initial planning tasks require evidence of individual interpretation of the design brief and an individual response to the constraints of the design brief. As in previous windows there were some learners who demonstrated the review of existing products within their planning evidence and this is not assessed, this type of research must have a clear and valid impact on their own idea development.

There was some improvement of the visual representation for the planning tasks, however there was also some submissions that required much annotation/written justification to communicate their ideas effectively, because hand-drawn planning was limited in detail and difficult to understand the interactive elements. Digital representations were much more effective to communicate ideas and understanding.

The preparation of assets and creating the product has also improved but proved difficult to examine for some learners. Although most clearly separated the preparation work from the final production work, evidence of preparing the assets for the final product was quite limited and dependent on the evidence of producing the final product. Although this may be relevant for assessment criterion 1.3, these are two separate tasks (3 and 6) that require quite different processes.

Many learners have continued to use screenshots to demonstrate the creation of assets and authoring the final product. These were useful forms of evidence if they were annotated to explain what the learner is showing by providing the screenshot. This is often the best way to evidence the development process, however Teachers need to ensure learners are fully aware that the final interactive product is not evidence of the authoring process or of creating the assets in the development stages.

Assessments of the development processes were mostly good and in some cases very detailed written evaluations, most learners responded very well to Task 5 and demonstrated a good awareness of processes undertaken and their personal performance.

Evidence of testing the product was much improved and many learners did this effectively within their written evidence and annotated screenshots. Most demonstrated valid understanding of this requirement.

Evidence regarding describing how the product can be cross-platformed has further improved. Stronger learners interpreted the task effectively and clearly stated/illustrated how their product can be saved/published/exported across the 3 different platforms stated in the design brief. In addition they provided valid understanding of how different platforms effect the accessibility and usability of their product.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1 - AC 1.1

In this task learners are required to plan and prepare for the production of final work in the form of an interactive media product. Some evidence was submitted via hard copy but mostly digitally.

There was some valid evidence for this assessment criterion in Task 2 and learners have been awarded for this appropriately.

There was a substantial volume of good and valid evidence submitted for this task. Most learners attempted to complete all elements of the task in some detail and this was positive to examine.

Learners responded creatively to the theme and seemed to be consistently engaged throughout the planning. Higher achieving learners demonstrated imaginative ideas generation and realised these effectively.

Most learners provided evidence that demonstrated relevant planning of resources, possible products and required techniques and processes. Most effective evidence supported these plans with annotated visual representations of interface design ideas and layout plans (hard copy and/or digital). Weaker learners did not complete all requirements of both parts of the task. In these cases, they provided basic planning documentation with minimal relevance to the brief or the intended product.

Task 2 - AC 1.2

In this task learners are required to use ideas developed in Task 1 to inform the production of final work in the form of an interactive media product. Some evidence was submitted via hard copy but mostly digitally.

There was a substantial amount of good evidence submitted for this task by most learners. There was some valid evidence for this assessment criterion in Task 1 and learners have been awarded for this appropriately.

Evidence for this task should have a consistent continuation of the planning in Task 1 but should demonstrate significant progression of the idea development and a selection process, however this was not always evident.

Learners who submitted digital representations were much more effective, even if they had been created initially by weaker drawings/layouts/sketches. Higher achieving learners considered alternative designs, plans and navigation structures. In addition, these were consistently linked to the design brief constraints.

There was mostly good and detailed evidence for the navigation of the interactive product, most evidence was submitted in diagram format and this was effective and easy to understand learners' intentions.

Task 3 - 1ˢᵗ part AC 1.3

This task requires learners to demonstrate their ability to prepare assets for the final product, the preparation of assets should clearly relate to their final product and platform. This is a preparation task and if learners are acquiring assets (permissible) then they must demonstrate how they have prepared these (eg edited and saved) for correct use in the final product.

Higher achieving learners did this effectively using annotated screenshots that demonstrated choices made within appropriate software packages to edit and save assets in correct formats for their product. There was also good use of correct subject terminology relevant to their chosen interactive media product.

Some learners did not attempt the task or provided screenshots with limited or no annotation or simply saved assets in a folder with no indication of purpose or how they would be used. In these cases, the awarding of Pass criteria proved difficult as this is a separate task to the actual production of the product.

Learners must be aware that as well as producing a final interactive product they must also clearly demonstrate the process undertaken to prepare assets or edit and import exiting assets to achieve a minimum Pass.

Task 4 - AC 1.5

In this task learners are required to describe how their media product could be cross-platformed. There was further improvement of evidence submitted for this task.

Most learners submitted some valid evidence for this task, however, as in previous windows this task also proved very challenging for some learners. Weaker learners focused on writing about content and how their product would be viewed, and this was not wholly appropriate to allow for Pass assessment criteria to be awarded.

Many learners were able to sufficiently describe how their product can be adapted (saved/published/exported) for three different interactive media platforms as stated in the design brief.

For some learners this task was incomplete and in some minor cases the only task not attempted.

Higher achieving learners used annotated screenshots that demonstrated preparing their own product for the three different platforms, these included screenshots of software options, preparing save/export/publish software settings and final file types.

Task 5 - AC 1.4

In this task learners are required to assess the whole development process. Most learners submitted very good, well written and refined reviews for this task, many of which were detailed and reflective of the whole development processes.

Higher achieving learners illustrated their reviews with specific examples and this was highly effective.

There was also some limited evidence of basic reviews and many learners interpreted this task as an evaluation and simply stated strengths and weaknesses of the project as a whole and how they could improve, and this is not the aim of this task. The task is focused on the development stages rather than the success of the final product, it is intentional that this task should not be completed at the end of the paper, after the completion of the product to further reiterate the focus on the development process.

Task 6 - AC 1.3

Evidence for this task was improved and mostly valid. All learners submitted a final product which was functional and mostly completed. Most learners submitted sufficient supporting evidence of creating the final product, this was mostly by using screenshots of production process and testing the product in appropriate software.

Most learners submitted good work for this task and final interactive products demonstrated creative application and some valid technical competence at this level.

Weaker learners although provided screenshots of creating the product, demonstrated a very limited understanding of authoring an interactive media product, associated subject terminology or the use of their chosen software. In a small number of cases just the final product was submitted with no further evidence.

Learners must ensure they are not dependent on their product being the only evidence for this task, in addition evidence of testing the product is a mandatory requirement of this task.

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