

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

Assessment window: 1 September - 20 November 2015

This report contains general information from the Chief Examiner. The aim is to point out the positives and negatives of the scripts in the assessment window to guide you to areas that are doing well and not so well.

Key points:

- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- 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 preparatory and timed period) 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 preparation tasks must be supervised by the Teacher and can be sat in a normal classroom environment. The tasks within the preparation period do not need to be invigilated. However, the preparation tasks must be treated independently from the teaching of the unit and learners must complete all tasks independently. This means the preparation tasks must not be Teacher led.

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

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

Standard of learner work

The standard of work for this marking window was variable at this level. There were some good examples of creative work submitted during this assessment window; however examiners expressed some concern about the general standard of work in many cases and the general lack of understanding of interactive media design processes.

The overall standard of the work produced by learners was generally not at the creative or technical standard which is consistent with the level of the qualification. It is the centres responsibility to ensure that the unit content is delivered in its entirety, before learners sit the external assessment, to allow learners the opportunity to achieve across all seven assessment criteria.

The qualification is a combination of visual design and technical ability. Teachers must ensure that learners are fully aware of the assessment criteria and grading descriptors during the teaching of the unit (prior to the 'preparatory period') so that the learner can relate the tasks to the relevant assessment criterion.

In addition it is the centres responsibility to ensure learners are recruited with integrity at the correct level.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

Most learners labelled their work effectively per task, however there is continuous concern regarding learner evidence and referencing. Teachers must ensure learner fully understand how to reference their work correctly per task to ensure examiners are fully aware of which task evidence has been submitted.

Learners are clearly informed to label each task separately within the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment- V Certs and in the External Assessment Instructions.

This wasn't seen to be consistently or reliably applied across the evidence during this assessment window. 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.

Learner must avoid referencing their evidence with multiple tasks; the evidence needs to directly relate to a specific task.

Learner should 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 a suitable storage device learner should check that their work can then be opened. In the case of a website, for example, the product should be tested to ensure full functionality.

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. The learner would be disadvantaged, as the work may be marked as Not Yet Achieved.

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 learner sitting the external assessment.

The brief and the tasks in the external assessment are to provide a context, it's important that during the teaching of the unit, learner understand the assessment criteria and the grading descriptors. The tasks are to guide the learner 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 Not Yet Achieved would be recorded.

The use of templates within the assessment is not permissible. Learners must not be given templates or prescribed instructions that have clear Teacher input.

Developing the interactivity of a given product has to be undertaken by the student within the assessment time. Screen-grabs are potentially very useful evidence. Screen-grabs should be annotated to explain what the learner is showing by providing the screen-grab. This is often the best way to evidence the development process Teachers need to ensure learner are fully aware that the final interactive product is not evidence of the process of developing it. There must be evidence of the processes involved in undertaking the tasks to show learner understanding and allow for these aspects to be assessed.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1 – AC 1.1

There seemed to be some misinterpretation in this task as many learners provided written accounts and reviews of existing products rather than planning their own product. Teachers are reminded that any work produced in the teaching and learning of this unit must not be submitted in the external assessment tasks.

Whilst there were well-developed plans in some cases, this was not consistent across all learners. There was limited planning for the navigation through the potential interactive product.

In some cases the time spent on the planning for Task 1, did not lead to a development of ideas, and the resources, techniques and processes were limited. Learners who achieved well in this criterion tended to demonstrate awareness and judgment in the structure of the planning process with full reference to the brief.

Task 2 – AC 1.2

Most learners used their first idea rather than developing more than one idea, and this limited achievement. Learners must ensure they consider alternative designs, plans and navigation, particularly to achieve the higher grades. The process of designing and developing the interactive product was not always recorded sufficiently to allow learners to achieve the assessment criteria 1.2 (and 1.1).

In some cases there was no development of design ideas or informed selections recorded. Research which is carried out in 'selecting from a range of resources' needs to be demonstrably influential in generating the learner's own ideas. It also needs to be purposeful and not a source for identical replication. Many learners simply stated likes or dislikes rather than how the findings clearly influenced their ideas, or informed the production of the final work.

Many learners spent much of their time, altering text content. However Lorem Ipsum (filler text used by designers) was used more frequently which is good practice.

Task 3 – 1st part AC 1.3

This qualification is a combination of visual design and technical ability. For many learners the design quality was weak. The product is a visual artifact and needs to be approached with due attention paid to the qualities it demonstrates in this regard.

The design process should demonstrate evidence of how learners have realised their creative intentions as well as of the development of the technical performance of their product. Learners should comment upon informed decisions they've made with regards to design elements such as font size, alternative typefaces they investigated (in an interactive environment rather than print context), and the juxtaposition of images and text blocks in the design.

The use of software for assessment criterion 1.3 was sometimes focused on preparing assets for products and did not always use processes appropriate for this purpose. An effective use of suitable software was not demonstrated, with learners not understanding basic concepts such as resizing, resolution, constant aspect ratio, or the difference between bitmap and vector files and the resultant effects when adjusted.

Task 4 – 1st part AC 1.4

The majority of learners achieved this assessment criterion. However many learners merely listed the chronology of events (rather than production stages) in a purely descriptive format. Reviews at this level need to be evaluations of the process and the success or otherwise of the journey thus far, and this involves more than a sequential list of tasks completed.

This part of the review is intended to be a process of reflection with the intention that it can inform the learner of the progress, the validity, and the practicality of the designing and planning process undertaken. It is also intended to allow learners to assess the visual and technical qualities of the work to this point.

Task 5 – AC 1.5

For this criterion, learners need to reflect on whether the product is viewable, and operates eg on both Mac and PC's, in different browsers or on mobile devices. The learner does not need to ensure that the product will work on any device but needs to show awareness of how this may be achieved, or made possible, where relevant. The higher grades, naturally, require demonstration of a more in-depth understanding of possible generic cross-platform transfer processes.

There was more understanding demonstrated in the responses for this criterion for this window. However, there were some responses which, whilst acknowledging that there might be issues, did not demonstrate an awareness of them or how they might be approached.

Task 6 – 2nd part AC 1.3

This was the more successful outcome in the learner work and many interactive products, which were often websites, worked adequately, however interaction was frequently limited to navigating between pages. More successful products utilised interactivity within the pages (of a website for example) and not just a '3 page' template. As in the first part of evidence for 1.3, demonstration is expected of the design process in realising the learners' creative intentions, as well as of the development of the technical performance of the product. Therefore, it would be expected that learners would make informed decisions, and comment upon, design elements such as font size, alternative typefaces investigated, and the juxtaposition of images in the design and construction of the final product.

Task 7 – 2nd part AC 1.4

The majority of learners achieved this assessment criterion. As in Task 4, reviews at this level need to be evaluations of the process and the success or otherwise of the final product, and this involves more than a sequential list of tasks completed.

The work completed for this task needs to be looked at with some objectivity and an evaluation of it completed with realistic and honest appraisal. The product is a visual artifact and needs to be approached with due regard to the visual qualities it demonstrates.

This part of the review is intended to be a process of reflection on the visual and technical qualities of the final product, and its successful points as well as those that could be improved. However as for Task 4, many learners merely listed the chronology of events in a purely descriptive format.

For this assessment window many learners were aware of the need to use a suitable file type. However there were still some instances where the file type was not able to be opened readily, or could only be done so with the generating software, websites, or any interactive products, need to be accessible, external to the software which produced them. Teachers must ensure they refer to the External Assessment Instructions document and the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment- V Certs regarding acceptable file formats.

Planning in the external assessment

Centres are reminded to be aware of the assessment windows of the external assessment. It's not advisable for learners to sit the external assessment early in their course. 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.

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Date:

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