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

Assessment window: 01 February- 22 April 2016

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 supervised and invigilated time) 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 time can be sat in a normal classroom environment, however, separate from the teaching of the unit. The tasks within the supervised period do not need to be invigilated; however, learners must complete all tasks independently. This means the preparation tasks completed in this supervised time must not be Teacher led. The invigilated hours must be administered with a trained invigilator.

The completion of the external assessment both supervised and invigilated time must be 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 mostly good at this level.

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

It is the centre's 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 five assessment criteria.

This 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 external assessment window so that the learner can relate the tasks to the relevant assessment criterion.

In addition it is the centre's responsibility to ensure learners are recruited with integrity and 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 learners fully understand how to reference their work correctly per task to ensure examiners are fully aware for which task evidence has been submitted.

Most learners submitted work digitally. Not all folders were labeled effectively or contained accurate or, in some cases, any evidence.

Referencing 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 (NYA) grade may be awarded.

Learners should be encouraged to check all work is labelled regardless of the format to aid the examination process.

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 a suitable storage device learners should check that their work can 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 assessment 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 learners sitting 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. 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 learner 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 screenshot. This is often the best way to evidence the development process Teachers need to ensure learners 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 was some good interpretation of this task and most learners provided evidence that demonstrated careful planning. Most effective evidence was annotated visual representations of ideas and navigation structures.

There was also quite a lot of evidence of written accounts and reviews of existing products rather than planning their own product and this is not required for this task and cannot be awarded any marks.

Task 2 – AC 1.2

Most learners submitted sufficient evidence for this task and representations of ideas at this stage did inform final products. Many learners did not fully explore more than one idea effectively.

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 criterion.

There was some limited planning for the navigation of the potential interactive product.

Task 3 – Part 1 AC 1.3

This task requires learners to demonstrate skills via a combination of visual design and technical ability. For many learners the design quality was the weaker element.

The design process should demonstrate evidence of how learners have realised their creative intentions as well as the development of the technical performance of their product.

This task requires learners to demonstrate their ability to prepare assets for the final product. Most learners did this quite well using annotated screenshots that demonstrated choices made within software packages in order to save media in appropriate formats.

Less successful learners simply saved assets in a folder with no indication of purpose or how they would be used.

Learners must be aware that as well as producing a final interactive product they must also clearly demonstrate the process undertaken to prepare assets in order to achieve a Pass.

Task 4 – Part 1 AC 1.4

The majority of learners submitted valid written work for this task.

However many learners simply listed or described the stages and activities they undertook. 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 of the work to date and allow learners to assess the visual and technical qualities of the work to this point and identify further actions for successful completion of the product.

Task 5 – AC 1.5

Learners submitted some good and valid evidence for this task, however there is still too much focus on how the products are viewed rather than how the product could be used cross platform.

Learners are required to describe how the product can be saved/published/exported for different interactive media platforms. Successful learners used annotated screenshots that demonstrated software options, informed decisions, preparation and final file types.

Task 6 – Part 2 AC 1.3

Learners submitted some very good work for this task and final interactive products demonstrated technical competence at this level.

Successful learners supported their final products with evidence of creating pages/screens/levels using annotated screenshots or design and technical notes.

Learners must ensure they are not dependent on their product being the only evidence for this task.

Task 7 – Part 2 AC 1.4

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.

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.

Successful learners clearly differentiated between the two elements of review (mid-point and final reflection).

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: June 2016