

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Creative Studies: Graphic Design (600/6907/7)

Assessment window: 1 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 learner evidence 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 examiners welcomed examples of attractive and exciting typographic work seen in individual AOs this window. The examiners also noted improvements in the creative use of graphic design elements since the previous window. However, reflecting on the broad scope of learner evidence submitted, the following concerns are noted:

- The standard of some work in Task 4 was not of the standard required for the qualification.
- The sufficiency of evidence for individual tasks was not consistent with a particular concern over task 2 where planning could be neglected.

Some examples of Merit and Distinction grade work was seen especially in tasks 1 and 4. Some learners met the challenges and opportunities of this typography paper with creativity and originality, they will be proud of what they achieved. The examiners recognised the work that the learners undertook to realise the creative potential of typography through experimental and development work. The more successful learner evidence used the context of the film quote to effectively inform the progress of typographic design. Some good and very good colour and black and white typography was seen this window.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

The vast majority of centres provided learner evidence which was clearly and reliably referenced. The requirement for the referencing of individual tasks is stated in the rubric. Instructions in the External Assessment paper states that tasks should be clearly labeled and distinguished from one another. Failure to follow this requirement may have significant implications for the awarding of candidate grades if examiners are not easily able to identify which evidence relates to which task.

Some learner evidence was not seen to consistently apply clear referencing. For example, some work was not seen to be referenced to tasks and some work appeared to be referenced to more than one task. This has the potential for confusion and a continued concern of a risk of disadvantage to learners was noted by examiners. Tasks which are not clearly referenced may not be able to be rewarded and a grade of NYA will be recorded. This will result in an overall grade of NYA for the external assessment despite the referencing of some items of work or the quality of other items of work.

Evidence creation

The qualification aims to develop a broad and comprehensive understanding of graphic design, and develop a significant knowledge core which spans the vocational sector. This paper was concerned with typography. Many centres provided a commendable focus on this discipline in this examination window.

The brief provided a structure and context for a typographic design from a choice of texts. The examiners noted that learners often took to the paper with a sense of curiosity and with a sense of fun. Learner evidence which did not remain focused on the brief however, was seen to risk not achieving a grade in some or all of the assessment criteria. Learners are advised to avoid time spent on activities which are not required by the paper. For example, the primary focus of task 1 was on the learners' use of visual language rather than gathering the work of others. Task 2 did not require an evaluation at Pass grade, however detailed. When doing so, learners were sometimes seen to neglect producing a plan. A record of work and a plan of work are required. However, the examiners did note that most learner evidence did not include unnecessary Health and Safety notes or risk assessments. This is a welcome improvement from the previous window.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

The examiners noted many creative and lively responses to this paper. The examiners also noted an improvement in the Graphic Design focus of much of the learner evidence. However, the examiners noted that some centres remain focused on a Design Technology approach to the qualification. Centres will wish to note that this approach may not be appropriate in a graphic design external assessment and potentially distract from the visual design character of the qualification. The qualification is concerned with visual design rather than production. Learners who do not remain focused on the brief are in danger of not achieving a grade in each assessment criteria. This was particularly visible in task 2 where good quality reflections which would be consistent with a Merit grade were not accompanied by a plan. This task was awarded an NYA grade in such cases. An evaluation is not necessarily seen to be a satisfactory substitute for a plan.

Task 1 – A.C 1.1

The focus of this task was in the learners' use of visual language and techniques to communicate a variety of ideas for the typographical presentation of a film quote. Unfortunately, a significant amount of learner evidence did not satisfactorily distinguish between visual language (which is required in the task) and the English language used to communicate visual ideas. Whilst communication in English is not at all discouraged, where learner evidence relied only on written language to communicate ideas, it was awarded NYA. Much of the learner evidence however, was awarded Pass. Such learner evidence used visual devices appropriately, such as letterforms, colour, typographical layout and tone, to present a variety of typographical ideas. Some learner evidence gaining higher grades in this task was also seen. Such learner evidence contained the application of a range of visual language and techniques to communicate ideas and solutions appropriate to the chosen film quote. In some learner evidence, the degree of investigation with visual language and visual techniques was often attractive and clear, and the standard of work was consistent with a Merit grade. Some of these ideas were intelligent and fun.

Task 2 – A.C 1.2

The focus of this task was to both record progress so far and to plan further work. Much learner evidence contained clear evidence of these activities and the examiners noted some improvements since the last window. Where learners were awarded a grade of NYA typically such learner evidence provided a review of work so far and a record of some of the strengths and weaknesses of individual design ideas. However, this evidence did not include a plan for the learners work which showed planned connections over time. The evidence was therefore not seen to be consistent with a Pass grade. Other learner evidence which was graded NYA, contained work titled 'a plan' but was seen to be retrospective as it included terms in the past tense.

Where learner evidence was awarded a Pass it clearly separated a record from a plan. Such learner evidence typically clearly referenced design ideas and recorded the strengths and weaknesses of each one. This learner evidence also provided a plan for ongoing work which projected stages over time. Where higher graded learner evidence was seen, learners had not only clearly separated recording from planning, but had used the reflection on their progress as a base to effectively plan the creative development of their work.

Task 3 – A.C 1.3

This task was focused on selecting the most appropriate graphic design materials, techniques and equipment following experiments with typographic designs and equipment. The paper clearly states that learners must demonstrate selecting rather than simply illustrating graphic design materials, techniques and equipment. Where the examiners saw an ostensibly indiscriminate range of materials, techniques or equipment without apparent selection, a grade of NYA was awarded. Some learner evidence contained written commentary. However, these explanations were not seen to reliably relate to the design brief. This was seen to be consistent with an NYA grade. Typically, learner evidence which achieved a Pass grade contained samples, or detailed descriptions of a range of materials and techniques. These learners also provided some explanation of their choices. Such learner evidence sought to describe how the selections were appropriate for the design brief and its specification.

Task 4 – A.C 1.4

Task 4 required learners to develop their typographic designs using the ideas from previous tasks. The typographic designs were to be developed within the constraints of the brief. In this paper the constraints related to colour and black and white work, and to size. The overwhelming number of centres found these constraints straight forward to work with. The majority of learner evidence contained a design in colour and a different design in black and white. All learner evidence was seen to work within the size constraint. However, some learner evidence included an evaluation. This is not required by the task. Some good work was seen in response to this task. However, where learner evidence was graded NYA for this task, the evidence was not seen to demonstrate the learner's understanding of the key characteristics of typography. These learners' evidence did not sufficiently pay attention to the formation of individual letters, visual contrast and the creative potential of typographic layout. Learner evidence graded NYA also typically contained work which was not seen to be consistent with the standard required for the level of the qualification. Pass graded learner evidence typically contained different attractive work in colour and in black and white. This evidence indicated that the learners had effectively understood some of the characteristics of typography and deployed letterforms, visual contrast and combined letter layouts creatively. Where this was seen to be consistently applied and the learners demonstrated sound grasp of the constraints of the brief, developing ideas and solutions accordingly - a higher grade was awarded.

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:

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Date:

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