

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

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 the 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

A significant improvement in the standard of many scripts was noted by the examiners. Examples of attractive, exciting and creative work were seen during this assessment window. Some interesting and well developed responses to the Ochre paper were seen. The examiners recognised the developmental work that learners displayed taking initial ideas through experiments and processes to show how they would look on a business card and a van side. Many learners and centres will be proud of what they achieved. The examiners saw evidence demonstrating some sound technical ability and original creative skill.

During this assessment window, learners used hand-drawn images, digital illustration work, photography and some good application of visual language to develop ideas. However, the standard of work produced in this window was not seen to be at the appropriate level. In addition, some learners did not demonstrate satisfactory skills in the planning, organising and recording of work.

Centres are reminded that they “are responsible for ensuring that this qualification is appropriate for the age and ability of learners. They need to make sure that learners can fulfil the requirements of the assessment criteria of this qualification”, as per the NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Creative Studies: Graphic Design (600/6907/7) qualification specification, Issue 5 July 2013, page 5 and issue 3 October 2015, page 6.

Centres may wish to refer to the NCFE website www.ncfe.org.uk for exemplar material for the internally assessed units, previous external assessment papers, and the Chief Examiner report for the previous assessment window.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

An overall improvement in the referencing of learner work was noted by the examiners. However, there continues to be concern that the way tasks are referenced may disadvantage learners.

The External Assessment Instructions make reference to the Regulations for the Conduct of the External Assessment - V Certs. These instructions state that tasks should be clearly labeled and distinguished from one another. This was not seen to be consistently or reliably applied among some scripts. 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. Learners must avoid referencing their evidence with multiple tasks. Individual tasks must be consistently referenced to an identifiable item(s) of work. Tasks which are not referenced cannot be rewarded and a grade of Not Yet Achieved will be recorded. This will result in an overall grade of Not Yet Achieved for the external assessment despite the referencing of some items of work or the quality of other items of work.

Centres are again reminded of the instructions for the preparation time. Centres will note that whilst teaching time will be Teacher led, the preparation time within the external assessment is to be learner led.

Only material produced during the preparation time and the examination time, by the learner should be submitted.

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. Centres provided a commendable focus on graphic design discipline of logo design in this assessment window. The examiners were concerned that learners spent time on activities which are not specifically required to gain at least a Pass grade. Learners are advised to remain focused on the brief and the tasks to avoid spending time on unnecessarily activities.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Learners must take regard of the content of individual tasks and the assessment criteria associated with the task. Learners should clearly understand what they are required to do in each discrete task. Each task should be clearly identifiable and distinguishable from other tasks as each task will be graded separately by the examiner.

Task 1 required learners to use a range of visual language techniques to develop initial ideas. Learners are not required to focus on ideas gained from the Internet. Task 2 required learners to record what they have done and plan what they are going to do. Learners may not be clear about the use of evaluations. A number of portfolios contained numerous evaluations. Whilst learners must show sufficient awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of their work, they are not necessarily expected to produce formal evaluations as a matter of course for a Pass grade. Task 3 required learners to select the materials, techniques and equipment to meet the Ochre design brief. A presentation of general graphic design equipment is not sufficient to demonstrate selection. Task 4 required learners to develop ideas to meet the external factors described in the brief. In this paper the external factors were the placement of the log on a business card and a van side. Addressing only one of these external factors is not a sufficient response to this task.

Task 1 – A.C 1.1

As in previous windows some learners neglected to use a range of visual techniques and language to communicate a variety of ideas. Centres must distinguish between visual language (which is required in the task) and the English language to write about visual matters and ideas. Whilst communication in English is not at all discouraged, the primary focus of the task is to communicate in visual language and through visual techniques.

Again in this window, where learners concentrated on the work of others, there was a risk of failing to communicate their own ideas in response to the brief. It's clearly recognised that graphic designers study and sample the work of others. This can be a productive and creative activity. However, learners can only be rewarded if this leads to the communication of the learners own ideas. This is the focus of Task 1.

Task 2 – A.C 1.2

This task required learners to record what they have done and plan what they are going to do. The examiners noted improvements since the last window and the efforts learners had made in recording their progress and in planning their work. However, learners should clearly distinguish recording and planning. Where these activities are not clearly distinguishable a grade of Not Yet Achieved will be recorded. Where either of these activities are not sufficiently addressed or are omitted, a grade of Not Yet Achieved will be recorded. Learners should avoid composing plans which are retrospective as they constitute a record rather than a plan. Where learners presented satisfactory plans they projected their work into the future and made connections between activities over time.

Some detailed and insightful evaluations were seen in this assessment window. Where this work informed the planning of the Ocher activity learners attracted Merit grades. However, in some cases evaluations which were consistent with a Merit grade accompanied by plans were not seen to demonstrate critical understanding of progress towards meeting the design brief. A Merit grade was not awarded in such cases.

Learners must avoid using centre devised forms for the purpose of planning. This does not provide sufficient evidence of the learner's own understanding and application of planning.

Task 3 – A.C 1.3

Many learners reliably referenced this task. Centres are reminded that where this task is not reliably referenced by the learner, it may not be possible to reward learners for this task. In this task, learners must demonstrate that their selections are appropriate for the design brief and its specification to achieve a Pass grade. Some engaging illustrations of graphic design tools and materials were seen in some scripts. Some learners printed screen-shots of various stages of digital image manipulation, with annotations. This approach was seen to be satisfactory. Centres are reminded that this task requires selections to be made by the learner. This should be clear and explicate rather than assumed to have been made by the evidence of design activity.

Task 4 – A.C 1.4

Some creative and delightful responses to the external factors described in the design brief were seen in this task. Learners made commendable attempts to recognise the design challenges posed by the paper and provide appropriate and creative solutions. In developing ideas, learners exercised a command of materials and techniques which allowed their ideas to be clearly and creatively expressed. Some examples of good work were seen for this task which attracted Merit grades. Such learners were seen to have taken laudable pride in their work for this task.

However, learners are reminded that this task requires them to develop ideas in response to the external factors described. There must be evidence of the development to satisfy the criteria for a Pass. Where learners were awarded a Not Yet Achieved grade for this task, the evidence was often seen to be below the standard required at level 2, and did not satisfactorily address both of the external factors described in the brief. Where learners neglected either the business card or the van side, their evidence was not seen to be sufficient and a Not Yet Achieved grade was awarded. Learners are reminded that this task must be clearly identified and distinguished from other tasks.

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:

Date:

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