Chief Examiner Report

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Creative Studies: Performance Skills (601/0043/6)

Assessment window: 4 February – 26 April 2019

Paper Number: P000676

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, as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- grading information
- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- evidence creation
- interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria
- planning in the external assessment.

It is important to note that learners should not sit the external assessment until they have taken part in the relevant teaching of the full qualification content.

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment (supervised and invigilated sessions) must be conducted independently from the teaching of the unit. Work produced during the teaching and learning phase 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 within the conditions set out within the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment.

The completion of the supervised tasks must be supervised by the Teacher and can be sat in a normal classroom environment. The tasks within the supervised period do not need to be invigilated. However, 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.

Standard of learner work

There has continued to be an improvement in the standard of work for this marking window and this has had a positive impact on the overall achievement of the external assessment.

In addition, there is an improved understanding from learners regarding what is expected for each assessment task and how to reference each task, and this was positive to observe.

As in previous windows, there was some evidence of learners not reading the task requirements and misunderstanding that some tasks have more than one part. In some cases, if a task is not completed for all parts, in the entirety, this did not allow mandatory Pass Assessment Criteria (AC) to be achieved. Therefore, this may also result in a Not Yet Achieved (NYA) grade for the overall assessment of Unit 03.

Learners must be advised that if there are multiple parts to a task (eg A and B) then all parts of a task must be attempted.

The use of digital evidence was quite limited; however, where evident, this continued to be effective for Tasks 5 and 6. Where learners have used a software programme to develop ideas (AC 1.5) and visually represent final ideas (AC 1.6), there was also some good digital evidence for the costed project plans (AC 1.7).

There were some excellent examples of creative work submitted across an increased and wide range of disciplines and the majority of learners responded to the theme ‘Heavenly Desserts’ very well. However, there was also some minimal interpretation of the theme and some learners submitting very literal and obvious responses with limited connection to the requirements of the craft design brief.

Higher-achieving learners demonstrated thorough interpretations of the brief, with focused and purposeful research. Research had also been carefully collated and well presented to clearly inform the development of a wide range of design ideas, this resulted in a highly presented final idea supported by a detailed and convincing project plan.

There was also substantial evidence of learners not responding individually. In these cases learners produced quite similar interpretations of the theme, used similar research sources, experimented with the same craft techniques and produced similar final outcomes. Learners are reminded that they must respond to the brief and associated tasks independently and individually.

Although there has continued to be an improvement of learners using a wide range of research sources, there has also continued to be many learners not referencing these sources and this can limit achievement.

Some 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 content of the unit is delivered in its entirety, prior to learners undertaking the external assessment. In addition, it is the centre’s responsibility to ensure learners are recruited with integrity at the correct level. It was evident in this window that some learners were more suitable for the Level 1 qualification where they are not required to pass an externally assessed unit.

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments

Malpractice and Maladministration

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.

Examples of maladministration will include evidence whereby the centre haven'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 for the Conduct of External Assessment, which must be adhered to. The supervised sessions must 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

Referencing of the tasks has continued to improve and the majority of learners labelled their work effectively per task. It was also positive to see a range of formats of evidence submitted to best reflect the craft discipline learners have worked in.

There were some submissions that consisted of unclear and / or no referencing of tasks. Learners must be aware how to label evidence correctly, per task. This should also include reference to multiple parts of any task.

Learners are clearly informed to label each task separately within the Regulations for the Conduct of the External Assessment. 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.

Learners must attempt all tasks in the paper, and these should be clearly referenced. Any tasks not attempted or not referenced cannot be awarded 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.

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. Most learners seemed to be well prepared for the external assessment and seemed to understand the requirements for each task.

Most learners chose to work in a single craft discipline; however, multiple disciplines are also permitted. Although it is the learner's choice, it is expected that they would choose to work with materials, techniques and processes that they are familiar with and experienced in; however, in some cases this did not happen.

Even though learners are not required to produce a craft product, they must still demonstrate understanding of researching relevant information to inform ideas for their own craft product (AC 1.3 and 1.4), experiment with relevant craft techniques (AC 1.2), develop appropriate ideas for a craft product (AC 1.5) and select a final idea to plan production for (AC 1.6 and 1.7). All these tasks should be with clear relevance and understanding of their chosen craft discipline.

Most learners provided a good interpretation of the craft design brief and responded well to the theme. There was also some good evidence of learners demonstrating how they explored the limitations and challenges to the brief. However, many learners also had some common and obvious interpretations of the theme and there was substantial evidence of submissions having the same or very similar final product ideas early on and prior to any research or individual development of ideas.

Most learners submitted a valid range of research sources that were relevant to their chosen craft discipline. It was also positive to observe an increase in primary research sources. However, there continued to be some learners who did not understand the required difference of sources (particularly the use of online sources) or did not clearly reference these. Referencing at least three different sources is a mandatory part of Task 2 and if this is not clear then an NYA may be awarded. As in previous windows, most learners used online sources, and this is expected and acceptable; however, learners should clearly differentiate between online sources to ensure these are valid and not all websites (eg an online magazine, an online shop and a website).

There was good evidence of practical exploration and this was highly effective; however, some of the craft techniques explored were similar and possibly guided more than expected. Most learners were able to make valid comparison as required; however, some comparison between techniques was limited in analysis and evaluation to achieve higher grades. In addition, some practical experimentation focused on the use of equipment and properties of materials rather than the actual comparison of craft techniques.

In most cases, learners used visual techniques effectively to present their ideas. However, not all-visual evidence had been annotated to show development or the reasons for choosing their final idea and these are mandatory elements of Tasks 4 and 5. Overall, the visual representation of design work and final ideas was much improved. In some minimal cases, learners did not submit ideas of their own or choose a final idea selected from their developed ideas and this limited them. These are also mandatory elements of Tasks 4 and 5.

The majority of learners submitted good and well-presented costed project plans; most were detailed and reflected their selected final idea effectively. The use of digital software was particularly effective, as was the evidence of contingency planning and quality control.

As learners are not required to create an actual craft product in this assessment, teaching and learning of the unit content should be extensive with regard to interpreting a design brief; comparing and evaluating relevant craft techniques; research using a range of sources (primary and secondary); collating information and presenting findings; developing ideas; selecting final ideas; presenting/communicating ideas; and producing a costed project plan. The delivery of all learning outcomes is mandatory prior to learners taking the external assessment paper.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1 – AC 1.1

In this task learners are required to interpret the requirements of a craft brief, inclusive of analysing the creative opportunities and exploring the creative challenges that the brief presents.

Most learners demonstrated this effectively by writing notes, creating mind maps, mood boards and rough design sketches. Some learners submitted a substantial amount of evidence for this task; however, not all was relevant. Evidence must be relevant to demonstrate the interpretation of the brief individually by the learner and the potential opportunities and challenges appropriate to them. This task is not about exploring the opportunities and challenges of their ideas and there was some misinterpretation of this evident.

There was generally an effective and creative interpretation of the theme Heavenly Desserts. Learners seemed to engage with the theme well and higher-achieving learners demonstrated interesting and less obvious interpretations that were imaginative within their chosen discipline.

Most learners demonstrated descriptive explorations of the creative opportunities and challenges of the craft design brief. This was mostly evidenced via bulleted lists and written notes – this limited the achievement of higher assessment criteria, as there was limited evidence of critical understanding.

Higher-achieving learners also demonstrated a thorough understanding of the brief and its requirements, inclusive of the theme, location and target audience. This was also clearly linked to their planned research in Task 2 and intentions for development in Task 4 and was highly effective to demonstrate a coherent interpretation.

Task 2 – AC 1.3 and 1.4

In this task, learners are required to research information using a range of different sources, then collate and present research findings to inform their own craft ideas.

Most learners used a minimum of three different research sources; it was good to see that the sources were also relevant to their craft discipline. There was also an increased use of primary sources and this seemed to support learners' understanding of how they could use these sources to inform their own ideas.

Some learners submitted less than three sources or did not reference their sources. As in previous windows, learners were quite dependent on online sources and this could limit achievement if these are not valid (eg all websites rather than a website, online magazine, online shop etc).

Many learners used practical experimentation as part of their primary research and this was very successful. Centres are reminded that even if learners have access to the same resources and may use similar techniques, the outcomes and presentation of this evidence should be individual to each learner.

The collation of research findings was mostly good, well referenced and well presented. However, there were also some low level presentations of research where learners had limited collation and no references at all.

Many learners collated their findings effectively did not fully demonstrate how these would be used to inform their own idea development and this is a mandatory requirement of assessment criterion 1.4 and at times limited the awarding of higher assessment criteria.

Task 3 – AC 1.2

In this task, learners are required to carry out practical experimentation with at least two craft techniques in their chosen craft area. They are then required to compare and evaluate at least two different craft techniques that they have experimented with.
Most learners did this highly effectively and evidenced their practical experimentation using photographs, technical notes and samples. In most cases, these were also supported by informative annotations that demonstrated valid understanding.

This assessment window observed some excellent examples of learners applying technical skills creatively for this task. Higher-achieving learners submitted exciting and vibrant responses within their discipline that had imaginative links to the brief theme.

There has continued to be some limited comparison in many submissions, in these cases the evidence focused on strengths and weaknesses of the craft techniques rather than comparing at least two techniques.

Higher-achieving learners experimented with many more than two techniques and consistently annotated their evidence to show comparison and evaluation.

Task 4 – AC 1.5

This task requires learners to develop at least three different craft ideas. The craft ideas must be developed in response to the design brief.

Evidence for this task was variable, there was some excellent and highly presented evidence that demonstrated a clear development process in response to valid research. However, there were also some very basic submissions that had limited links to any research or the brief.

There has continued to be an increase of written evidence rather than visual evidence and this task requires both design ideas and the development of the ideas to be communicated. Learners should produce evidence for this task in a format that is best for them; however, this task is about developing design ideas so it is expected that some visual communication would be evident.

Learners with weaker drawing skills who were able to represent their ideas digitally, for example using an appropriate software package were more successful at visually communicating their intentions. This was further supported by annotations to demonstrate thought processes and how ideas have derived from research.

In some cases, learners used images of existing products. This is not acceptable as their own ideas and significantly limited achievement.

Task 5 – AC 1.6

In this task, learners are required to select and present a final idea, giving reasons for their choice. Reasons should be valid and consistent with the development in Task 4.
In Task 5 evidence was variable. There was some excellent visual representation that had been highly presented and well annotated to justify reasons, compared to very weak evidence not consistent to the standard of this qualification. In some minimal cases, learners submitted evidence completely separate to any of the previous tasks and this significantly limited achievement.

Most learners that did not do well in Task 4 due to the level of the work generally did not do well in this task either. Some learners also presented a different idea, not part of the development in Task 4, and this limited achievement in this task.

Some learners also submitted a relevant final idea selected form their development but did not give reason for their choice and this is a mandatory part of the task and assessment criteria – again, this significantly limited achievement.

Task 6 – AC 1.7

This task requires learners to produce a costed project plan inclusive of all required materials, costs and the stages of production required to make their intended final idea for a craft product selected in Task 5.

Most learners submitted well-presented plans inclusive of realistic costings that had been well researched and collated; in most cases the same costs had also been referenced in Task 3 effectively.

There were some excellent examples of well presented, thorough and detailed plans to allow for higher-end assessment criteria to be awarded. In most cases, these plans had been refined prior to submission, were logical and clearly reflected the final idea selected in Task 5.

There were some minimal submissions of lower-level plans that had been poorly presented, not readable, shown limited refinement and often did not reflect their selected craft item.

Not all learners included the stages of production for the final design idea and this is a mandatory element of this task.

Higher-achieving learners included an excellent amount of detail such as contingency plans and quality control.

Most learners were able to submit at least a basic project plan that included stages, materials and costs. Learners who did not achieve this assessment criterion did not submit any evidence at all.

Planning in the external assessment

Centres are reminded that they need to teach this unit before the learners complete the external assessment.

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Date: 21 June 2019