

**NCFE Level 1 Technical Award in Graphic Design (603/0844/8)**

**NCFE Level 2 Technical Award in Graphic Design (603/0845/X)**

**Assessment window:** 3 June 2019- 28 June 2019

**Paper Number:** P000708

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 Assessment
- 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.

## Grade Boundary Information

Each learner's external assessment paper is marked by an Examiner and awarded a raw mark. During the awarding process, a combination of statistical analysis and professional judgement is used to establish the raw marks that represent the minimum required standard to achieve each grade. These raw marks are outlined in the table below.

Max Mark	Level 2 Distinction	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Pass	Level 1 Distinction	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Pass	NYA
90	72	55	38	30	22	15	0

Grade boundaries represent the minimum raw mark required to achieve a certain grade. For example, if the grade boundary for the Pass grade is 25, a minimum raw mark of 25 is required to achieve a Pass.

Max UMS Score	Level 2 Distinction	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Pass	Level 1 Distinction	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Pass	NYA
200	160	140	120	80	60	40	0

*\* In order to ensure that levels of achievement remain comparable for the same assessment across different assessment windows, all raw marks are converted to a points score based on a uniform mark scale (UMS). For more information about UMS and how it is used to determine overall qualification grades, please refer to the qualification specification.*

## Administering the External Assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment. Learners may require additional pre-release material in order to complete the Tasks within the paper. These must be provided to learners in line with our Regulations.

Learners must be given the resources to carry out the Tasks and these are highlighted within the Qualification Specific Instructions Document (QSID).

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## Standard of Learner Work

Standard of work for this second external assessment for the Graphic Design qualification has been mixed. Overall standard of work is considerably lower than the first external assessment window.

There was a good range of traditional and digital techniques being used showing originality and consideration of the brief.

There was significant reliance on the use of Google images, this did have a noticeable impact on the marks being awarded. Whilst the paper does ask learners to reference any images that are not the learners own such as Google images, the use and presentation of Google images as their own used within their creative responses, cannot be credited and awarded marks.

As in the first external assessment window, the vast majority of learner evidence provided substantial written work that would have taken considerable time to complete. The sufficiency of the written work in many cases outweighed the creative responses, initial ideas, development and final design. Whilst tasks 1 and 2 did require communication of ideas, annotations and how the ideas meet the values and the requirements of the brief, the focus of the brief was on the creative intentions, ideas, development and final idea, rather than substantive written work.

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## Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment

### Malpractice

There have been some issues of malpractice raised in this assessment window. The Chief Examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise learners that instances of malpractice will affect the outcome on the assessment. It is imperative that centres and learners adhere to the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment to ensure the integrity of the qualification and that malpractice does not take place.

### Maladministration

No instances of maladministration were reported in this assessment window. The Chief Examiner would like to highlight the importance of adhering to the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment document in this respect.

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## Referencing of External Assessment Tasks

For this external assessment window, the referencing of tasks and organisation of evidence being presented was poor. One examiner has commented that for one learner being marked they received file formats of PDS, PDF, SERIF, 2D design, PPT and Word and paper copies of their designs. Examiners also commented that they received DVD's, and work mounted on A1 card. The external assessment paper requests that file formats used are PDF, Word or PowerPoint. If learners are submitting a range of file formats which cannot be accessed by the examiners it proves a challenge for the examiner. Similarly, if DVD's are submitted it could be a challenge for the examiner to be able to read a DVD, and likewise to be able to efficiently work through the external assessments without struggling to accommodate A1 mount boards.

In terms of marking, it was quickest to mark work which had been presented as **one** PowerPoint or PDF and displayed in the correct order, clearly labelled with each task and submitted on USB or CD.

The vast majority of learner work was not labelled correctly and not presented in the order of the tasks and therefore was very time consuming to mark. In instances where evidence is not labelled correctly the examiners used their best professional judgement to award the marks against the most suited task.

Learners are clearly informed to label each task separately within the Regulations for the Conduct of the External Assessment document. 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, this may limit the marks awarded for that task.

Clear plastic sleeves are neat to keep work in but very difficult to get work in and out of, especially without damaging work. If centres could please avoid the use of clear plastic sleeves this would be appreciated.

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## Evidence Creation

The external assessment is based on internally assessed units 1, 2, and 3, therefore learners should only be registered for the external assessment after sufficient mandatory unit content of these units has been delivered.

There was a good range of digital and traditional techniques being used to present the ideas and final design. The use of Photoshop, Illustrator and other digital manipulation packages were used to some good effect. A proportion of learners have used PowerPoint and Word to digitally manipulate the images which has been awarded but has also limited the learners in their creative response. Examiners saw a range of processes being used for task 3 including Photoshop, Illustrator, 2D Design, print making and hand drawn/painted ideas and outcomes.

As previously mentioned there was significant reliance on the use of Google images, this did have a noticeable impact on the marks being awarded. Whilst the paper does ask learners to reference any images that are not the learners own such as Google images, the use and presentation of Google images as their own used within their creative responses, cannot be credited and awarded marks. Learners must be discouraged by centres to use Google images in their work and to present them in their responses.

It is appreciated that stock images can be used in the Graphic Design industry, however the copyright will have been paid for. Where learners have used the images and work of others in their creative responses, examiners have marked the skill of the use of colour combinations, composition and meeting the requirements of the brief and not the skill in creating the imagery.

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## Responses of the Tasks within the Sections of the External Assessment Paper

There was evidence of a significant number of learners misinterpreting task 1 with learners presenting research and brief analysis. Learners were not awarded marks on task 2 and 3 by relying on imagery copied from the internet, such as Google images.

The portfolios that scored highly often had very definite development routes, exploring ideas, not just experimenting with backgrounds, fonts and the experimentation clearly related to the ideas. Learners who gained higher marks also showed there was direction in where the ideas were going and being developed. Some learners showed evidence of very good development routes but then did not think about how these could be applied to the end design.

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### Task 1

A significant number of learners misinterpreted task 1 as a research and mood board task rather than design sketches or scamps as initial ideas. Whilst it is good to show inspiration of ideas it is the interpretation of it and the creative intentions that are being marked. Examiners did mark positively and awarded whether the initial ideas were presented in written or sketched ideas.

Many learners have spent significant time presenting research, re-writing the brief and completing a design brief analysis which is not required as a task and is not included in the mark scheme.

For this window there was also a large proportion of learners who have spent considerable time completing posters and/or design analysis which again is not required, is not given as a task and is not included within the mark scheme.

Where learners performed well the initial ideas were presented as thumb nail sketches or scamps, ideas for composition and layout, typography and use of imagery and/or mind maps that explore creative possibilities and plan the experimentation stages. Where learners have also performed well they have included clear annotations of how the initial ideas meet the requirements of the brief.

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### Task 2

Learners scored highly on Task 2 where they selected one or two initial design ideas from task 1 to develop further and focus their experiments on and how to improve the design. It was helpful when learners thoroughly showed the digital development of the experiments and design development through

screen shots of the development process including rejected ideas. These screen shots made it easy to award marks as examiners could see all of the graphic components being covered and a clear thought out process.

Many learners showed typography exploration by simply downloading fonts from the internet and typing the festival name several times, however learners were awarded higher marks when they showed further exploration with features such as tracking, kerning, warping text or combining lettering with imagery, thinking about the typography as part of the overall composition of the poster, rather than an afterthought.

Learners performed well when evidence of experimentation was clearly labelled and identified, including rejected ideas. Experimentation of all 6 components is required to be awarded band 4 within the mark scheme.

Where experimentation showed a clear thought process, originality (learners own work), development and refinement, examiners were able to award higher grades. This was also possible if learners had experimented with all 6 graphic design components. Where it was not clear, examiners used their own best professional judgment to determine if all 6 components had been experimented with.

Experimentation ranged from traditional techniques that have then been scanned/copied and imported to a digital manipulation software package. In the vast majority of learner portfolios this proved to be highly effective and a true reflection of Graphic Design practice.

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### Task 3

The successful learners had focused on the key points in each task that led to the successful outcome of the final poster design. There were clear and obvious developments in task 2 using the Graphic Design components and materials, which then clearly matched the final outcome. Where learners had combined imagery taken from the internet, learners were not awarded for skill in the creation of imagery. All other components were marked based on application of skill.

The vast majority of learners responded to the brief and did not misinterpret the task and requirements of the brief. Where misinterpretation had occurred, examiners were not able to award high marks. There was a good mix of traditional and digital techniques used and as in task 2, where learners have provided clear screen shots or stages of development to completion, it helps the examiner understand and award for the skill used as per the mark scheme. In some cases the final design did not relate to the experimentation in task 2 which was required in the given task.

Some learners have included a significant amount of detail and information in the poster which is not required, such as lists of bands performing at the festival, times, dates and venues. Learners have not been penalised for this but it is unnecessary and time consuming.

Successful outcomes ranged from hand drawn or painted ideas, use of print techniques, to hand drawn ideas that have been developed and digitalised through the experimentation and final design stage. Learners achieved higher grades by showing good evidence of meeting the requirements of the brief and a good level of skill shown.

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## Task 4

Overall the quality of the final conclusions was good for this external assessment window. This task required learners to evaluate their own graphic design created in task 3, in relation to the brief. A bullet point list was provided for the learners in the task. Where learners achieved higher grades the bullet point list was used as a title to provide evidence against. In some cases the learners did not provide evidence of how they responded to the challenges presented by the brief, which would not provide the opportunity for the learners to achieve the higher grades.

There was a significant amount of written work throughout some learner portfolios that was not relevant to the tasks given. This evidence was considered and marked against task 4 and examiners used a holistic approach to marking this evidence. Where learners achieved higher grades the evaluations focused on and gave detailed conclusions about the appropriate use of the Graphic Design components, and good descriptions of the processes used to resolve the challenges faced by the brief in the final design.

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**Chief Examiner:** Catherine English

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> August 2019

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