

NCFE Level 3 Applied General Certificate in Art and Design (601/8898/4)

Assessment Window: 7 May 2019- 21 June 2019

Paper Number: P000702

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	Distinction	Merit	Pass	NYA
75	59	48	27	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.

Maximum UMS Score*	Distinction	Merit	Pass	NYA
500	325	275	225	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).

Standard of Learner Work

This was the first year that this externally assessed unit was made available for delivery as part of the NCFE Level 3 Applied General Certificate in Art and Design qualification. There were a very limited number of entries within this first assessment window, which was unsurprising as this unit was anticipated to be delivered synoptically to allow learners to draw on the specialist learning and skill development experienced throughout their programme.

This report is written to highlight findings from submissions this year. Although the size of the cohort taking this unit was relatively small, valuable insight into the unit can be gathered and used to support future delivery.

The underlying principle of this unit is to assess the learners' ability to respond to a thematic starting point and undertake a creative investigation into the chosen theme, which culminates in the production of a creative body of Art or Design work in a format of the learners' choice.

This year the theme was 'Covered' and it was clear from the range of responses that this thematic starting point was accessible by all learners who took this exam. Responses to the theme appeared to take quite a formulaic approach to the paper with all learners referencing a range of obvious synonyms for the word to inform their investigation and subsequent creative practice. The majority of learners had taken a very literal and unsurprising approach to the unit, which did, at times, lead to predictable outcomes that lacked imagination.

The paper provided learners with images and basic information about three Creative Practitioners whose work relates to the theme.

The exam is split into 3 individual tasks, which are designed to evidence the learner journey through the unit paper and theme.

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment

Malpractice

Evidence of malpractice has been 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.

Referencing of External Assessment Tasks

Although it was clear from the nature of the submitted work which evidence related to each individual task, it was noted that, at times, the examining process may have been helped by the numbering of tasks. In addition, where the evidence was presented on loose leaf pages, numbering the pages sequentially would support the assessment process.

Evidence Creation

Evidence for each part of this assessment must be created independently. With regards to the practical assessment it is important that learners submit evidence of all exploratory and experimental work created when developing their personal response to the theme.

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

Task 1

For Task 1 learners are required to research the three examples of work provided in the paper and to analyse how the work communicates of the theme 'Covered'. The task asks learners to consider how formal elements are used to visually communicate in each of the three examples. In addition to this analysis, learners are expected to undertake research to enhance their own understanding of the theme and to inform their personal response. Evidence for this task should be a written or word-processed document, which may include visual elements. Learners are also expected to provide a bibliography of sources used to undertake research. At this level it is expected that students are identifying appropriate

and relevant sources of information, undertaking independent research and applying this research to the development process.

Learner's submissions for this task varied significantly in quality. Those achieving higher marks for this task had demonstrated a basic ability to analyse the visual elements within the work and had started to use this analysis to infer meaning. In addition, these candidates demonstrated evidence of wider research into the theme and had documented the work of additional practitioners who had informed their response to the remaining tasks. These learner's were able to demonstrate a broad understanding of the theme, ideas and messages.

Unfortunately for learners achieving lower marks for this task, the evidence provided little to no evidence of analysis and was purely descriptive, often citing assumptions about the work that were either inaccurate or ill informed. In addition, for some learners there was very limited research beyond the examples provided in the brief. For these learners the response was considered as limited.

Following the release of the paper learners have 5 hours to conduct their investigation and produce the written response for this task. Therefore it is expected that learners will have conducted an extensive investigation that supports a thorough and informed understanding of themes, ideas and messages. The written report does not need to be excessively lengthy but should strive to include insightful and comprehensive analysis of the formal elements used to visually communicate and avoid wasting time simply describing the work.

The quality of the bibliographies were generally considered to be below what is expected for this level of qualification. The bibliographies within the sample were generally very short and for a number of learners the bibliographies incorrectly referenced sources such as 'Google Images' and 'Pinterest'. This limited referencing and lack of specific detail meant that the vast majority of learners were considered to have made limited use of sources. It is important that during the teaching and learning, in preparation for this unit, learners develop their research skills.

Although the assessment of this unit does not require learners to use a specific standardised format for their bibliographies, they are expected to have sufficient detail for the sources to be retrieved independently and should include all sources used to undertake research and not just those that have been directly referenced. In general, a bibliography should include:

- The authors' name.
- The titles of the work.
- The names and locations of the companies that published your copies of the sources.
- The dates your copies were published.
- The page numbers of your sources (if they are part of multi-source volumes).

For Task 2 learners are required to produce a written Statement of Intent explaining their planned response to the theme. The Statement of Intent is a vital part of the unit as it should afford clarity with regards to their creative intentions for the subsequent work. The exam paper clearly identifies to learners that the Statement of Intent should include:

- How they intend to communicate the theme of 'Covered'.
- Materials, techniques and processes that they plan to use.
- Resources.
- Anticipated timescales.

Unfortunately, learners in this series did not appear to fully understand the nature or purpose of the Statement of Intent and the documents did not contain the required details highlighted in the paper. The evidence submitted for Task 2 lacked any real sense of purpose and generally appeared to have been produced retrospectively. Generally learners were far too specific in how they planned to undertake the final task and used the Statement of Intent to outline exactly what they planned to produce and how they would accomplish this, including what materials, techniques and processes they planned to utilise. When learners were this specific, the proposal did not provide appropriate assessment evidence. It is important to note that whilst learners should use the Statement of Intent as an opportunity to explain their creative intention, this does not preclude learners from changing their mind regarding what they plan to produce as a result of their exploration and experimentation. Learners should clearly document any changes and adaptations to their stated creative intentions in their studio/workshop diary required for Task 3.

It is important that learners write their Statement of Intent after they conducted their research and completed the written document for Task 1, but before undertaking the practical work required for task 3. Learners should provide a Statement of Intent that broadly outlines the line of enquiry that they intend to explore and gives a general idea of what they may plan to produce. The Statement of Intent should make reference to how the work plan relates to the theme.

Task 3

Task 3 provides learners with the opportunity to practically explore the theme through application of specialist materials, techniques and processes and produce a personal response to the theme. The practical work should be informed by the contextual research undertaken in task 1 and by their creative intention outlined in their Statement of Intent. Learners have a total of 13 hours to complete tasks 2 and 3 and the evidence submitted should provide evidence of a sustained creative exploration in response to the thematic starting point. Ideas should be developed and refined through relevant exploration. This process should be fully documented. The method by which this work is recorded should be selected with due regard to the nature of the work being produced.

For this task learners should take the opportunity to make use of the extensive range of skills and creative practice they have developed throughout the delivery of the rest of the qualification. The work produced for Task 3 should demonstrate the sophistication and competent application of creative and technical skills required at this level. The majority of work received this year lacked the required level of development and sophistication expected and this was reflected in the marks awarded.

Whilst most learners decided to produce a 'final piece' in response to the theme, it is important to note that learners are not expected to present a fully resolved piece of work. It is perfectly appropriate that learners present evidence of an informed line of creative enquiry that culminates in a body of work that responds to the given theme. Learners should include all experimental and exploratory work in their portfolio for consideration for assessment.

Task 3 also requires learners to maintain an ongoing studio/workshop diary, in which they should critically reflect on:

- Materials, techniques and processes as they use them.
- How their practical work is progressing.

The quality of these diaries was very variable in the submissions seen. At the lower end learner diaries were very limited with little or no evidence of reflection or criticality. These diaries simply described the activities being undertaken and there was insufficient detail to reflect the duration of the activities undertaken. For learners achieving higher marks for this activity there was evidence of consistent analysis of progress, which supported the understanding of how the practical work has developed. This studio/workshop diary can be presented as a separate written document or can be included within the portfolio of practical work as a series of annotations.

Chief Examiner: Jill Simms

Date: 19 August 2019
