



Chief Examiner and Chief Moderator Report

**NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Graphic
Design
603/7011/7**

Series: Summer 2024

NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Graphic Design (603/7011/7)

Paper numbers: P002447, P002448, P002484

This report contains information in relation to the examined assessment (EA) from the chief examiner and non-exam assessment (NEA) from the chief moderator, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment series.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally performed well as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- grade boundary information
- administering the EA and NEA
- evidence creation
- standard of learner work
- responses to the tasks
- Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment and the NEA

The qualification is linear, meaning both assessments must be taken in the same assessment series and cannot be combined across different assessment series. Learners are allowed one attempt at each assessment, and there are no resit opportunities.

Grade boundary and achievement information (V Certs)

This qualification consists of two assessments: the examined assessment (EA) and the non-examined assessment (NEA).

After both assessments are completed and marked or moderated, the marks are combined to give a final mark for each learner. Where the raw marks do not reflect the required weighting of the assessment, a scaling factor is applied. For further information on grading information and scaling factors, please see the Qualification Specification.

Qualification scaled mark boundaries in this series are:

		<i>Notional boundaries*</i>	
	Overall	EA	NEA
Scaling factor		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Max	200	<i>80</i>	<i>120</i>
Level 2 Distinction*	174	<i>69</i>	<i>105</i>
Level 2 Distinction	149	<i>59</i>	<i>90</i>
Level 2 Merit	122	<i>49</i>	<i>73</i>
Level 2 Pass	96	<i>39</i>	<i>57</i>
Level 1 Distinction	77	<i>31</i>	<i>45</i>
Level 1 Merit	58	<i>23</i>	<i>34</i>
Level 1 Pass	39	<i>16</i>	<i>23</i>

** The grade boundaries given for each assessment are known as 'notional grade boundaries', as they are for illustrative purposes only. Grade boundaries are the lowest mark with which a grade is achieved.*

Administering the EA and NEA

The EA is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our [Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment](#) document.

Learners must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the [Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery \(QSID\)](#) document.

The NEA must be conducted in line with the regulations outlined in the [Tutor Guidance Document](#).

Evidence creation

EA

Learners should use the space provided to answer questions. Where answers are typed or additional pages included, the learners name, centre number, centre name and task number must be clearly visible. The additional paper must then be securely attached to the workbook.

Where assessments are completed online, centres must ensure they are familiar with the Surpass platform and have completed all testing and preparation before the assessment, to ensure learners are unaffected by technological issues.

NEA

Learners should approach all tasks in the NEA with reference to time requirements and control conditions. Learners should produce evidence to meet each task independently and with no feedback or guidance from tutors during the assessment.

Learner evidence requirements are stated per task and give required outcomes which can often be evidenced in a variety of ways to best meet the needs of the learner, unless otherwise stated.

Learner evidence submissions in this session often included a range of word-processed documents, PowerPoint presentations and digitised portfolios in line with expectations. Most learners had included a range of visual evidence as appropriate to the subject area including sketches, photographs and digitally generated images.

Centres are reminded that template documents, word frames and other supporting documents should not be supplied to the learner for the purposes of generating evidence against this assessment. Use of such materials to generate assessment evidence could potentially be considered malpractice.

Standard of learner work

Examined assessment

This was the first series for the newly developed NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Graphic Design, and overall learners were well prepared for this assessment.

Where asked to engage with images and design elements, most learners were able to respond within context, often able to reference visual language and design elements. Many learners demonstrated successful ability to engage with AO2 and AO3 elements of longer response questions such as evaluate and analyse, although this was also a common area where brief or superficial responses, sometimes only recalling or identifying, limited the marks that could be awarded.

In some of the shorter response questions some learners misunderstood the requirements of the question being asked, at times listing resources, materials, or other general subject knowledge rather than engaging in the command verbs or specifics of the question itself.

NEA

This was the first NEA for the qualification. The assessment consisted of seven tasks to be completed by learners over 17.5 hours. The assessment was marked, and quality assured internally by centres, with a sample of work externally moderated by NCFE.

A total of 120 marks was available across the assessment. Each task was allocated a range of marks placed against stated assessment objectives (AOs) linked to task focus. In this assessment, AO's 1 to 5 were assessed via levels of response mark grids aligned to each task, with weightings per task varied to reflect the nature of the qualification outcomes.

Learner outcomes were achieved across the available range of awarded grades in this assessment, which was suggestive of learner engagement and useful differentiation of assessment. Most learners had attempted all tasks within the assessment, producing appropriate evidence in most cases, to accrue marks against AO's. A minority of learners registered for the assessment had not submitted any evidence or had not gained any marks for evidence produced. Some learners had not attempted all tasks within the assessment, which led to a reduction in the available marks.

Learner evidence was generally appropriately presented, although learners did not always identify evidence explicitly against tasks, which in some cases led to some lack of structure in responses. The chief moderator notes that evidence should be referenced to task responses to aid in clarity of assessment and to aid learners in ensuring coverage of tasks.

The structure of the assessment allowed learners to accrue marks in areas in which they were most confident which, to some extent, counterbalanced areas of lesser success. Holistic outcomes therefore frequently differentiated via AO and task-level application of marking.

Many learners had produced credible outcomes which indicated application of graphic design skills and understanding of key areas of the qualification content. Outcomes generally reflected the demands of the brief and in some cases showed creativity and imagination alongside technical fluency at level. Learners who achieved well in practical outcomes tended to be able

to demonstrate not only understanding of the requirements of the brief but the ability to refine ideas throughout the project.

It was noted by moderators that summative assessor feedback to learners was generally useful and positive. However, assessor feedback did not always include marks and commentary at AO level within tasks which on occasion made assessor decisions unclear for both the purposes of accuracy of feedback to learners and external moderation.

Evidence upload for moderation was generally well handled by centres, although it was noted that some uploads did not initially include all submitted learner evidence and, in some cases, did not include assessment documents. This potentially led to some delays in moderation of learner work.

All tasks must be uploaded using the 'learner evidence upload checklists' as a guide so it is clear that learners have attempted the tasks or not. These will be available as part of the live assessment materials. The assessor feedback sheet must also be uploaded per AO. Learner feedback should also be included.

Responses to the assessments

EA

The following is a breakdown of learners' responses to all questions

Question 1

Multiple choice question which saw many learners responding well and achieving full marks.

Question 2

This question was generally answered well with learners achieving full marks.

Question 3

This was a multiple-choice question which saw many learners responding well and achieving full marks.

Question 4

Learners struggled with this question and appeared to misunderstand the requirements, with many responding with design principles or elements of design. This resulted in many learners not being awarded the full two marks.

Question 5

This question was generally answered well by many learners. Those who gained the full two marks answered with serif and sans serif.

Question 6

Learners again struggled with this question and misunderstood what the question was asking. Many of the learners achieved 1 mark for the first part of the question (one situation when it is suitable to use digital photography and digital illustration), but were not successful explaining why it would be suitable.

Question 7

Learners responded well to this question, many of which achieved the full four marks.

Question 8

Learners responded well to this question by providing detailed analysis and achieving full marks. There was good reference to design elements evidenced in the learners' responses.

Question 9 – Question 11

These were MCQ's which many learners struggled with and did not achieve full marks. Resolution is referenced in the Qualification Specification and learners are expected to understand this content area.

Question 12

Learners generally struggled with this question by providing examples of resource constraints opposed to listing actual resources. Resources are referenced in the Qualification Specification.

Question 13

Some learners achieved the full three marks for this question. A good response was seen for the explanation and reasons given.

Question 14

This question seen learners describing the design elements rather than 'effective use of resources' (planning and development) with some learners achieving more than 2 to 3 marks.

Question 15

Learners struggled with this question generally achieving 1 to 2 marks at most, however some learners did not attempt this question. The image was an old photograph (not digital) however learners did not recognise this, and this was evident in their responses (perhaps not familiar with the non-digital age of photography and therefore presumed that this was a pixelated image). Many learners responded with 'increase resolution' which was not correct. Where correct answers such as 'saturation' were given, there was no expansion as to why this could have improved the quality of the photograph.

Question 16

This multiple-choice question saw many learners responding well and achieving the full one mark.

Question 17

This question split learners with some achieving the full marks and correctly identifying figure 3 (a) as the answer.

Question 18

The majority of learners performed well in this question and achieved the full one mark.

Question 19

This question seen a mixed response from learner. Learners were able to achieve 1 mark with answers such as 'employment opportunities and 'promotion'. Incorrect answers consisted of responses such as 'critique' or 'sharing new ideas'.

Question 20

As seen with question 19 this question seen mixed responses. Learners generally responded well to the first part of the question (design principles) but struggled to achieve marks for the second part (techniques).

Question 21

The majority of learners struggled with this question. Learners appeared to understand the question and responses saw information relating design to principles / elements that can be applied to a graphic design idea. Some responses included information that referenced planning, development and review, that would allow for the full six grades to be achieved. Learners are encouraged to look at the command verbs in the question.

Question 22

This question saw learners responding well to information regarding the social and cultural factors, however less so for communication and message. It is crucial for learners to carefully read and understand the command verbs in the question in order to achieve higher marks.

Question 23

This is a 9 mark question providing a high number of available marks and by failing to attempt a response learners are limiting the marks that they can receive for the paper overall. This question split learners and varied responses were seen. Some learners did not achieve any marks due to overlooking the question requirements and failing to analyse the image regarding design elements / principles. Where learners had stated physical and digital methods very few expanded on these answers to achieve the higher marks.

Question 24

Generally, this question received a good response from all learners with some achieving the full 9 marks. Responses saw learners making comparative analysis of both images with reference to the visual language used. Responses were expanded on with clear reference to the design principles for learners who achieved higher marks along with detailed analysis and evaluation.

NEA**Task 1**

In this task, learners were required to carry out primary and secondary research to inform initial design ideas in response to the given brief. Task evidence could be presented in digital or physical format and scope for a variety of evidential content was offered. Most learners engaged with the task to produce research leading to the creation of initial ideas.

Evidence of research undertaken during this task, and in the preparation and research time proceeding it, was notable in most responses. The range of research undertaken varied across responses although gathering of secondary research was more extensive in many learner responses.

Learners who achieved well in this task tended to be able to use well-selected primary and secondary research to create a range of initial design ideas which reflected the needs of the brief. Research often informed responses by detailed exploration of other designer's work which was related to the needs of the brief, with reference to components of graphic design.

Some learners were able to consider the three types of graphic design work stated in the brief in these terms which often led to useful evaluation. Learners working at this level were sometimes able to assimilate all demands of the brief into their initial ideas and provide commentary to reflect this including drawing in ideas from their locality to inform the use of imagery. Learners who achieved less marks in this task tended to have undertaken research which was less focussed and was often more reliant on secondary sources. Some learner submissions did not include evidence of primary research, which in some cases hampered evaluation and generation of ideas. Several learners had generated a great deal of research evidence relating to their local town or city which did not always translate to meaningful sources of imagery. A minority of learners had generated one idea only, which tended to limit the scope of their response.

References to graphic design components in some cases restated the nature of components without contextual consideration, which tended to limit outcomes against AO2. Consideration of other designer's work was in some cases limited and not always well linked to graphic design features. In some instances, commentary provided background information on the designer

only, rather than consideration of their work – which was often of limited benefit in informing generation of ideas.

Useful consideration of initial ideas in this task generally allowed learners to move with confidence into task 2.

Task 2

Task 2 required that learners develop their initial ideas. As in task 1 evidence could be presented in digital or physical format. Many learners undertaking the assessment engaged with the task.

Development of initial ideas was apparent in most responses. However, this was not always well signposted by learners and in some cases was not apparent which task the evidence had been produced in response to. The chief moderator notes that, as tasks are allocated a specific timeframe, work should be clearly defined to aid in assessment and allow focus for learners.

Learners who achieved well in this task tended to have made good use of initial ideas from task 1 and through a process of refinement and experimentation had to work towards cohesive designs. Evidence at this level generally showed considered use of tools, materials and techniques with reference supported by commentary which recognised components in principles in the work to accrue marks in AO1.

Learners were often able to develop ideas to more closely satisfy the requirements of the brief through considered experimentation to meet AO2 and demonstrate some imagination and application of in the developed work to meet AO4. Learners were able to begin to discount initial ideas and move forwards to begin to consider focussed graphic design solutions.

Learners who achieved less well in this task tended to have engaged less well with experimentation and shown less consideration in the of application of tools, materials and techniques. Testing of ideas and refinement was often less focussed, and in some cases did not substantially advance the graphic design elements.

Commentary was often more limited and not always well contextualised to the task amongst learners who achieved less well. In some cases, learners restated identified components and principles but did not relate them to their work. In a minority of cases learners development work did not build on initial ideas, but instead generated further (and sometimes wholly unrelated) ideas which often did not advance in terms of development.

Where learners had engaged with development work in this task the outcomes often provided a useful basis for consideration in task 3.

Task 3

This task provided learners with an opportunity to evaluate their work to this point in the assessment and gave time for consideration prior to moving the project forwards via a production plan in task 4. The task required learners to consider their developed ideas in the context of client requirements, communication of ideas and appropriateness to the target audience.

Evidence to meet this task was not always clearly differentiated from task 2 development work, despite the different focus given by the requirements above.

Learners who achieved well in this task often considered all the areas listed in detail and provided focussed comments in relation to their ideas. This allowed learners to engage with the process of reflection and select their strongest idea in these terms.

Logically structured responses often allowed learners to measure their work to this point against brand identity, aims and values, sources of inspiration and appropriateness of visual language. Learners who in previous tasks had experimented with options in terms of the outcome were able to take this opportunity to choose one via this process of review. Problems and solutions identified as part of the commentary often provided often assisted in meaningful decision making.

Learners who achieved less marks often provided a more limited review which did not acknowledge all areas given in the task, leading to a less coherent and comprehensive outcome. Reviews were sometimes sparser in analytical terms which tended to reflect in more limited marks against AO3 and AO5.

Justification of choices and identification of potential problems was not always in evidence. A minority of learners had taken an 'even better if' and 'what went well' (EBI and WWW) approach, which resulted in some creditable commentary but did not always align with the breadth of task requirements. Notably some learners did not present evidence against this task, which reduced available marks.

Appropriate review and reflection in this task tended to assist learners in attempting task 4.

Task 4

Learner responses to this task varied considerably in detail. The task required that learners develop a detailed production plan for their chosen solution to the brief, based on the preceding tasks with the intention that this would feed into the approaches taken to create the final design. Learners who achieved well in this task tended to exhibit clear understanding of the requirements and resources available to them and use these to inform their planning. Learners had often supplied commentary suggesting steps to move towards the outcome, with their chosen solution in mind.

Evidence was presented in variety of ways, including mind maps, workplans and proposed layouts for the design. Commentary tended to be supportive in rationalising planning and setting a coherent workflow in place.

Learners who achieved less well in this task tended to rely more on broader statements related to how the design may continue to be developed, with less focus on how this may be realistically achieved.

Commentary was more often limited to simpler statements of intent. In some cases, learner evidence recounted development to this point, with limited suggestion of how creation of the chosen solution would be undertaken.

In a minority of submissions this task was phrased in a way which suggested a retrospective approach. The chief moderator notes that tasks in the NEA must be undertaken sequentially, a minority of learners did not produce evidence against this task, which limited available marks.

Learners who had applied planning considerations with more detail tended to be able to move into task 5 with more confidence.

Task 5

Generally, learners had engaged well with this task to create a graphic design solution. The task required that learners create the solution and provide evidence of process including ongoing review. Evidence was presented in a variety of formats including physical and digital portfolios.

Learners who achieved well in this task tended to accrue credit across AO4 and AO5 via creation of suitable outcome supported by ongoing commentary. A wide range of solutions were developed by learners.

The three solutions given in the brief were all in evidence across submissions, with magazine covers being a slightly more popular choice amongst learners than vehicle wraps or murals.

Learner work showed consideration of choices in respect to the solution in terms of materials and components. A variety of creditable techniques and tool usage was in evidence with some learners developing convincing solutions using a mixture of mediums, often with useful application of digital editing to refine the outcome. Learners were able to line, colour, tone, composition and imagery effectively. Learners producing detailed commentary were often able to reflect on hierarchy, alignment, balance, contrast and space and apply this to useful effect. Some successful final design elements refinements were in evidence – for example, the inclusion of barcodes onto magazine covers.

Outcomes which were most effective reflected focus on all elements of the brief including imagery drawn from the learner's immediate location, cues relating brand identify, the target audience and the required tagline.

Learners who achieved less marks often provided more basic solutions with more limited consideration of principles and components in evidence. In some cases, development was less noticeable and process commentary was sparser. In a minority of submissions, the final outcome had not significantly advanced from the initial ideas produced in response to task 1, which tended to limit credit in AO4. Some outcomes lacked required elements of the brief – with the omission of the tagline being most often in evidence, which reduced holistic effectiveness.

It was noted that the scope of the levels of response grids allowed for balanced assessment against principles, components, tools, materials and techniques which allowed learners to accrue marks with suitable differentiation.

In a minority of submissions, it appeared that time management may have become an issue for learners in completing the required outcome. A small number of learners did not produce evidence against this task which limited available credit.

Cohesive final graphic designs tended to allow learners to move into task 6 with an outcome most suitable for presentation.

Task 6

This task required that the learner's graphic design solution be presented in an appropriate format, with justification of choices to enable this. Most learners had presented evidence against this task. The task generally showed detailed engagement from learners with a variety of often outcomes in place, including some creative and imaginative work.

Learners who achieved higher marks in this task often presented the final design in a way which added value to the outcome. Creative digital editing was often in evidence to place designs in context. For example, by editing mural designs onto wall spaces and vehicle wraps onto cars or vans. The results were successful and often striking to maximise credit against AO4. Justifications of choices made were often well related to the needs of the client and audience.

Learners who achieved less marks tended to have given less apparent consideration to context and had in some cases, replicated images used to evidence task 5 without further consideration of formatting or display. Justifications were often substantially limited or not addressed by the supplied evidence.

A minority of learners had not attempted this task, which reduced available marks.

Task 7

This final task required learners to produce a summative evaluation which referred to the client brief. Most learners had produced evidence against this task. However, this task did not always result in substantial outcomes, with a minority of learners producing no evidence in response which limited available credit.

Learners who were able to produce a considered evaluation with reference to their work and link this back to the demands of the brief were often able to achieve well. In some cases, a range of specific and creative suggestions for improvements were provided alongside logically structured evaluation which considered each of the areas specified by the task.

Learners who achieved less marks tended to have produced more minimal evaluations which in some cases did not address all aspects of the task. Learners working at this level sometimes moved to an 'what went well' and 'even better if' (WWW / EBI) approach which in some cases constrained commentary. Suggestions for improvement tended to be more limited and broader in nature, often referring to the learner's wider skills than cohesive and specific comments in regard to the outcome.

Often a pattern was notable in that learners who had not achieved well in the earlier tasks tended not to accrue marks as successfully in response to this task.