

NCFE Level 1 Technical Award in Interactive Media (603/0851/5)

NCFE Level 2 Technical Award in Interactive Media (603/0852/7)

Assessment window: 25 January 2021 – 5 March 2021

Paper Number: P001179

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	60	45	31	25	20	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
160	128	112	96	64	48	32	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 for delivery (QSID).

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## Standard of learner work

This was the fourth external assessment for this qualification and although there was a significant decrease of learner registrations in this window, the standard of learner work has continued to improve, and this has had positive impact on the overall achievement of the external assessment.

There has continued to be good demonstration of understanding from centres regarding what is expected for each assessment task and this was positive to observe.

Most learners submitted the actual interactive media product as expected for task 2, however, a small number of learners did not, and this limited marks for this practical task as examiners were not able to make a fair judgement on the functionality of the product or the accurate use of file types and folder structures. Learners are required to submit evidence of how they have prepared assets and how they have created their product for task 2, but this evidence only supports the actual submission of the created product, as this task assesses the application of knowledge and understanding.

Centres must encourage learners to use the evidence checklist at the end of the assessment paper to ensure learners include all required evidence in their submission.

Most centres submitted digital evidence, and this was highly effective and aided the efficiency of the external assessment process. A minority of learners produced hard copy evidence to support digital evidence, and this was also collated and submitted effectively.

As in previous windows, there was also evidence of centres still duplicating digital evidence and this is not best practice, as this meant examiners had to spend additional time reviewing the same evidence in multiple file formats.

Learners responded to the theme 'Summer Picture House' well, they seemed to enjoy researching the theme and demonstrated creative interpretations for their intended products. The theme and target audience also seemed to be accessible for both levels of learners.

The majority of learners produced a website with fewer learners producing a PowerPoint presentation.

There were some minimal examples of learners misinterpreting the brief requirements, in these cases learners submitted incomplete work not related to the theme or tasks. Learners must be taught how to interpret a design brief prior to undertaking the external assessment as this is a key skill that is required for all 3 tasks of the paper.

Higher achieving learners demonstrated thorough interpretations of the brief leading to focused research that had been collated purposefully to inform the planning and development of design ideas. This was followed by purposeful experimentation and an outcome clearly linked to initial intentions. Final evaluations were also well justified in response to the brief and included valid improvements.

Centres are reminded to encourage learners to interpret the theme and requirements of the brief individually. Although it is inevitable that learners may apply skills that they have been taught and that this may result in similar processes used, the actual evidence and quality of the evidence produced should be clearly attributable to each individual learner and their ability and personal interpretation.

There were some minimal submissions that were not considered to be at the creative or technical standard consistent with the level of the qualification. Centres are reminded that it is their 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 centres responsibility to recruit with integrity.

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## Regulations for the conduct of external assessment

### Malpractice

There were no reported instances of malpractice in this assessment window. The chief examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise learners that instances of malpractice (for example, copying of work from another learner) will affect the outcome on the assessment.

### 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

Referencing of the 3 assessment tasks was mostly effective and most submissions were digital, this aided the efficiency of the external assessment process.

Most learners were able to organise folders within which to submit their work appropriately in clearly labelled folders per task. It is best practice to include 1 folder for each task, in some cases learners submitted copies and/or multiple versions of documents within folders and this is not good practice as this significantly slows the examination process.

There were also some examples of learners duplicating evidence, however this was mostly in cases that contained the same evidence in multiple formats (for example, a PowerPoint presentation and a PDF) and this is not required.

There were some submissions that did not include a clear final outcome for task 2 (the interactive media product) and this proved very difficult to award marks for this task. Centres are

strongly reminded that the actual product must be included to demonstrate learner's technical ability, even if only producing a prototype in this task there should be a clearly accessible outcome to demonstrate the required interactive content and functionality. In addition, locating the final product was also difficult in some cases, this was mainly due to learners not naming files as a particular task or using incorrect naming conventions. Such details should be taught during the teaching and learning of the unit content, prior to learners undertaking the external assessment.

In task 2, there are 50% of marks available as assessment objective 2 assesses learners' application of knowledge and understanding. Unfortunately, some learners only submitted evidence of creating their product and/or screenshots of their product yet did not submit the actual interactive media product in its original format (for example, website or PowerPoint).

Learners should be instructed to attempt all tasks in the paper, and learners' evidence should be clearly referenced in line with the best practice indicators in the qualification specific instructions for delivery (QSID). Any tasks not attempted or not referenced may not be able to be rewarded and may limit the marks awarded for the associated task(s).

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## Evidence creation

The external assessment is completed by learners alongside internally assessed units. Therefore, learners should only be registered for the external assessment after sufficient mandatory unit content of these units has been delivered. Most learners seemed to be well prepared and demonstrated valid understanding from all units and this was positive to observe.

Most learners evidenced valid research sources that were used effectively to inform the development of ideas. Many learners chose to submit digital mood boards to demonstrate their inspiration from research sources, this is acceptable, however almost all learners provided a justification of their image choices and/or how they intended to use them.

Some learners have continued to provide evidence (for example, general explanations of hardware and software) that are not required and cannot be awarded marks in any assessment task. Learners should only produce evidence that is requested in each task.

There was good evidence of practical experimentation using hardware and software, in particular regarding the preparation of assets. Most learners had access to a range of appropriate resources to demonstrate the use of sources, techniques, and processes. Some learners also annotated their thought process of their experimentation to record their approach, and this worked well and also aided their evaluations.

The use of annotation within all tasks was useful to verify learners understanding and choices made during the planning, design, development, and production stages. Higher achieving learners did this very well, annotations were informative, and they made consistent links to the project brief. However, lower achieving learners had limited, very descriptive or no annotation at all, and this proved difficult to follow the creative process and choices made.

There was an improvement in the standard of evaluation skills and most learners submitted honest, sufficiently detailed, and well-presented evaluations. Higher achieving learners used the bullet points within the assessment task to guide the evaluation and this ensured all required areas of review, inclusive and focused on improvements were addressed.

Centres are reminded that the focus of the evaluation for task 3 is on improvements to the interactive media product rather than personal improvements such as time management or personal ability. In many cases learners demonstrated valid evidence in other tasks (for example annotations in task 2) and this was positively awarded.

The majority of learners attempted and submitted evidence for all tasks, however centres are reminded that they must check all learners' folders are included on the chosen storage device (for example, USB/DVD) when transferring from their own machines.

Centres must ensure all submissions are thoroughly checked prior to submitting these to NCFE.

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## Responses of the tasks within the sections of the external assessment paper

### Task 1

In this task learners are required to consider all aspects of the brief and create a plan for the content and layout of the interactive media product.

There has continued to be a good standard of evidence for this task and most learners demonstrated planning very effectively using written notes, mind maps, mood boards, design sketches, storyboards, navigation diagrams and layout designs.

There was generally an effective and creative interpretation of the theme and learners seemed to engage with the target audience well. In limited cases, some learners did use the target audience from the project brief.

Most learners provided valid evidence of their intended application of sources, processes and techniques and clearly labelled this evidence. However, some learners did not evidence any planning of these areas at all.

There has continued to be a significant volume and detail of planning documentation submitted for this task, higher achieving learners used the bullets in the task effectively to ensure they included all required planning evidence, and this was positive to observe. However, centres are reminded of the suggested allocated hours for this task. Learners who seemed to spend more than the suggested allocation of time planning, seemed to be less successful in task 2, the creation of their product. This was unfortunate as some potentially good products were unable to be completed.

There was also some evidence of learners explaining what each planning element is (for example, what a storyboard is and what a layout design is) rather than actually creating their own planning evidence. The focus and time allocated to this task is for learners to produce the planning documentation to clearly inform the product they will develop and produce in task 2.

Centres are also reminded that only one format of evidence is required, it is best practice to collate all planning evidence in one PDF, rather than multiple separate documents.

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## Task 2

As it is not mandatory that learners create a final product that is completed and fully functional in this external assessment, teaching and learning of the unit content should be extensive with regard to experimenting with appropriate interactive media techniques and processes (including authoring), finalising a product to allow for functionality (even if a prototype) and recording the processes undertaken in response to a brief.

In this task learners are required to create their planned interactive media product from task 1. This might not be a completed version, but learners must demonstrate evidence that the product shows sufficient functionality.

There has continued to be significant and valid evidence of annotation within this task that was valid to support the preparation of assets and production process, this also contributed effectively to the review in task 3 regarding solving problems and improvements.

Many learners demonstrated some valid practical experimentation of hardware and software as part of their development. Centres are reminded that even if learners have access to the same resources and may use similar techniques, the presentation of this evidence should be individual to each learner.

Higher achieving learners experimented with a wide range of processes and techniques (for example, creating/editing images, authoring, saving/exporting file types, testing) and annotated their evidence to show development and thought process in response to the brief and initial intentions.

However, lower achieving learners showed minimal evidence of development and some submitted just the final outcome and this limited marks awarded for this task.

There has continued to be evidence of learners not submitting their actual product and in these cases marks for this task were dependent on screenshots or other evidence, this limited the marks for this task as learners were not able to demonstrate their skills to produce a functional interactive media product, the focus of this assessment.

There has continued to be an increase in the submission of websites and learners should clearly evidence how they authored the site as well as prepared assets appropriately in order to demonstrate their understanding effectively and achieve higher mark bands.

There has continued to be a significant amount of PowerPoint presentations submitted, this is as expected and entirely acceptable. However, some learners were limited to achieving in lower mark bands if the presentations had no interactivity, there is still a substantial amount of linear presentations being submitted and these do not demonstrate the required level of skill for this subject or external assessment.

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## Task 3

In this task learners are required to evaluate their interactive media product in relation to the brief. The evaluation should include a review of how the product has met the brief and must include how to improve the interactive media product.

There was a significant improvement in the quality of work submitted for this task. Most learners did this well and were able to provide a good evaluation of how the product met the brief inclusive of valid improvements.

Higher achieving learners focused on the improvements of the product and this is best practice. In addition, there was clear and consistent links to the brief throughout the evaluations. However, some learners also submitted extensive reviews of their strengths and weaknesses overall and this is not required, in particular as they made limited reference to improvements and this limited marks for this task.

Learners should be discouraged from simply describing each stage of their production in this task, this is not only time consuming for learners but also not assessed in this task.

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**Chief Examiner:** Lesley Davis

**Date:** March 2021

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