Chief Examiner and Chief Moderator Report

NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Creative Design and Production
QN: 603/7003/8

Series: Summer 2025

Examined assessment (EA) paper number: P002842

Non-exam assessment (NEA) paper number: P002844

(EA) assessment date: 12 June 2025

(NEA) assessment date: 30 April 2025

Introduction

This report contains information in relation to the EA from the chief examiner and 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 assessments

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 information

This qualification consists of two assessments: the EA and the 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:

		Notional boundaries*	
	Overall	EA	NEA
Scaling factor		1	1.25
Max	200	80	96
Level 2 Distinction*	164	65	79
Level 2 Distinction	138	55	66
Level 2 Merit	112	45	53
Level 2 Pass	86	35	41
Level 1 Distinction	66	27	31
Level 1 Merit	46	19	22
Level 1 Pass	27	11	13

***** 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. The NEA is moderated and must be conducted in line with our Regulations for the Conduct of NEA – Non-Exam 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.

Evidence creation

EA

Learners should use the space provided to answer questions. Where answers are typed or additional pages included, the learner's 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 are expected to complete all tasks within the NEA in accordance with the specified time constraints and under the required controlled assessment conditions. Evidence for each task must be produced independently, without feedback or guidance from teachers during the assessment period.

Each task outlines clear evidence requirements and mandatory outcomes. These outcomes can often be met through a variety of formats, allowing learners to select the most appropriate method of presentation, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

In this assessment window, learner submissions typically included a range of formats such as word-processed documents, PowerPoint presentations, sketches, hand-drawn visuals, computer-aided design (CAD) outputs and photographs, aligning with expected standards.

Moderators were encouraged to see that the majority of learners incorporated visual evidence that effectively supported their written commentary. To enhance the clarity and impact of this visual material, the chief moderator recommends that screengrabs and photographs are annotated wherever possible.

Centres are reminded that template documents, writing frames, or other forms of structured support should not be provided for the purpose of generating assessment evidence. The use of such materials may compromise the authenticity of the learners work and could be considered malpractice.

Centres are also reminded of the importance of ensuring that learners clearly label and title each task within their portfolio of work. Failure to do so may result in key evidence being overlooked during moderation, which could impact the accuracy of the assessment.

Standard of learner work

EA

The standard of work presented by learners this series varied considerably. Performance on the lower and mid-range mark questions was generally consistent, indicating that many learners were well-prepared and demonstrated a secure understanding of the core concepts outlined in the course specification. This strong foundation enabled a significant proportion of learners to meet AO1, which focuses on the recall of knowledge.

This year's paper assessed knowledge across a broad range of specification topics, with some areas proving more challenging than others. This was particularly evident in the extended-response questions (ERQs), which were designed to assess all three assessment objectives (AOs). While many learners were able to recall relevant knowledge, a number struggled with the application of that knowledge (AO2) and with demonstrating higher-level skills such as analysis and evaluation (AO3). As a result, fewer learners were able to fully meet the expectations for AO2 and AO3, which limited their ability to access higher marks in those responses.

Encouragingly, fewer learners left questions unanswered in this series. However, where questions were omitted, this inevitably impacted overall performance. Learners should be encouraged to attempt all questions, as blank responses reduce the potential to achieve higher marks.

A recurring area for development, as seen in previous series, is learners' understanding of printing techniques and processes. Targeted teaching and revision in this area will better equip learners to respond confidently and accurately in future examination series.

NEA

This was the second NEA for the qualification. The assessment comprised of six tasks to be completed by learners over a 16-hour period, with a total of 96 marks available. Each task was assigned a mark range aligned to clearly defined assessment objectives (AOs), with levels of response marking grids used to assess AOs 1 to 5. Task weightings varied to reflect the specific demands and intended outcomes of the assessment.

Learner performance spanned the full range of available grades, indicating effective engagement with the assessment and appropriate levels of differentiation. Most learners attempted all six tasks, providing suitable evidence to support the awarding of marks across the AOs. Responses generally followed a logical structure, demonstrating a sound understanding of key content within the qualification.

Moderators observed that, in some cases, the evidence provided was not clearly labelled by task. It is therefore recommended by the Chief Moderator that, for future submissions, all evidence is clearly referenced to the relevant task to support the moderation process.

Responses to the assessments

EA

Question 1
Multiple-choice question which was answered well by many learners.

Question 2
Multiple-choice question which was answered well by many learners.

Question 3
Multiple-choice question which was answered well by many learners.

Question 4 (a)
Learner performance on this question varied. While some learners correctly identified key designers from the Art Nouveau design moment, others struggled and made incorrect connections.

Question 4 (b)
This question was well answered by learners. Most were able to identify key features from the Art Nouveau design movement in the lamp shown with an explanation given.

Question 5 (a)
A well answered question, learners were able to identify two different computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) techniques used in the creative industry.

Question 5 (b)
A well answered question, with the majority of learners able to explain why using CAM would be suitable for the cabinet door handle and provide detailed explanations as to its benefits.

Question 6
This question was well answered by learners. Most were able to identify three ways that design and production can have a negative impact on the environment.

Question 7 (a)
Learners demonstrated varied performance on this question. While many effectively described an advantage and disadvantage to the hand block printing techniques, a limited number of learners incorrectly identified the disadvantage of the technique as an advantage. This identified a gap in understanding the hand block printing technique and its applications.

Question 7 (b)
This question presented a notable challenge for learners. Many found it difficult to justify the most appropriate printing techniques for the T-shirt design, with responses often lacking clarity and depth in explaining the relevance of each method. A common misconception was the incorrect association of the advantages of the techniques with reasons why Jamal would benefit from using them. This highlighted a gap in learners' understanding of the different printing techniques and their practical applications.

Question 8 (a)
Learners performed very well with this question. The majority could identify two different forms of secondary research that could be used alongside the use of books.

Question 8 (b)
Many learners were able to correctly identify and describe the purpose of using books so that Frank could successfully research existing retro jewellery designs.

Question 8 (c)
Learners performed well in this question and were able to identify why the use of a mood board could support Frank in organising his ideas and designs for the jewellery range.

Question 9
The learners demonstrated a solid understanding as to why Ali would benefit from using both questionnaires and interviews to support in their research. They also showed proficiency in how the primary research techniques would enable Ali to better understand what the clients would want to see for the coffee table design.

Question 10 (a)
Learners' performance was mixed in this question. Many learners could not correctly identify both years for the design movement.

Question 10 (b)
Learners generally provided a lower level of response to this question, with few correctly identifying the different social factors that were associated with the Art Deco movement. This highlighted a gap in learners' understanding of the Art Deco design movement.

Question 10 (c)
Learner performance on this question was mixed. While some learners were able to accurately identify the distinct features of the cup and saucer and effectively explain the influence of Art Deco on its design, a significant number either referenced an incorrect design movement or provided limited responses that did not fully meet the assessment criteria (AC).

Question 11
Multiple-choice question which was answered well by many learners.

Question 12
Multiple-choice question which was answered well by many learners.

Question 13
Multiple-choice question which was answered well by many learners.

Question 14 (a)
This question was well answered by learners. Most were able to identify the purpose of self-promotion with an explanation given.

Question 14 (b)
Learners performed very well with this question, with the majority identifying the reason why using digital promotional methods can help Bobby to increase sales to his business.

Question 15 (a)
A well answered question, learners were able to identify a suitable sector of the industry that Joe could work within.

Question 15 (b)
Learners performed mixed in this question. Many learners could correctly identify the disadvantages to working freelance within the design and production industries. However, the majority of answers focused on financial issues and not other issues such as job development or access to resources needed.

Question 16
Learner performance on this question was varied. While many effectively identified skills the inventor would require to support the new product line, a significant proportion focused predominantly on ‘soft’ skills, such as communication, rather than the technical or specialist skills that would directly contribute to improvements in the product line.

Question 17
This question was well answered by learners. Most were able to identify different methods of digital presentation methods that could be used so that a design could present their new design ideas to a client.

Question 18
Multiple-choice question which was answered well by many learners.

Question 19
Multiple-choice question which was answered well by many learners.

Question 20
Multiple-choice question which was answered well by many learners.

Question 21 (a)
A well answered question, learners were able to identify suitable ways for visual sampling to be completed for quality control purposes.

Question 21 (b)
Responses to this question were varied. Some learners were unable to correctly identify how Lou could visually sample the new backpack to ensure that manufacturing standards were met. Many provided answers similar to their responses to Question 21(a), however, to be awarded marks, learners needed to reference specific tests, such as inspecting the quality of stitching.

Question 22 (a)
Responses to this question varied considerably. A number of learners limited their answers to the possibility of Mo facing legal action. To achieve higher marks, learners needed to develop their responses further by explaining how such legal action could place Mo in a challenging situation and why this might influence the design of the stationery items. This indicates a gap in learners' understanding of copyright law and its practical implications.

Question 22 (b)
Learners generally demonstrated a limited response to this question, with few accurately identifying the impact of giving the items away for free on Mo's design ideas. Stronger responses would have focused on the need to use inexpensive materials or considered how lower-quality products might affect the longevity of the items.

Question 23
This question was well answered by learners. Most learners correctly identified three different elements a design should include when presenting their summative review of work.

Question 24 (a)
The learners demonstrated a solid understanding when asked to identify different types of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Question 24 (b)
This question was well answered by learners. The majority of learners correctly stated how the facemask would protect Amy when cutting materials.

Question 25 (a)
Learners often misinterpreted the question, discussing further surface treatments of finishing techniques. Learners needed to discuss how cutting or joining the food packaging could be used to produce the takeaway restaurant packaging.

Question 25 (b)
Responses to this question varied considerably. Some learners provided accurate and well-reasoned explanations of how surface treatments can enhance the strength of packaging.

However, a significant number demonstrated limited understanding of what surface treatments are and the ways in which they can affect the usability of packaging.

Question 26
In this extended-response question, many learners found it challenging to produce responses with the depth and breadth required to access the higher mark bands.

While some demonstrated an awareness of key components in the Bauhaus chair design, such as its streamlined form and use of industrial materials, these points were often presented as simple lists, without sufficient explanation of their significance. In particular, many learners did not clearly articulate how these features justified the chair's suitability for manufacture.

Furthermore, only a small number of learners addressed the broader social context of the Bauhaus movement, and even fewer explained how these social factors directly influenced the nature and style of designs produced during this period. This omission limited their ability to present a comprehensive, analytical response.

Overall, this suggests that learners would benefit from developing a more critical and contextual understanding of design movements. This should include not only the identification of key features and materials, but also an exploration of their relevance, purpose, and influence, alongside an understanding of the historical, cultural, and social factors that shaped the work of leading designers within each movement.

Question 27
In this extended-response question, learners were asked to review the design of a child's bed in relation to the original design brief and to evaluate whether the first draft effectively fulfilled the brief.

Learners generally demonstrated the ability to clearly identify aspects of the bed design that met the brief as well as areas requiring further development. This was encouraging, as it suggests that learners are capable of interpreting a design brief and making informed judgements regarding the sustainability and functionality of initial design ideas.

However, while learners were able to outline the strengths and weaknesses, their responses often lacked the depth of explanation necessary for this type of evaluative question. Frequently, points were noted without sufficient detail regarding why these aspects were significant or how they might impact the overall effectiveness of the product in relation to the design brief. To achieve higher mark bands, learners need to ensure their answers are not only clear and focused but also supported by thorough explanation and evaluative commentary. This approach will better demonstrate critical thinking and a comprehensive understanding of the design's effectiveness.

NEA

Task 1 (a) and 1 (b)

Task 1 (a) asked learners to investigate the issues around the design brief with the initial design created. Task 1 (b) asked learners to present their design ideas to the client in the style of a blog post. The work submitted for tasks 1a and 1b generally met the expected standard as outlined in the Mark Scheme. Many learners demonstrated a clear understanding of the design brief through detailed secondary research, from which they drew appropriate conclusions that informed a range of relevant design ideas. The use of secondary research aligned with the indicative content for this task; however, primary research was largely absent across submissions. Centres are encouraged to incorporate primary research into future delivery of Task 1 (a), as this would enhance the depth and quality of learner responses. The allocated two hours of preparation time should be utilised effectively to support this aspect, enabling learners to access the higher mark bands.

The design ideas generated were of a good standard. Nonetheless, centres should encourage learners to develop their concepts in greater depth to fully explore the brief and produce distinctive, well-considered outcomes. The work produced for the blog component also met expectations, with most learners providing thoughtful evaluations of their design ideas and presenting them effectively for a client-facing context.

Task 2

Task 2 required learners to take their initial design ideas and develop them to better meet the design brief. The work submitted by many centres for this task was of a good standard. Learners had often developed their initial design ideas in considerable depth, demonstrating clear intent to meet the requirements of the design brief. It was particularly encouraging to see widespread use of CAD software, which not only supported the visual development of design proposals but also showcased learners' digital competence. Centres are encouraged to continue embedding CAD into the design process to reflect industry best practice.

Only a small number of centres provided evidence of physical prototyping using materials such as card, foamboard, or similar. These prototypes offer valuable insight into learners' design intent and assist in communicating and refining their ideas. Centres are strongly encouraged to support all learners in producing physical models as part of the development process, in line with the indicative content of this task.

In addition, few centres included working drawings of the final developed design. This is a key element of the design process, providing essential detail and clarity that supports progression into subsequent tasks (tasks 3 and 4). Moving forward, centres should ensure that working drawings are clearly presented within learner portfolios.

It was also noted that many learners conducted additional research during the design development phase, exploring areas such as materials, tools, and processes. While this is a positive and relevant aspect of the task, the depth and rigour of research were often limited. In most cases, learners did not clearly articulate how their research informed or influenced their

design decisions. Centres should guide learners to conduct purposeful, analytical research that allows them to draw meaningful conclusions and justify the suitability of their final design choices.

Task 3

Task 3 required learners to produce a production plan for the 5-hour practical task. The majority of learners presented their plans in a structured table format, with clearly defined columns that addressed the key criteria necessary for a detailed and supportive planning process. While most learners included timings for each stage of the task, moderators noted that in some cases, the allocated times were unrealistic relative to the complexity of the activities. Learners should ensure that time estimates are practical and reflective of the actual demands of each stage to ensure accurate planning within the 5-hour limit.

It was encouraging to see that many learners identified key risks associated with the various stages of the task. This demonstrated an awareness of the importance of health and safety within the qualification. The risks identified were generally appropriate, and learners often proposed sensible strategies for managing and mitigating these risks, which was a positive aspect of the submissions.

Task 4

Task 4 required learners to manufacture their final prototype based on the design work completed in earlier stages. It was encouraging to see that many learners produced strong outcomes that aligned well with the intended design brief. Most centres ensured that learners had appropriate access to a range of tools and equipment, enabling them to effectively realise their design intentions. Notably, centres that integrated the use of CAM technologies provided clear evidence of continuity between tasks 2 and 4, reinforcing the application of digital design and manufacturing skills.

While the majority of learners submitted photographic evidence of both the manufacturing process and the final prototype, centres are encouraged to ensure a broader range of images are included. These should comprehensively capture the practical work undertaken. Additionally, it is important that photographs are annotated by the learners to document and explain the processes involved. This not only enhances clarity but also supports the moderation process by providing context and rationale behind each stage of manufacturing.

Task 5

In the final task, learners were required to evaluate their completed prototype in terms of its functionality and how effectively it met the original design brief. While most learners provided evidence for this task, there was a slight increase in the number of learners who did not submit evidence compared to previous tasks.

Learners who engaged thoughtfully with the evaluation criteria and offered detailed, reflective responses generally performed well. These evaluations often made clear connections between the functionality of the final prototype and the original design brief. In stronger submissions,

learners provided specific and meaningful suggestions for improvement, referencing challenges encountered, prior tasks, and possible developments. These reflections were frequently underpinned by appropriate consideration of tools, materials, and techniques, resulting in coherent and relevant documentation that supported higher levels of achievement.

Conversely, learners who achieved less marks often submitted limited or superficial evaluations. In some cases, evidence for this task was either missing or not clearly identifiable. Furthermore, evaluations did not always address all targeted areas comprehensively. Where learners relied on a simple ‘What Went Well’ / ‘Even Better If’ (WWW / EBI) format, the depth of critical analysis was sometimes restricted, reducing the effectiveness of their evaluation.