Qualification title and code

NCFE Level 1 Technical Award in Interactive Media – 603/0851/5
NCFE Level 2 Technical Award in Interactive Media – 603/0852/7

Assessment date/window

09 January 2023 – 17 February 2023

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:

- grade boundary 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.

NYA	Level 1 Pass	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Distinction	Level 2 Pass	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Distinction
0–14	15	20	26	32	46	61

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*	Level 1 Pass	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Distinction	Level 2 Pass	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Distinction
160	32	48	64	96	112	128

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).

Evidence creation

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.

The majority of learners submitted digital evidence for this paper, some learners submitted hard copy evidence to support task 1 (for example technical notes, navigation plans and layout designs). This evidence was scanned, clear to identify and easily accessible.

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) when transferring from their own machines. Centres must ensure all submissions are thoroughly checked prior to submitting these to NCFE in their chosen format.

Labelling of the 3 assessment tasks was mostly effective, as most submissions were digital, and 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 named folders for each task.

It is best practice to include one named folder for each task. In some cases, learners submitted copies and/or multiple versions of documents within folders; 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 a 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 but did not submit the actual interactive media product in its original format (for example, a 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 tasks.

Standard of learner work

The external assessment is completed by learners alongside 4 internally assessed units. Therefore, learners should only be registered for the external assessment after sufficient mandatory unit content of these 4 units has been delivered.

Most of the learner's work was at the expected level and this had a positive impact on the overall achievement of the external assessment. Most learners attempted all elements of the 3 tasks, even if some evidence was limited. However, there was some minimal submissions, where tasks had not been attempted at all.

There continued to be a good understanding from centres regarding what is expected for each assessment task as well as the formats of evidence submitted, and this was positive to observe.

There also continued to be evidence of learners not submitting their actual interactive media product and this limited marks for task 2, 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. In addition, this caused significant delay to the examining process whilst centres were contacted for confirmation if learners did actually create a product.

Learners responded to the theme 'Don't Isol8' positively; they seemed to relate to the target audience well and demonstrated creative interpretations for their intended products that contained appropriate content.

There were some minimal examples of misinterpretation of the design brief, where learners seemed to create products with limited or no relevance to the theme or target audience, and marks awarded reflected these submissions. 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.

Most learners produced a website, and PowerPoint presentations have continued to be popular. A minimal number of learners produced protypes for mobile applications or interactive games and this was pleasing to observe.

Higher achieving learners demonstrated thorough interpretations of the brief, leading to focussed planning to inform the proposal document and development of design ideas. This was followed by purposeful experimentation using appropriate hardware and software and an outcome clearly linked to the initial intentions. Final evaluations were also well justified in response to the brief and included a number of valid and justified improvements to the interactive media product.

It was positive to observe centres encouraging 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, resulting in similar processes used. Most submissions consisted of evidence that was clearly attributable to each individual learner, 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.

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

Most learners seemed to be well prepared and demonstrated valid understanding from the 4 internally assessed units, suggesting they had been registered for this spring window appropriately.

Most learners also evidenced valid interpretations of the design brief that were used effectively to inform the proposal document, inclusive of a range of appropriate planning documentation, such as mood boards, navigation charts and visual layout designs. In most cases the proposals clearly informed development of ideas, the production process and the final evaluations. There were minimal submissions that demonstrated some disconnections such as the proposed intentions compared to the final outcome, for example, planning to produce a website, yet actually producing a PowerPoint presentation.

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

There was some 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 hardware and software to demonstrate the use of sources, techniques, and processes. However, some learners provided no supporting evidence with their product and this was reflected in the awarding marks in the lower mark levels.

The use of annotation within all tasks was useful to verify learners understanding and choices made during the planning, design, development and production stages. Some learners also annotated their thought process of their experimentation to record their approach, and this worked well and aided their evaluations.

The annotations of higher achieving learners were informative with consistent links to the design brief and the requirements of each task, in particular, justifying the choices made throughout the production process. However, lower achieving learners had limited, very descriptive annotations or no annotation at all, and this proved difficult to follow their approach, level of understanding and choices made.

Task 1

In this task learners are required to consider all aspects of the design brief and create one proposal document (in their own choice of format) for the content and layout of the interactive media product. The proposal should be inclusive of all relevant planning of for the production of the interactive media product in task 2.

Not all learners submitted their evidence in one proposal document, but rather multiple planning documents and this was not requested in this task. In some cases, this proved highly problematic for examiners to locate valid evidence, in particular when there were multiple files and file formats within the task 1 folder. Centres are reminded that only one format of evidence is required. It is best practice to collate all planning evidence into one proposal document, for example a PDF, rather than multiple separate documents.

There has continued to be a good standard of evidence for this task and most learners collated written notes, mind maps, mood boards, design sketches, storyboards, navigation diagrams and layout designs into one clear proposal document. There was also some improvement regarding the presentation of the proposals, in particular where learners included visual representations.

Most learners provided valid evidence, even if limited, of their intended application of sources, processes and techniques. However, some learners did not evidence any planning of these areas at all in the proposal and this is a requirement that is awarded marks for this task. Some learners provided this evidence in task 2 and marks were awarded as appropriate for task 1.

Higher achieving learners submitted focused and highly detailed planning documentation for this task and this was positive to observe. Centres are reminded that learners should only produce evidence that is requested, and there is no requirement or marks awarded for additional evidence, for example screenshots/reviews of exiting products. In some cases, this type of evidence was substantial and seemed to have taken some time for learners to complete, diverting their time from creating evidence actually required for this task, and that allows marks to be awarded.

Task 2

In this task learners are required to create their proposed interactive media product from task 1. This may not be a completed product, but learners must demonstrate evidence that the product shows sufficient interactivity and functionality. Evidence of functionality is a significant allocation of marks awarded in this task, and without an actual product, marks will be restricted to lower mark levels.

Centres are strongly reminded that, even though it is not mandatory, learners should create a final product that is fully functional, and the 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. Following this process should ensure learners can demonstrate the required understanding and skills to allow for marks to be awarded even without a completed product.

Learners' submissions have continued to be inclusive of valid evidence of annotated screenshots for this task. This approach works well to support the preparation of assets and the production process. In some cases, this also contributed effectively to the review in task 3 regarding decision making, solving problems and improvements.

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 experimentation and development and some submitted just the final outcome; this limited marks awarded for this task. Centres are reminded that learners do not have to create their own assets for their products in this task but should evidence the acquiring and preparation of assets for their interactive media product.

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, which is the sole 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 how they have prepared assets in order to demonstrate their understanding and achieve higher mark levels. This is of particular importance when learners have used website builder applications or customised templates.

There has continued to be a significant amount of PowerPoint presentations submitted and this is acceptable. However, some learners were limited to being awarded marks in lower mark levels if the presentations had no interactivity, or if they had not selected appropriate options in the slideshow settings to enable full interactivity. There has also continued to be many submissions of linear

presentations being submitted and these do not demonstrate the required level of skill for this subject or external assessment.

Task 3

In this task learners are required to evaluate the interactive media product created in task 2. The evaluation should include a review of the technical skills used and the choices made, the processes used and why they were used, and how they could improve the interactive media product in relation to the brief.

There was some improvement in the standard of evaluation skills and most learners submitted honest, sufficiently detailed and well-presented evaluations. It was also positive to observe ongoing review and reference to improvements within task 2; marks were awarded in task 2 in these cases.

However, some learners also submitted detailed reviews of the strengths and weaknesses of their own performance overall and this is not required, as they made limited refence to improvements to the actual product 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 awarded marks in this task.

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. Therefore, learners who provided minimal evaluations yet focused on improvements of their product were still able to be awarded sufficient marks for this task. In contrast, many learners provided detailed evaluations focused on strengths and weaknesses of their own performance with limited reference to improvements of their products and this limited the awarding of higher marks.

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Malpractice

There were 3 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 maladministration was 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.

Chief Examiner: Lesley Davis
Date: 10/04/23