



Chief Examiner Report

**NCFE CACHE Level 3 Extended Diploma in
Health and Social Care
QN: 601/6110/3**

Assessment code: HSC EDEA Theme 1 & 2

Paper numbers: P003208, P003209

Submission date: 15th January 2026

Introduction

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 performed well as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- grade achievements
- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- assessment structure
- use of word allocation
- criteria requirements and command verbs
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- assessment criteria (AC)
- regulations for conducting examinations.

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 achievements

HSC/EDEA Theme 1 Professional practice in health and social care

Grade	NYA	D	C	B	A	A*	Learners	69
% of learners	2.90%	31.88%	33.33%	20.29%	5.80%	0.00%	Pass rate	91.30%

HSC/EDEA Theme 2 Empowerment within health and social care

Grade	NYA	D	C	B	A	A*	Learners	1957
% of learners	8.48%	27.24%	48.34%	15.07%	0.72%	0.15%	Pass rate	91.52%

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with JCQ [Instructions for Conducting Examinations \(ICE\)](#) document. 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 \(QSID\)](#) document.

Standard of learner work

The standard of learner work varied in both the length of the submissions, and the standard of their responses. Learners who performed well typically identified the grade criterion they were attempting, paid attention to the demands of the command verbs, and weighted their responses throughout their submission to meet the increasing demand of the criterion.

Assessment structure

This series featured significantly fewer holistically written scripts from learners. In most cases, learners identified the grade criteria they were attempting and included the relevant command verb in their title.

Use of word allocation

Many learners this year selected three key issues and spent substantial word count describing them for D1 and discussing them for D2. This approach often used a significant proportion of the allocated word limit, which in turn affected their ability to achieve the higher grades, as they had insufficient words remaining to fully meet the command verb requirements for the A and A* criteria. Additionally, many learners submitted lengthy scripts overall, and it appeared that some tried to reserve words for the higher-level criteria by limiting their response for B1.

Criteria requirements and command verbs

The criteria require learners to identify two key issues for both D1 and D2; however, this year many learners described three key issues for D1 and went on to discuss all three for D2.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

Centres are advised to remind learners to select good academic sources for their research and quotations, preferably UK sources. Blogs, essay writing sites, motivational quotes and Wikipedia are not appropriate.

Assessment criteria (AC)

HSC/EDEA Theme 1 Professional Practice in health and social care.

D Criteria

D1 requires learners to select 2 key issues to be discussed, and the majority of learners did achieve this. Some learners named and discussed 3 key issues, while this did not affect their ability to achieve the criterion it does use valuable words from the total word count and have an impact on their ability to achieve the higher grades.

Some learners did not achieve D1, the command verb is describe, many learners merely identified the issues using bullet points.

D2 should be an explanation of the key issues raised, not an opportunity to raise more issues.

C Criteria

C1 should focus on demonstrating how this knowledge supports understanding of the key issues raised in D1. Some learners merely explained a theory or legislation.

Many learners discussed how values, principles and standards underpinned the theme, some related these back to their key issues which was not always successful.

B Criteria

B1 requires learners to analyse a theory or legislation, contributing to the theme. Some learners described a theory or legislation, learners should ensure they are aware of the command verb requirements.

Some learners selected both a theory and legislation, often not meeting the command verb requirements.

Where learners had selected 3 key issues in the D grades, it appeared that B1 had been scaled back to save word count for the A grades.

In B2 many learners provided depth and detail related to the impact on practice.

For B3 some learners failed to provide personal reflections, including the impact of their learning on future practice.

A Criteria

When learners had selected 3 key issues for D1 and described their relevance for D2 there is an impact on the word count, often the subsequent submission for the A grades was underdeveloped.

Some learners appeared to conserve words in B1 to enable them to attempt the A grades, this was not a successful strategy as often it limited the learner to an overall C grade.

For A2, learners who had not related their work for B2 to the impact on practice, were limited in their ability to achieve this criterion.

A* Criteria

For A1*, some learners did not evaluate the influence of a theory or legislation. Learners evaluated the legislation but appeared to run out of words to complete the requirements. It is also important to note that professional standards and codes of conduct should not be mistaken for legislation.

Theme 2 Empowerment within health and social care.

D Criteria

D1 requires learners to select 2 key issues, many learners successfully achieved this criterion, some learners named and discussed 3, using valuable words from their total word count.

Some learners did not achieve D1, the command verb is to describe, many learners merely identified with bullet points which does not meet the requirements of the command verb.

D2; this criterion should be an explanation of the key issues raised in D1; some learners did not achieve this as they introduced new issues not described in D1.

C Criteria

C1 should focus on demonstrating how knowledge supports understanding of the key issues raised in D1. Some learners merely explained a theory or legislation.

Many learners discussed how values, principles and standards underpinned the theme, some related these back to their key issues which was not always successful.

B Criteria

For B1 learners should provide a detailed analysis of one recognised theory/piece of legislation or report, to complete this task for a theory and a piece of legislation and a report, is using valuable words from the allocation, frequently this also impacts on the quality of the work as learners fail to meet the command verb requirements. This strategy also has an impact on learners' ability to achieve the A grades as they do not have the words to fully attempt the criteria.

B2; learners must analyse the ways to ensure provision of equality, diversity and inclusive practice is shown. Describing what these elements are is not sufficient to achieve the grade.

B3; learners should reflect on their own learning and future practice to ensure success in this criterion.

A Criteria

As in theme 1, when learners name 3 issues in D1 and 2, this uses additional words which means learners then do not make successful attempts at achieving the higher criteria command verbs as they cannot demonstrate the depth and breadth.

A* Criteria

Many learners attempting A* appeared to have reached their word limit, resulting in very brief responses that did not meet the requirements of the command verbs.

Regulations for conducting examinations

Malpractice

There were three 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

There was one instance of maladministration in this assessment window. The chief examiner would like to highlight the importance of adhering to the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) document in this respect.

Chief examiner: Clare Scott

Date: 24 March 2026