

NCFE Level 1 Technical Award in Graphic Design (603/0844/8)

NCFE Level 2 Technical Award in Graphic Design (603/0845/X)

Assessment window: 10 February 2020 – 6 March 2020

Paper Number: P000899

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 | 73 | 55 | 38 | 30 | 22 | 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 |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-----|
| 200 | 160 | 140 | 120 | 80 | 60 | 40 | 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 Document (QSID).

Standard of learner work

The standard of work for this external assessment window was very good and consistent with both level 1 and level 2, the outcome of which is very positive and is comparable to the previous year's assessment windows.

There was very good understanding of the tasks given with little misinterpretation of the tasks and assignment briefs. Where there was misinterpretation this was usually due to the learner not completing the task correctly, such as designing their own bottle for the drink to go in rather than using the brief and dimensions given. There was also some open interpretation of the name of the drink, learners were not disadvantaged for this but could not achieve full marks for the tasks where this had occurred.

There was a very good mix of digital and traditional handmade techniques and it was encouraging to see that learners had used the techniques and they were stronger with where both digital and traditional handmade techniques were accessible. It was also good to see that some learners had used collage, stencil and other traditional techniques which had then been scanned or copied to be made digital with further manipulation occurring using a range of digital software.

Overall the presentation of the evidence for this window was very good, with the vast majority of scripts clearly labelled per task, which allowed the examining team to focus on the evidence and applying the mark scheme rather than trying to figure out which task the evidence should be marked against. For this external assessment clear labelling of tasks really does help the examiner make the best informed decision they can.

There was much less reliance on written justifications in the evidence presented in this external assessment, learners focused most of their time and efforts on the creative responses with annotations rather than written work that outweighed the creative response. This was very encouraging and good to see.

Learners who gained higher grades completed all tasks, showed little misinterpretation of the brief and responded to the brief in full. A very good level of skill was shown across the tasks with accurate conclusions.

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment

Malpractice

There have been some issues of malpractice raised in this assessment window. The Chief Examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise learners that instances of malpractice may affect the outcome on the assessment. It is imperative that centres and learners adhere to the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment to ensure the integrity of the qualification and that malpractice does not take place.

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.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

In the vast majority of learner external assessments, the evidence was clearly labelled. As mentioned previously this really allows the examiner to focus on applying the mark scheme correctly, rather than trying to use their best judgement on which tasks the evidence applies to. Where evidence is not labelled it is not always clear where one task ends and another starts, in particular for tasks 1 and 2.

Where evidence is not referenced clearly, examiners use their own best professional judgement and often through discussion with the Chief Examiner, which task the evidence corresponds to. This was discussed at length during external standardisation for the external assessment. It is imperative that the learner clearly labels their work with the task that it corresponds to, in order for the examiner to be able to make a clear and accurate judgement against the mark scheme.

Evidence creation

The external assessment is based on the internal units 1, 2 and 3, therefore learners must have completed these units before completing the external assessment in order for the learner to have a fair chance at completing the external assessment to the best of their ability.

The originality of the evidence created for this external assessment window was excellent with very little evidence presented that was not the learners own work such as taking images from the internet. This was written into the assignment brief and tasks to discourage this and promote originality. Where learners had used images from the internet it was as reference only, or as a starting point, tracing images using Illustrator or by hand and then manipulating the image with sufficient difference. There was a small amount of evidence presented using Google images, where this occurred learners were not awarded marks for originality, use of image or experimentation with image in particular for task 2.

There was an excellent range of traditional and digital skills being used, from illustration to cut outs, collage, stencils, Photoshop, illustrator, PowerPoint, 2d Design, coloured pencils, graphic markers and paint. A large proportion of learners used a blend of traditional and digital techniques, some used just traditional, some just digital, all techniques are valid and were marked equally.

Where learners achieved higher grades, it was clear to see that the ideas degenerated in task 1 were developed and refined through task 2 to final outcome in task 3. The higher achieving learners were not afraid to experiment and to make mistakes, and make final decisions.

Learners who achieved in the lower grade bands showed some inconsistency in responses to the individual tasks, some misinterpretation of the brief and a lower level of skill.

There were some instances where learners clearly had a good to very good level of skill however failed to complete the external assessment, these learners were awarded marks for evidence generated for each task, where no evidence is generated no marks can be awarded despite the level of skill shown in the tasks completed.

The balance of written work to the creative work has improved, centres are reminded that annotations are asked for in the tasks, not necessarily a full and detailed description with potential for the time spent on the written work outweighing the creative responses.

The vast majority of learners only presented one file format, however there were still instances where learners provided multiple files of the same evidence, perhaps in PowerPoint and PDF format. There was also instances where learners provided Photoshop PSD files, this is not a permitted file format as not all examiners will have access to Photoshop.

Centres provided the external assessments either as hard copy or as digital copy, either is perfectly accessible. Centres are reminded to provide NCFE with the necessary password when digital evidence is password protected, to allow easy access for the examiner.

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

Task 1:

The Natro Drinks Company want your initial ideas to show that you have considered all of the requirements of the brief.

They would like to see how you have interpreted the brief and want you to provide some initial graphic design ideas for the packaging design.

Your response to the brief must include:

- *your initial graphic design ideas*
- *annotations of how your ideas will meet the requirements of the design brief for the packaging design*
- *annotations stating how your ideas will meet the aims of the brief*

The vast majority of learners responded well to this task with little misinterpretation of the tasks, where learners achieved higher marks the initial ideas presented were innovative, met all the requirements of the brief with all aspects of the brief being considered.

Where learners did present research, this was to inform the initial ideas, there was little evidence of just research being presented, as was found in the previous two external assessment windows.

The overall response to this task was good with learners spending time on interpreting the brief and coming up with initial design ideas, using the information given in the assignment brief and tasks.

Task 2

The Natro Drinks Company want you to use your initial ideas and develop them further.

You must:

- *experiment with the graphic design components to develop your ideas further*
- *annotate your experiments, stating how your ideas use the graphic design components*
- *show all your experiments, including your rejected ideas*

Learners achieved higher grades by clearly experimenting with all 6 graphic design components and completing all tasks. There was some really visually pleasing experimentation using a mix of traditional and digital techniques. Learners gaining higher marks used the full information given in the brief, including the dimensions of the packaging, the overall final form of the packaging as a cylindrical can, and considered how this would be viewed by the consumer. Many learners also considered other information that would take up space on the packaging, such as ingredients and nutritional information. There was some evidence of learners focusing too much on the nutritional information, where this occurred learners could not be awarded marks as this was not asked of in the tasks.

It was absolutely fantastic to see that the vast majority of learners, including lower marked and lower level 1 learners, understood and applied the graphic design components. There was some lovely evidence of considering colour and composition. There was also some really lovely consideration of typography and how to apply this creatively, although the vast majority of learners still relied upon software such as dafont.com. It would be encouraging to see learners try and experiment further with typography and fully understand how to apply it with image to be able to gain full marks.

Evidence was on the whole very well presented for this task, with learners clearly labelling the components and the corresponding experimentation.

Task 3

You must produce your final work of the packaging design ready to be presented to Sam Goodyear at The Natro Drinks Company.

You must:

- *use imagery and typography*
- *use the graphic design components*
- *use the ideas developed in Task 2*
- *meet the requirements of the brief*

Learners responded really well to this task, presenting some excellent creative, relevant and visually appealing final designs that met the brief.

There was some misinterpretation of the task with some learners presenting a poster, a logo, or a packaging design that was not in the form of a can using the dimensions given. Some learners presented a bottle design, a carton or box design, or a drinking glass design, where this occurred learners did not achieve high marks.

Learners showed the skills they had used, in particular it was good to see screen shots of the digital making process. Where learners had used traditional techniques it was also clear to see the skill used through step by step visual story telling of the techniques and processes used.

Learners achieved higher marks by meeting all of the requirements of the brief, showing they understood the dimensions of the packaging given and the visual impact of this as a 3D form. Again a good mix and balance of traditional and digital techniques with learners playing to their strengths rather than risk taking at this stage.

There was some evidence of basic use of the components on the final design with minimal skill to meet the expected standard against the mark scheme, usually showing minimal understanding of the requirements of the brief.

Overall a really positive response to this task and the final outcomes with little misinterpretation of the task.

Task 4

You must provide an evaluation to present to The Natro Drinks Company about your graphic design and how the packaging design meets the design brief and communicates the company aims of The Natro Drinks Company.

Your evaluation must include:

- *the choices you made during the design process*
- *how you used the graphic design components*
- *the processes you used to solve the challenges of the brief*
- *the technical skills used to complete the design and meet the brief*

This task is the most straightforward for learners to understand, with little misinterpretation of the task. The responses were consistent with the previous external assessment windows, where learners gained higher marks by using a bullet point list as provided in the task of the external assessment, to provide their responses.

In some instances, the final evaluation was presented holistically rather than the bullet point list which is acceptable, where this occurred examiners use their own professional judgement to find the evidence that corresponds to the task.

In many cases, the written work provided throughout the evidence and the evaluation provided for task 4, were descriptive narratives of what the learner did rather than evaluating the choices made, the use of the graphic components, the skills used, the challenges faced and how the design meets the requirements of the brief.

Where learners achieved higher grades the evaluations focused on and gave detailed conclusions about the appropriate use of the graphic design components, and good descriptions of the processes used to resolve the challenges faced by the brief in the final design.

A very good overall response to this task with learners providing a proportionate amount of evidence against the time given and marks available.

Chief Examiner: Catherine English

Date: April 2020
