



Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

June 2016

BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Firsts in Art and
Design

Unit 2: Creative Project in Art and
Design (20478E)

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk for our BTEC qualifications.

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

If you have any subject specific questions about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you can speak directly to the subject team at Pearson.

Their contact details can be found on this link: www.edexcel.com/teachingservices.

You can also use our online Ask the Expert service at www.edexcel.com/ask. You will need an Edexcel username and password to access this service.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

June 2016

Publications Code 20478_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2016

Introduction

The general view received from the moderators who visited centres this year is that teachers and assessors have continued to improve in their understanding of the qualification and this was evident in the overall accuracy of their assessment decisions. Many centres now have experience from three years of delivery of this specification, and all stakeholders can benefit from the growing body of resources and exemplar work with assessment detail on the website, from the regular email newsletter with guidance from the Subject Advisor and from continuing training opportunities. The trend towards understanding of the specification and improving accuracy of assessment is very pleasing.

Assessment Feedback

Learners in schools are now mainly coming from Year 10 and 11 groups, with very few Year 9 entries seen by the moderating team. We have also seen more delivery taking place in FE colleges, with pleasing recognition that the requirements of this qualification present a different challenge when compared to the old QCF Level 2. Some very good work has been seen in FE centres and this was often found to be accurately assessed as well. However, in some instances very well-resourced centres, with established and successful Level 3 provision, and well-equipped studios have not always elicited quality results.

Many colleges have aimed to deliver a full Diploma in a year, and discovered this makes for a lot to cover in their standard weekly timetable, especially with the added pressure of two externally examined units. At least one centre seen this year has decided to change to an Extended Certificate, saying this will allow for greater depth of study, while still giving learners the progression potential and experience of a multi-pathway programme.

There have been one or two instances of centres, despite them being well-established and experienced BTEC providers, getting enrolments, registrations and exam entry late or wrong; or mistakenly entering students for a different unit in a different qualification. There have also been instances inaccurate uploading of centre marks so that the on-line marks did not match the marks on the assessment sheets.

It is important for managers, administrative staff and course delivery teams to speak to one another, to double-check documentation, administrative requirements, exam procedure and entry requirements and the published assessment, standardising and marking requirements.

As in previous years, moderators have made comments in their reports which offer very astute observations regarding practice found in centres and the narrative below is a summary of these findings.

There is a continued preference for learners to select the Visual Arts pathway. This may be because many centres are simply not equipped, either in teacher experience or physical resources, to deliver the more specialist pathways to a great enough depth. This is offset to an extent by those centres visited this year with learners opting for the fashion/textiles, design craft and photography pathways, but they are rather in the minority.

The Reflecting Your World, Flower Power and Tutti-frutti questions were by far the most popular choices this year. Some very good work was seen on the Tutti-frutti packaging design brief. Well-organised learners employed drawing, photography, layout techniques, nets and mock-ups and digital print before photographing their mock-ups on a shop shelf alongside commercial products to show how they might appear in context. Work was seen that effectively combined observational work in mixed media with digital scanning, manipulation and typography. Some highly convincing and commercial-looking pack designs were produced, as well as engaging and attractive magazine covers, magazine pages and website pages.

The Flower Power question was popular, and elicited some excellent outcomes, across a range of specialist pathways including fashion and design and crafts. These were supported by attractive and coherent sketchbooks that showed how ideas had developed, referred to artists and designer research, and explained and justified design decisions in the context of client expectations.

Some discussion has emerged over the interpretation of the Visual Arts question, Reflecting Your World. Rather too many learners appeared to miss or avoid the intention of the question, including the client expectations and context, based on their own locality or region. Moderators saw work based on skateboards, comics, animal welfare, and a selection of foreign cities outside of the intentions of the question. Such work didn't always fulfil the requirements of the client brief. In more successful centres wide-ranging local research was undertaken, with drawings and photographs of local buildings, Roman remains, and industrial sites past and present, churches, civic buildings and vernacular architecture, as well as investigation into rural landscapes, maps, aerial photos, agricultural settings, shops and businesses.

The outcomes from those learners fully met the intentions of that exam question and the best examples balanced personal interests and identified sources with the client expectations with real skill and confidence. In some instances centres have been asked to retain examples of work from this question to support future training events and for their support in this we are grateful.

Moderators have commented on the extent to which centres allow or limit free rein to learners regarding the selection of questions and indeed, regarding the process or model of working that they then apply. Some centres still choose to operate in a very formulaic manner, pre-selecting the question, and in some cases supplying identical artist reference material and processes leading to a discomfiting similarity between sketchbooks and processes employed. Only rarely does such an over-managed process result in high achievement as the learner has simply not fulfilled the criteria relating to development of diverse ideas and of independent decision-making, selection and working.

Sketchbooks and development sheets that share identical workshop experiments and show very similar processes or a step by step and page by page progression often lead toward similar outcomes. Such a strongly managed teacher led approach fails to allow the independence which learners need to do well in this unit. In some centres it is clear that every learner has been told which pathway and which exam question to choose. Some learners may have never even seen the whole paper. The question paper very clearly states that learners should receive a copy of the entire paper for consideration.

It is worth reflecting on how cohorts are managed through the 20 hour preparatory stages of this unit. For those 20 hours to be most effective, guided development at the early stages will serve the learner better, hopefully ensuring that primary and secondary research is properly undertaken and recorded and that relevant artists and designers are identified. Best practice is for these to be considered and critically appraised in relevant contexts-by the learner towards the development of a personal response. Ideas should be developed in quantity, so some can be discarded, and others kept. Ideas developed towards final outcomes should have meaningful justification and reasoned personal argument.

Non-prescriptive approaches encouraged learners to make their own creative choices supporting independent development which led to truly personal and imaginative outcomes. Learners who engaged well with the client expectations-produced truly vocational outcomes that worked well in response to the task. Where ongoing evaluation took place throughout the creative process, it enabled learners to fully justify their decisions.

Whole cohorts who produced only slight variations on a common theme suggested that the teacher maintained control all the way through the process, stifling or perhaps even discouraging individual ideas and response. A further point of concern here is that the so-called design process is being increasingly taught as a linear process. This often took the form of a spider diagram or brainstorm usually followed by some research in the form of stand-alone pages. These often failed to meaningfully contribute to the further development of ideas and in some cases were often mislabelled as mood boards. Learners often then suddenly jumped to final ideas: '*this is what I am going to do*' referencing the ten hour exam.

Best practice is when the cohort are taught the iterative and cyclic nature of the design process. Where good practice has been seen, teachers have successfully encouraged questioning, the active weighing and discarding of proposals, the evolution, modification, testing and further refinement of ideas. Where this doesn't take place learners often are seen to grasp onto their first idea without any further developments.

Some centres stipulated which questions learners could tackle during the exam and informed moderators that this was due to learner inability to work independently. The more confidence the centre had in the ability of the learners the more freedom of choice was given. It is important that the paper in its entirety is given to learners who should then be allowed to select the pathway and client brief of their choice.

It is pleasing to note that Moderators reported that generally centre marks were more accurate this year. This suggests that centres have heeded previous advice to read and discuss the Lead Examiner Reports, and to look at the increasing amount of exemplar material, additional guidance and support available for this qualification. It is strongly recommended that all centres, both new and experienced, access all current and available support materials to enable confident understanding of the delivery and assessment of this unit. Centres who do this invariably do better in their delivery of this unit.

Despite a pleasing trend towards accuracy in centre marks, there is still some variability and weakness in evidence with some centres finding it hard to be consistent across the different mark ranges. In these cases leniency was often noted and this was more usually in the higher mark bands. Moderators often noted that evidence

placed in Marks Bands 4 and 5 did not always meet the demands of the criteria. Centres are advised to read closely the descriptors for these bands when considering if learner work meets their requirements. Centres may benefit from reviewing the requirements of these higher mark bands in particular. Improved standardisation of centre marks within departments would also help keep this leniency in check.

There was occasionally some severity found in centre marks and this was mainly where marks had been reduced due to the perception that insufficient annotation had been used. This occurred even though the creative flow was strongly evident in visual forms. Centres are urged to give credit for the use of visual as well as written language to illustrate the development of ideas.

Moderators also reported that there is still an occasional lingering preconception that lower ability learners might do well on a BTEC course regardless of how weak their work is. It is important that centres acknowledge the standard required at Level 2 when recruiting onto this programme.

It is worth reminding centres here that the Art & Design Subject Advisor's regular email newsletter adds extra support, guidance and advice, and anyone associated with planning, delivery and assessment of this programme should be a subscriber.

Achievement is fuelled by a willingness to explore and refine different types of media and process. Sketchbooks have been instrumental in collating and recording evidence to support investigations and final realisations. There have been some excellent examples of sketchbooks being employed creatively and fully this year. There is still some evidence of over-prescriptive teaching, with mechanistic duplication of source material, worksheets, and identical artists and designers and where this has taken place it has inhibited progression. In such cases it can be difficult to see what exactly any individual learner learner has achieved while formulating their own decisions.

The general nature of sketchbook work has caused moderators to comment on the ways in which they are used and presented. There are common themes noted by moderators and centres may wish to take note of the following:

- Spider diagrams or brain storms with connections to words that are not referenced or developed any further may give work a simplistic feel. Centres may wish to encourage a broader and more meaningful approach to research.
- There has been some excellent use of primary source contextual research either in the form of visiting artists, workshops with specialist practitioners or trips to galleries or notable places of interest. Where this has taken place learners have responded very positively with inspired notes, drawings, sketches and designs. Centres that recognise and support the meaningful value of primary contextual research and experience should be applauded.
- Writing and annotation is important but there have been excellent visual examples of the creative development of ideas, and this is to be encouraged.

- Learners may benefit from being taught about mood boards, and about how and why art, craft and design practitioners use them. There tends to be some over-use of secondary source material labelled as 'mood boards' and these don't always lend themselves to the meaningful progression or development of ideas.

Summary

In summary, centres should prepare to:

- Review and discuss the Moderator's report when results are published and use that to support action planning.
- Look carefully at recruitment to the qualification and explain the demands of the course and the externally assessed units to prospective learners.
- Look on the Pearson website for all the exemplar material available to support delivery of this unit.
- Avoid mechanistic and formulaic models of delivery. Best practice is to use the twenty hours of preparatory time to support the development of a personal response.
- Use selected questions from previous years' Unit 2 exam papers as practice for learners.
- Underpin learning with drawing, research skills, understanding of primary and secondary source material and help learners see how they inform design and decision-making.

Grade Boundaries

Unit	Max Mark	D	M	P	L1	U
20478E – Unit 2: Creative Project in Art and Design	30	26	20	15	10	0

External assessment

The suite of 'next generation' NQF BTECs include an element of external assessment. This external assessment may be through a timetabled paper-based examination, an onscreen, on demand test or a set-task conducted under controlled conditions.

What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we 'set' the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass and Level 1 fallback).

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries - this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries ensures that a learner who receives a 'Distinction' grade next year, will have similar ability to a learner who has received an 'Distinction' grade this year. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to make sure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in externally assessed question papers

Each exam we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries year on year because then it wouldn't take into account that a paper may be slightly easier or more difficult than the year before.

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found here:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit
www.edexcel.com/quals

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual




Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

