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Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

NQF BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Firsts in Art and
Design

Unit 7: Recording for Creative Intentions
in Art and Design (21357E)

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Introduction

Team leaders and moderators commented on how well the theme was received by centres this year, possibly due to a familiarity with last year's exam theme. They also commented on a more thorough coverage of the criteria by learners. Having said this there was a strong feeling that the 25 hours of non-assessed learning time was still not being used effectively. Team leaders and moderators also commented on the variety of visual sources provided. A range of forms, shapes, materials, textures and colours helped learners to be creative with their responses.

It was also noted that there was a need for more online exemplars spanning across the different pathways and mark ranges. With no feedback being given, it is paramount that each centre makes full use of the moderator's report to help develop action plans and improvement strategies. Access to training was also raised, although the support given by Susan Young was also recognised. It was noted that a number of centres had not accessed the previous year's examiner's report to help them with their planning.

Overall Performance of the Unit

Centres should download and read the Administrative Support Guide and familiarise themselves with the content before they deliver this unit. This guide will help you prepare and plan for assessment and moderation of the work. Moderators reported errors such as centres uploading the wrong set of marks and failing to upload marks by the set deadline. It was pleasing to see that there were very few examples of centres not marking out of 30 this series. A more common occurrence noted was the failure to have marks uploaded before the moderation. On a few occasions, there were also discrepancies between online marks and assessment grids. It is important that centres double-check information and use the guide to ensure they follow the administration requirements, and meet the key dates and deadlines.

It is highly recommended that learners look at previously released exam papers to help them to prepare for the 25 hours and 5 hour test. They should pay particular attention to the 'information for learners' section which clearly lays out what is required. Quite often the chosen brief was not clearly identified. Learners also need to make sure that they build their studies around the brief and client expectations. Often learners drifted away from the actual demands of the brief while coming up with creative solutions. Some centres provided a structured approach which helped learners to organise their work. At times, an over-emphasis on material processes stifled flowing creativity and made it hard for learners to access the higher marking bands.

It was also noted by team leaders and moderators that the emphasis needs to be placed on learners creating work that could be developed into future final outcomes rather than producing final pieces. Many learners also seemed to tackle pathways that were unfamiliar to them and therefore struggled with the nature of a particular brief.

However, it was good to see learners visualising their designs in situ when required by the chosen question.

Some moderators commented on the fact that a number of learners seemed to produce work which addressed each criteria individually rather than collectively embracing the creative process. While this may seem to support some learners, it certainly hampered higher placed learners who found it harder to explore the chosen brief through a personalised and imaginative journey.

Team leaders and moderators commented on the popularity of the visual arts and fashion & textiles pathways, with the other pathways being more evenly represented. Having said this, coming up with designs for multiple items in two of the fashion & textiles briefs seemed to suit learners who were able to quickly visualise and render developing solutions in a particular way. Those relying on a more considered drawing style, struggled to offer a diverse range of solutions and achieve the required depth, analysis and diversity within the time. It is recommended that learners make full use of the suggested 10 minutes at the start of the test to go through the paper and consider their choices carefully.

Team leaders and moderators commented on the variety of materials being used within such a small timeframe. Traditional dry media and especially pencil and pen were still the most popular. There was also free stitching on sewing machines, studio lit photography and Photoshop collages. The exciting part was that these often appeared outside their pathway specialism. Having said this, a more traditional approach to media certainly did not disadvantage the creativity and progression of any learners, whatever pathway they had chosen.

Centres have a good understanding of the unit components, but still struggle at times to communicate the importance of evenly approaching the requirements of the brief and providing evidence for each criterion. Some learners spent so much time on detailed drawings or a beautifully constructed mind map at the start of the exam, that time was lost to really unlock the potential developing design ideas. This often affected higher placed learners, who were not able to provide the expected level of depth, diversity and analysis.

Many moderators commented on the lack of primary first-hand observations. A lot of centres used photography as a way of evidencing this, however, when the photographs were more like 'snapshots' they lacked any real analysis of the subject matter. In one centre a team leader commented on how they had a structured and effective approach to using digital photography that enabled the learners to review the given objects and sources as a starting point for their primary research.

In terms of written and visual annotation, learners are improving at evidencing their thoughts in a more purposeful and meaningful way. This should not stop after initial designs and be evidenced throughout the unit and be constantly driven forward by creative intentions, shaped around the brief and client expectations. Learners demonstrated that well-chosen words were just as powerful as well measured visual

sequences. In this way centres must consider their approach to the unit with the cohort they have. It may well be that certain learners struggle to write annotations, when English is a second language, for example.

In terms of assessment, centres seem to be growing in confidence when awarding marks from middle to high in mark band 3 and early in mark band 4. Centres are certainly getting used to correctly and consistently awarding marks in these areas. It was also encouraging to see that even the lower placed learners were addressing all the criteria and there was a more robust structure to their work. Initial responses to the brief and client expectations were strong and provided a strong platform to develop creative intentions for the rest of their timed submission.

Centres need to fully utilise the 25 hour non-assessed period to practise analysing objects in great detail, demonstrating real purpose in their selecting, recording and designing. There was a stronger understanding of how to apply nearly, partially and fully met, within each criterion this year. Centres still need to look more carefully at the awarding of marks and level descriptors sections on the assessment grid. This would have helped them to examine work placed in mark bands 4 and 5, especially when the work lacked strong reasoning throughout and a personal response which started to explore tangents and combine developing ideas in unexpected ways. Sometimes submissions were pushed up into the middle of mark band 3, even though the work clearly failed to demonstrate an engagement with the recording of visual sources and struggled to evidence reasons behind responses.

The application of skills when handling media and materials has become more secure. This needs to be matched by more purposeful selections and designing for creative intentions. Learners were also being awarded marks as their work progressed, even though they had lost site of the brief and client expectations.

Moderators saw accuracy and leniency across all the criteria, although a weaker approach to criterion one had a greater effect on the other two. Work was seen across all the mark bands, with mark band 3 being the most consistently marked. It was encouraging to see that work placed in the top of mark band 1 still considered all the criteria.

Online exemplar materials should also be considered more carefully. It is easier to understand what is meant by 'a diverse range of designs and ideas' in criterion 3, for example, when you line this up against an online exemplar. Creating a rank order should also be encouraged as it helps similar samples more easily. Having said this, moderators saw some exciting work which fully justified its marks.

Summary

Based on the responses seen this series, the following should be noted:

- Review and discuss the moderator's report when results are published and use that to develop and help implement their action planning.
- Look carefully at recruitment to the qualification.
- Use departmental resources fully to support delivery of this qualification.
- Look on the Pearson website for all the exemplar material available to support better assessment and delivery practice.
- Use selected questions from previous exam papers as 'mini-assignments' to help prepare learners for the exam itself.
- Underpin learning with drawing, research skills, understanding of primary source material and ensure learners see how these elements inform selecting, recording and designing.
- Use the 25 hours of non-assessment time to during the pre-release to prepare for the 5 hour exam.
- Ensure that the six specialist vocational pathways are fully understood so that choices are based on viable options for a particular learner.

Grade Boundaries

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). The grade awarded for each unit contributes proportionately to the overall qualification grade and each unit should always be viewed in the context of its impact on the whole qualification.

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 is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in external assessments

Each test 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 for each test, because then it would not take into account that a test might be slightly easier or more difficult than any other.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link:

qualifications.pearson.com/gradeboundaries

Unit 7: Recording for Creative Intentions in Art & Design (21357E)

Grade	Unclassified	Level 1 Pass	Level 2		
			Pass	Merit	Distinction
Boundary Mark	0	10	15	20	25

