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Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Art and Design

Unit 6: Managing a Client Brief

(31832H)



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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 Near Pass). 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 6: Managing a Client Brief (31832H)

Grade	Unclassified	N	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Boundary Mark	0	9	19	30	42

Introduction

This report is based on the first submission of the externally assessed Unit 6: Managing a Client Brief. It has been written to support assessors in understanding how students have performed overall in the preparatory and invigilated tasks for Activity 1.

The marks have been applied holistically and there is a summary of the student responses for assessment outcomes 1 to 4. In this unit learners are allocated 20-25 hours of research and preparatory work and five hours to collate the presentation and write the speaker notes. The general view received from examiners and based on the standard of work submitted, is that teachers and assessors may have entered students too early, in year 1 of the programme for this assessment.

Centres are advised that this is a 120 GLH Unit, therefore all mandatory unit content must be delivered prior to students undertaking this external assessment. As this unit is only studied and assessed as part of the larger size Tech Level Diploma (720 GLH) and Extended Diploma (1080 GLH) qualifications it is suggested that the skills developed in this unit should be assessed in year 2 of the programmes (Page 69 of the Extended Diploma specification).

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

There was a small number of entries for unit 6 and this was expected as first teaching was September 2016. Although submissions were early in year 1 of the programme there was still some good evidence of learners engaging with the creative process and responding to their chosen Oxfam issue and design brief.

This unit requires learners to investigate the process of responding to client briefs in the art and design sector, and applying these skills to develop responses and present ideas. Centres should involve employers in the delivery of this unit prior to the unit task, to ensure that learners understand real vocational practice and the range of clients and possible briefs that they may be asked to respond to for the final task assessment.

It was evident within the submissions that most learners were not able to demonstrate the ability to respond to a professional brief and this may have been due to lack of experience of practicing this within the delivery of the unit content.

In addition, there is significant focus on how learners use skills and knowledge developed in this unit to improve their professional practice. Professional practice is defined as:

- Structure of presentation covering all elements within time constraints
- Use of terminology appropriate to the client
- Effective use of visual prompts
- Organise presentation material.

Again, the submissions did not evidence effective demonstration of these skills and this is considered to be based on limited experience and feedback in order to develop and refine these professional practice skills. This may be directly as a result of learners perhaps being underprepared for the demands of this unit in the first year of study on a two year programme.

The importance of presentation skills must also not be underestimated, the presentation skills demonstrated in this unit should help prepare learners for interviews into employment, an apprenticeship or higher education. In most cases learners presented their work to their teacher or to the examiner rather than the client, and this is a significant misinterpretation of the activity and impacted on the awarded marks for assessment outcome 4. Valuable slides were wasted repeating information from the client information pack included in the unit paper, essentially repeating information back to the client which had been provided by the client in the first place.

Learners clearly had the skills to present their work using appropriate software or collating information via a PDF and this was mostly valid and relevant. However some learners had not reviewed, refined or proof read their presentations prior to submission and this weakened submissions.

Centres are advised to ensure learners plan their presentations and speaker notes carefully. There was some evidence of learners not utilising the full allocation of slides or using far too many slides. For example, as previously mentioned, repeating information from the set task information and client information pack at the start of their presentations.

Oxfam seemed to be an engaging client for learners at this level, however much of the presentation slides and speaker notes tended to inform the client about themselves rather than using the information provided to respond in a personal way. Some learners did attempt to present their work to the client and this was effective within the initial stages of the presentations, however, this was not always consistent due to lack of planning the content and structure of the presentations.

The most popular selected target audience was found to be 'young people aged between 18 and 25 attending festivals'. Learners related well to this audience and provided a valid and broad range of relevant research sources. In addition, most learners made consistent links to their audience throughout the presentations and in the speaker notes; this was positive to observe.

The most popular Oxfam issues were water and food, followed by conflict and disaster. In most cases the issues were interpreted quite literally, and not fully investigated. Most learners produced quite basic and naive responses that did not entirely relate to some of sensitivity required for the chosen issues. In most cases quite predictable outcomes were presented based on under-developed initial ideas.

Task

AO1: Demonstrate ability to select relevant information and material to inform ideas

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to effectively interpret a design brief by selecting relevant information from the following:

- set task brief (page 5)
- the set task information (page 7)
- the client briefs (pages 8 to 10)
- the client information pack (pages 11 to 16).

Most learners were able to demonstrate a valid selection of relevant information and clearly show how the information informed their own ideas. However most of this evidence was not presented as if to the client, it was presented to their teacher or to the examiner. There was some good evidence of independent research using the provided information and links as a starting point.

Some learners simply repeated information that had already been provided for them. In addition they did not use the information to inspire their own ideas. This limited marks higher than mark band 1.

The issue, target audience and specialism learners chose to work with was clearly stated within the initial presentations and this was pleasing to observe.

There should be a clear and valid intention at this stage of the presentation and this should not be used to simply include all the research they have undertaken, this should be used to summarise key areas and justify their intentions for the ideas they want to develop in AO2.

AO2: Develop design ideas relevant to client brief

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to develop design ideas that are relevant to the client brief. Therefore, there must be more than one idea developed. As a minimum, more than one idea should clearly and consistently represent the Oxfam issue, the target audience and the chosen specialism.

Most evidence for this assessment outcome was a visual representation of idea development such as rough design sketches, samples, mock up designs and experimentations with colour. Most evidence was found to be quite basic in terms of how it was communicated on a visual level and limited marks to mark band 1. Learners must have the opportunity to develop and refine visual communication skills within their discipline to ensure they can demonstrate the competency and assured use of these skills required for mark band 2.

Most evidence also lacked annotation to demonstrate thought process and this limited marks to mark band 2, as although some evidence was relevant (mark band 3) assured ideas were not confidently developed. There was missed opportunity to demonstrate these skills required for mark band 2 and higher within the speaker notes. Often, where speaker notes were included, these were descriptive and simply described the slide content, rather than adding value with additional information, commentary and ideas. Learners did not seem to always understand the purpose of slide notes and this is something centres would benefit from considering with learners ahead of this task.

Some learners presented ideas that demonstrated some relevance and refinement, albeit technical and visual communication skills were found to be still quite weak. However, at times they were able to be awarded slightly higher marks based on their ability to use the speaker notes effectively to communicate thought process and development.

Idea development should show consideration of the design brief possibilities and constraints and consistently refer to the issue, target audience and discipline students are working within.

Learners are not required to create an outcome but may find it useful to apply practical skills that best show their development. In these cases annotations, design and technical notes within the development should be included and clearly relate to the brief.

AO3: Justify the decisions in relation to brief, audience and client demands

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to explain the choices they made from their initial intentions, development and final design idea. There should be some relevant reasoning based on the chosen issue, target audience and chosen specialism.

Some of the evidence for the assessment outcome was also evident in AO2 and this was expected due to the nature of the development stage of AO2 and how learners used the slides or speaker notes to give reasons for the choices made.

Most learners were found to sit most comfortably in mark band 2 as they could give a clear line of reasoning based on the issue and target audience. However, this was less effective in relation to their chosen brief and specialism. Most learners were not able to be awarded higher than mark band 2 as their level of visual and written communication could have been more confident and they did not always fully explore the demands of the client and audience.

The few higher achieving learners used this opportunity to explain further areas for development based on the selected ideas, client needs or limitations they experienced.

AO4: Be able to organise ideas and information for presentation, demonstrating professional practice

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to plan the presentation making optimum use of the twenty slides and speaker notes.

Marks for this assessment outcome were evident across the whole presentation, therefore evidence for AO1, AO2 and AO3 also contributed to marks awarded.

Planning should be evidenced by effective distribution of the content in a logical order and presented to the client. Therefore, all stages such as initial intentions based on the research of the issue, the chosen target audience, chosen specialism, development and final idea should all be included.

The presentation formats were not always entirely suitable or engaging for the intended audience, the client. This was mainly due to limited planning and the actual layout of slides. This aspect of the work submitted was found to be very inconsistent and unbalanced, especially regarding the use of images and text. There were some very basic submissions that did not demonstrate the required skills at this level. Photographs of visual work included were out of focus and hard to read, work was displayed at jaunty angles with jagged cut edges and annotation was full of mistakes. Some presentations were very weak in professional presentation skills. In addition the use of language was weak, bordering on the descriptive and narrative rather than explaining why choices had been made. It didn't always add value. As already described, speaker notes were used to repeat information from the slide content or used as an end of project evaluation.

Most learners were awarded marks in bands 1 and 2, although most were able to create a presentation in a logical sequence much of these were not refined or engaging. There were lots of submissions that included a lot of text and images that was difficult to read, poorly focussed and difficult to see. Sometimes the learner tried to include too much work on one slide, making it very hard to view.

This part of the activity should allow for significant demonstration of what the learner has accomplished and should showcase their design, visual communication and presentation skills. It is hoped that with more time spent developing presentation skills prior to the delivery of this unit, learners should be able to easily achieve in higher mark bands.

Summary

Recommendations for centres:

- Review and discuss the lead examiners report when results are published and use that to support action planning.
- Centres are advised that this as this unit is only studied and assessed as part of the larger size Tech Level Diploma and Extended Diploma qualifications, the skills developed in this unit should be assessed in year 2 of the programme.
- Centres should involve employers in the delivery of this unit to ensure that learners understand real vocational practice and the range of clients and possible briefs that they may be asked to respond to for the final external assessment.
- Ensure learners can practice responding to a professional brief within the delivery of the unit content.
- Ensure learners can practice and improve their professional practice within the delivery of the unit content.
- Ensure learners can practice and improve their visual communication skills appropriate to their subject discipline within the delivery of the unit content.
- Ensure learners use the allocated 20-25 hours of research and preparatory work effectively to work towards a personal response
- Ensure learners use the full allocated five hours to collate the presentation and write the speaker notes. Speaker notes should be a summary of the learner's ongoing technical and design notes, not an evaluation or review of the slide content.
- Ensure learners present their work to the client, not to their teacher or to the examiner.
- Avoid learners repeating information back to the client that has already been provided in the external assessment paper.
- Avoid learners using descriptive language within the speaker notes rather than explaining why choices had been made. Overall ensure the speaker notes add value to each slide.

- Ensure learners review, refine and proof read their presentations prior to submission.
- Ensure learners utilise the full allocation of slides productively and ensure these are carefully planned to cover all required elements stated within activity 1.
- Ensure the presentation formats are entirely suitable and engaging for the intended audience, the client. In addition, ensure learners plan the content carefully and ensure all text and images are clear and readable.

