

Examiners' Report June 2009

Principal Learning

Creative and Media
Level 2

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Principal Learning Creative and Media

Level 2 Introduction

Evidence was presented in a number of formats including traditional sketchbooks and written logs as well as photographs, DVD recordings, podcasts and blogs. Whilst the use of a range of different types of assessment evidence is encouraged a lack of annotation of evidence against specific learning outcomes often made moderation difficult particularly where evidence of more than one learning outcome was covered in documents such as sketchbooks or blogs. In some portfolios there was also a lack of evidence of individual contribution to group activities. Few portfolios included any explanation or justification of grades awarded by centre assessors. This again made moderation difficult. Some centres had submitted work that covered a number of units in single portfolios.

Centres are reminded that it is a requirement of principal learning:

- to submit evidence on a unit-by-unit basis
- to fully annotate evidence against individual learning outcomes.

The following administrative issues were noted during this moderation series:

- many centres missed submission deadlines
- many centres had failed to include the correct paperwork e.g. candidate record sheets, authentication statements etc.
- some marks had been incorrectly entered on paperwork

Centres are reminded of the importance of deadlines and the inclusion of accurate paperwork.

There was little evidence of internal moderation however where this was evident there was a direct correlation between the accuracy of centre marking and evidence that a Domain Assessor had reviewed the work.

Moderators also reported that some centres appeared not to have undertaken standardisation activities as a lack of consistency in marking was noted in the assessment decisions submitted by some centres.

Level 2 Unit 1: Scene

This unit requires learners to undertake research into a range of creative and media activities and job roles available in their region. Although many centres had delivered and assessed this unit in an appropriate manner some had designed assessment tasks that required learners to choose one area of the creative and media scene e.g. music or film for study. Where this was the case this limited the marks available to learners.

The research areas of this unit (LO1 & LO2) were approached through a range of activities with learners undertaking visits to venues and other organisations and interacting with a range of practitioners.

Although some learners had evidenced their research activities in an appropriate manner by including a research log and notes on what was discovered in their portfolios many simply submitted un-annotated leaflets and brochures. Centres should also note that downloaded material from internet sites, e.g. outlines of job roles, should not be included in portfolios. Many learners had been given the opportunity to interview practitioners. Whilst this was an appropriate activity this was often evidenced through a recording or transcript of the interview only. Centres are reminded that learners must be able to summarise and analyse this material and other research findings to gain the highest marks.

The outcomes of research activities were presented in a number of ways with PowerPoint presentations being the most popular. Some centres had allowed learners to work in pairs or small groups for this activity. Whilst this is not inappropriate centres must ensure that each learner's individual contribution to the outcome is clearly evidenced.

LO3 requires learners to present a personal critical response to an event, activity or artefact. Theatre productions, films and exhibitions were popular choices for this outcome. Although some centres had approached this outcome appropriately many learners had not submitted evidence of research into the event, activity or artefact they were responding to. Furthermore many learners produced a commercial style review rather than a personal critical response.

Some interesting guides were produced for LO4 in the form of websites, brochures and documentaries. Many centres had however designed tasks that allowed learners to collaborate on a 'guide' whilst not including information to support individual contribution. Some learners had not provided evidence that the needs of the target audience for the guide had been considered and evidence of the planning of the guide was not always included in portfolios.

Level 2 Unit 2: Performance

This unit requires learners to investigate the development of a form of performance and contribute to the planning and production of a performing arts event. Centres had mostly used appropriate and relevant activities to provide suitable practical teaching and learning experiences for learners completing the unit. It was a concern however that many centres had not provided evidence of individual learner engagement in this process.

Most learners had carried out some research into the 'development of a form of performance' (LO1). Concern was expressed by some moderators however that some investigations lacked a clear focus as described in the specification; this asks the learner to critically investigate the development of a form of performance over a specified period of time. Work submitted for this learning outcome was largely descriptive and did not comment on the factors that have influenced change. In many cases work lacked the detail and analysis required for the higher mark bands. It was also noted that there was some evidence of plagiarism in work submitted for learning outcome 1 with un-annotated downloads being presented. Centres are reminded that evidence of research should be submitted in the form of notes presented in the learners' own words with any quotes suitably identified.

LO2 & 3 requires learners to take part in the planning and production of a performance and it was noted that many centres had not provided suitable learner generated evidence of this process. Work for these outcomes requires robust evidence of the learner's individual contribution to the planning and engagement in the production process. This can include, annotated production meeting minutes, sketches, construction plans, budgets, photographs, formative assessments, self evaluations, peer evaluations', witness statements journals and or logs. Much of the work submitted for this series had brief and insufficient evidence, which in most cases did not support the centre awarded grade. Identification of learners in recordings of performances often proved difficult. Some centres had referenced health and safety, however this needs to be consistently referred to and applied by the learner throughout the planning and production process.

Evidence provided for LO4 tended to be very limited with few learners providing evidence of on-going monitoring and evaluation throughout the process. Some learners had only submitted final summative evaluations, which offered only brief descriptive comments about the final product.

Level 2 Unit 3: Artefact

This unit requires learners to investigate the way in which specific artefacts are created before planning and producing an artefact for a given or chosen purpose. Learners had produced an interesting range of artefacts including hats, masks, metalwork, hoodies, calendars, ceramics, bags and shoes.

Many centres however had not understood what an artefact is in relation to this unit. This meant that assignment tasks did not always generate appropriate evidence in relation to each assessment focus. It was noted that learners from centres who had designed a straightforward assignment where the creative outcome was a physical object tended to achieve higher grades.

There was concern expressed by moderators that investigation activities undertaken for LO1 did not always relate to the type of artefact eventually produced. It was also noted that some learners had not understood the distinction between investigation (LO1) and planning (LO2). Centres are reminded that LO1 requires learners to research the process and materials used to make existing artefacts as well as the impact of developing technologies on their production. This should be evidenced in a research log that includes details of sources used, with the results presented in an appropriate form.

Although the generation and development of ideas was often well evidenced few learners had produced formal evidence of forward planning against deadlines (LO2). This learning outcome requires learners to produce a production plan for the artefact they are creating. In many cases this had not been included in the portfolio or had been produced retrospectively.

The production process (LO3) was well evidenced by many learners by the use of step-by-step annotated photos. Some portfolios however did not include clear photographs of the finished artefact.

Some learners had made good use of diaries to evidence regular monitoring of progress (LO4) however many had only presented a brief end of unit evaluation. Centres are reminded of the need to provide learners with regular opportunities to review their progress and use monitoring to inform their decision making.

Level 2 Unit 4: Record

The aim of this unit is to make a record of something. Although learners can be involved in either the process of recording or the creation of something that is recorded, centres are reminded that in order to meet all of the learning outcomes learners must provide evidence of their involvement with each stage of the recording process.

LO1 requires learners to generate research notes in their process portfolio before producing a detailed investigation in an appropriate format such as a written report, presentation or an audio recording. It is essential that the focus of the investigation is relevant to the learner's own brief. Within this moderation series, although the majority of learners did produce some analysis of relevant examples in response to LO1, they did not generally produce well-focused and wide-ranging investigations into a range of examples from different periods in time and different cultures, including examples that highlight recent developments in their chosen medium. Furthermore, learners who were involved in the creation of a performance to be recorded did not, on the whole, investigate the demands of creating a record in their chosen medium through the comparison of different examples, choosing instead to focus solely on an analysis of the performance itself, which does not fully meet the assessment criteria for LO1.

With regard to the planning of the recording process (LO2), learners did not always begin by developing a series of ideas, evaluating these ideas based on appropriate research. Even with a prescriptive brief, where perhaps the client, medium and intended audience have been set in advance, learners should be encouraged to explore different approaches to the recording process. There were very few examples of process portfolios that evidenced the whole process of planning the creation of a record. Appropriate forms of evidence include notes on ideas, research outcomes, production plans, records of meetings, resource lists and initial design work.

The quality of the final recordings (LO3) produced by different learners varied considerably. Whichever medium is chosen by the learner, they are expected to develop sufficient skills to create an effective final product. Although there were examples of imaginative records, which included original musical recordings, music videos and animations on 'A' Level Biology processes, the majority of outcomes only demonstrated a limited or moderate range of relevant skills and techniques.

Learner attainment would be supported by the more widespread adoption of a monitoring and review process, whereby learners regularly monitor their own progress and use the findings to inform, shape or modify their work. Not only would this provide evidence of attainment in relation to LO4, it would also improve the overall quality of the learner's final record.

Level 2 Unit 5: Campaign

In this unit learners are asked to conduct their own campaign. The term 'campaign' refers to promoting ideas and raising awareness of issues as well as the practice of promoting products and services. Those learners who compiled the most effective campaigns were the ones who engaged with the notion of a campaign in this broader sense.

In response to LO1, the most successful learners compared the nature, purpose and relative success of a range of different campaigns, some of which were chosen through a process of independent research. However, the majority of learners simply analysed a series of print adverts, which did not offer sufficient insight into the complex nature of how campaigns convey their message to their target audiences, often through a variety of different methods.

In preparing a campaign, learners are expected to plan an effective strategy to promote a message to a clearly defined target audience. However, there were very few examples of learners who produced detailed notes on different approaches, records of meetings, notes on potential constraints, a campaign production plan and initial drafts of campaign materials.

Furthermore, there were numerous examples of end of unit evaluations whereas LO4 requires learners to provide evidence of the regular monitoring and review of their campaign, where learners identify the strengths and weaknesses of their campaign in order to refine their ideas and outcomes. This process should also be informed by the results of audience feedback.

Although there were examples of campaign materials that demonstrated some imagination and skill, attainment was generally low in relation to all of the learning outcomes. In order to raise attainment, centres will need to construct assignment briefs that enable learners to investigate how different campaigns work, so as to engender the knowledge and understanding necessary to carefully plan, prepare and conduct their own campaign, refining their ideas as they progress through an effective and ongoing monitoring system.

Level 2 Unit 6: Festival

This is a unique unit within the Higher Diploma in terms of its focus upon the organisation, planning and delivery of a festival of events as opposed to the production of a creative outcome. Many centres did not seem to acknowledge this distinction and often presented a single event which could be termed as an individual performance or exhibition rather than embracing the celebratory nature of an arts festival.

There were some centres where there was little or no evidence that a festival actually took place and as such, the work presented was not indicative of the 60 GLH recommended. Those centres who submitted this unit were seemingly working in a one-year delivery mode and it was clear that insufficient time had been allocated to the unit. Centre performance in this first year was rather disappointing. The spirit of the unit had rarely been captured yet teacher assessors were often awarding high marks with minimal evidence.

LO1 often yielded higher marks than other learning objectives though the research into festivals and their purposes was often surface level and rarely addressed the artistic policy and funding aspects. There was generally a lack of engagement with material found.

For LO2 the better marks came from those centres who had used planning formats as a starting point and where individual learners had planned and charted their own ideas, actions, targets and progress throughout the project. The necessity for individual contributions to be evidenced was often lacking which made moderation increasingly problematic especially where there was minimal teacher observation and annotation within the portfolios presented.

LO3 requires a contribution to the planning and production of publicity materials. Many centres did not give learners sufficient opportunity to achieve this criterion as often only two or three learners were involved in the publicity and even then, this was to a limited extent.

The relative importance attributed to the Mark B in this unit is synonymous with the active participation and individual responsibility required throughout the process and as such, significant evidence of individual learner involvement is expected. Such evidence might be in the form of reflective journals and observation records.

This unit has much potential to celebrate the diversity of opportunities and talented learners who have undertaken the Creative & Media Diploma and it is envisaged that the true spirit of Festival will be evidenced as a highlight of future seasons.

Level 2 Unit 7: Project Report

This is the only externally assessed unit for the higher diploma. There were a very low number of entries for this unit during this session and those learners who completed the unit were completing the qualification in a year.

The unit requires learners to gather feedback from a range of sources to work produced in units 2,3, or 4. They are required to analyse responses to assess the success of the work. Although this unit is allocated 60 GLH it was apparent that many centres had not used these hours to adequately prepare the candidates for the completion of the paper.

Section A of the report requires learners to:

- describe the methods used to gather responses, information and data relating to the work
- describe the sources from which responses were gathered
- summarise the responses,
- draw conclusions in a summary.

Very few learners had approached this section of the paper appropriately. Many referred to research undertaken whilst planning their project rather than research undertaken into responses to the completed work. This resulted in low marks being awarded in many cases. Many of those who had gathered feedback tended to ask rather simplistic questions and had not fully analysed their findings.

In general section B of the report was completed more successfully although few learners related responses in this section to findings from section A. It was noted by examiners that learners who reported on projects with clearly defined aims and objectives were able to complete this section more successfully as they were able to make judgements about their successes against clearly defined criteria.

Although some learners had submitted reports that were written and structured appropriately, report writing skills demonstrated by many learners were not of the standard expected. Most learners had taken the opportunity to include illustrative materials however very few had used graphic aids such as bar or pie charts to illustrate their research findings.

Statistics

Level 2 Unit 1 Scene

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Raw boundary mark	60	52	42	33	24
Points Score	10	8	6	4	2

Level 2 Unit 2 Performance

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Raw boundary mark	60	53	43	34	25
Points Score	10	8	6	4	2

Level 2 Unit 3 Artefact

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Raw boundary mark	60	54	44	34	25
Points Score	10	8	6	4	2

Level 2 Unit 4 Record

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Raw boundary mark	60	54	44	35	26
Points Score	10	8	6	4	2

Level 2 Unit 5 Campaign

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Raw boundary mark	60	52	43	34	26
Points Score	10	8	6	4	2

Level 2 Unit 6 Festival

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Raw boundary mark	60	52	43	34	25
Points Score	10	8	6	4	2

Level 2 Unit 7 Project Report

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Raw boundary mark	60	54	43	33	23
Points Score	10	8	6	4	2

Notes

Centres are reminded that this is the first summer examination for this new specification and that boundaries may change in the following series

Maximum Mark (raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme or mark grids.

Raw boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a learner to qualify for a given grade.

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