

GCSE Design and Technology

Contextual challenge
release – 1 June 2023

Guidance for centres





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Introduction

All design and technology happens within a context. It is important for designers to understand the context they are designing within, as this will impact on the wants and needs of users as well as the requirements for the design.

Contextual challenges for the design and make project (NEA) are provided, so that learners can select an appropriate context to base their projects on. The challenge selected, will create stimulus for the design and make project undertaken.

Contextual challenges are statements/questions that are open for interpretation, and it is possible to realise various design problems/situations associated with each challenge.

Please note: all NEA sample submissions are completed through Learner Work Transfer (a digital portal) and therefore taking a digital approach from the initiation of the NEA project would be advised.

Accessing the contextual challenges for Summer 2024 certification

Contextual challenges document for GCSE D&T NEA for summer 2024 submissions will be released on:

Thursday 1 June 2023

You will be able to access the contextual challenges under the Teaching and Learning Materials section of the qualification page, which is linked below.

 **Access contextual challenges**

Deadline to submit NEA samples: 15 May 2024



Approaching the contextual challenges – Useful tips for teachers

- You must give all the challenges to your learners and ask them to consider them all and select one that resonates with them. Learners should spend some time considering their options, so that a conscious and effective decision can be made, which would bring inspiration to their design journey.
- Contextual challenges are open for interpretation and therefore many different projects and project types can be realised for each challenge.
- Learners can design and make different types of outcomes, too, including product design, textiles design, architectural design and more...etc.
- Guide learners, so that they have a commercial design methodology.
- Provide broad parameters for students' design contexts
- Confirm that the project has the potential to meet the assessment criteria and offer general guidance on any necessary amendments



Approach the contextual challenges – tips for learners

Read the themes and contextual challenges associated with them carefully, considering the key information in each one.

Select the contextual challenge that resonates with you the most. This would be the challenge, for which you can;

- Analyse and investigate further
- think of possible design problems/situations to tackle
- show creativity and innovation
- Identify exciting projects, which you would like to pursue.

Analyse and investigate the contextual challenge you have selected by focusing on the key information it includes. Identify **key words/phrases** and expand on these. A **mind map** can be a useful tool here. Investigate the key information in detail, so that you have enough information to base your design brief on.

Through your analysis and identified design problems/situations, select **one** that you want to tackle. Identify a client / user group and write your initial design brief to initiate your project.



How to approach the contextual challenges



Read all 6 contextual challenges and think of design situations/problems for each context.

Select one challenge that you want to focus on and analyse this using, for instance, a mind map.

Investigate the context in detail, focusing on the key aspects of the selected contextual challenge.

Realise the design problem/situation you to tackle.

identify a client/user group and their needs and wants.

Write your initial design brief, telling what you will be designing and making to solve the identified problem, considering the user.



Problems/Situation vs Product thinking

When starting a design project that stems from a contextual challenge, you should be identifying design situations/problems that can be resolved with a design solution. It would be limiting at this stage to think of products, which would be the final answer to the problem.

Here are some examples:

Design situation/problems (✓)	Product (x)
Design a solution to improve comfort while working from home, improving the posture of a someone using a laptop most of the day for their work.	Design a chair for working from home.
Design a system which would enable its user to create different types of ambiance, using light/shadow.	Design a desk lamp
Design creative and innovative ways to bring awareness around sustainability to people visiting Y exhibition.	Design a jacket to promote sustainability

Scaled outcomes?

We have been asked a few times about appropriateness of scaled outcomes for GCSE D&T. We can confirm that scaled final outcomes (working scale models) are valid for GCSE D&T NEA, where the requirement of manufacturing a full-size prototype is impractical and would limit learners' ability to realise their full aspiration.

What to consider if a scaled approach is taken?

- Learners should aim to use similar materials to the ones intended for the full-scaled outcome, so that learners are able to demonstrate their manufacturing skills.
- Learners should use a wide range of tools, equipment and processes that are comparable to the skills involved in making the full-scale outcome.
- Prototype should be scaled to an appropriate size, so that details of the final design are not lost.
- Learners should have measurable criteria for the scaled outcome, so that final outcome can be tested effectively.

If you have any questions around the scaled approach, please do get in touch with your subject advisor to discuss further.



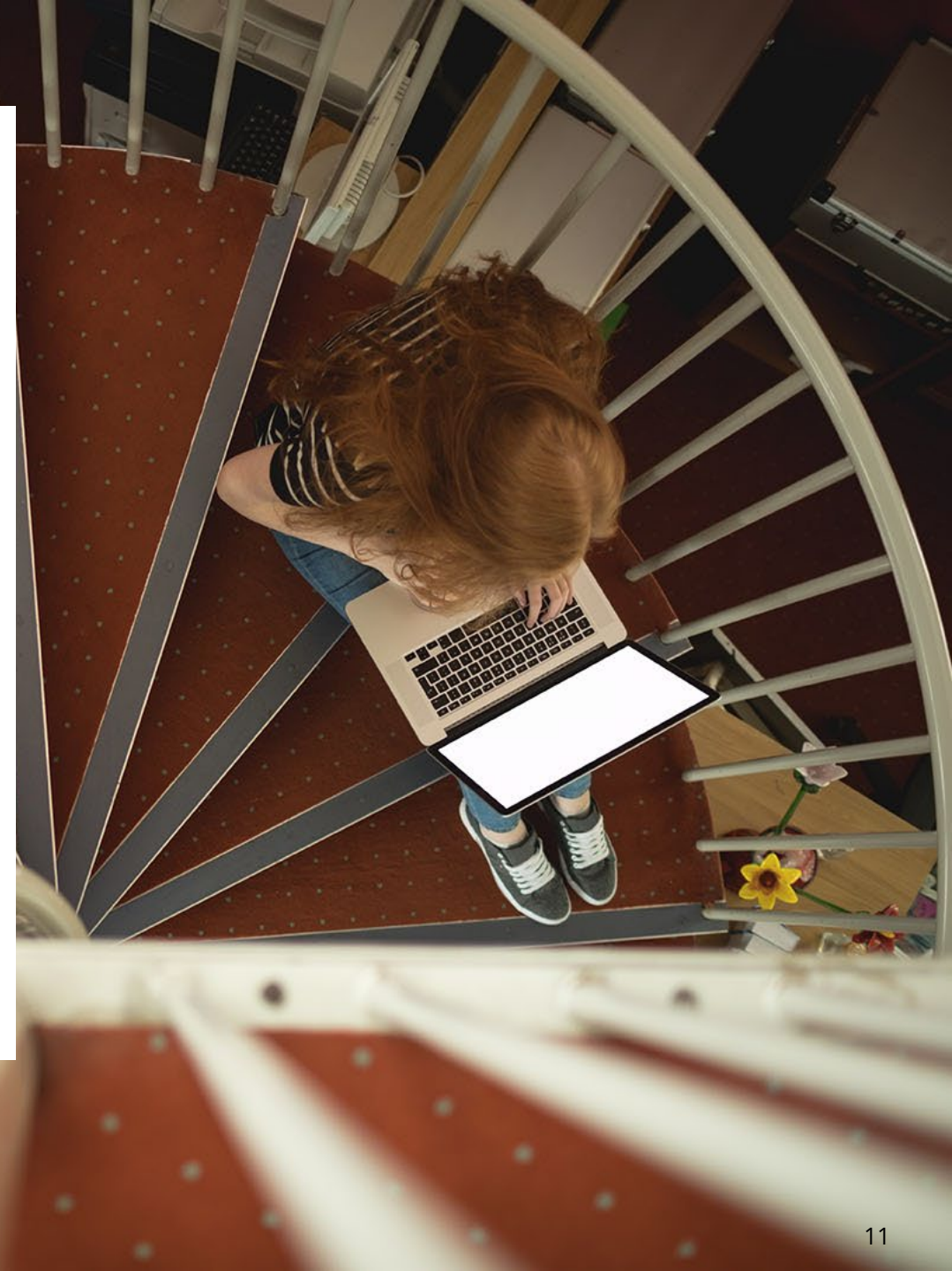
Useful materials and resources

- 1) [Exemplar portfolios](#)
- 2) [Delivery guide](#)
- 3) [Administrative support guide](#)
- 4) [Coursework marking training modules](#)
- 5) [Past training content](#)

Further support and contact details

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- Email: teachingdesignandtechnology@pearson.com
- Phone: (+44) 344 463 2819
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