



Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

June 2015

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

The principal message for teachers and learners resulting from this year of entries for Unit 7 is that the majority of learners were under-prepared and that centres had not taken the time to fully understand the requirements of the unit nor of the underlying principles behind the unit. Marking in many cases was found to be lenient and often well outside national standards.

Learners had tried to address the learning aims and there was evidence of considerable enthusiasm, effort and due process. However, many were unable to fully satisfy the criteria of the mark scheme.

The reader is advised that materials showing how the marks are applied to exemplar work are to be found here <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-firsts/art-and-design-2012-nqf.html>

Assessment Feedback

The visual arts section proved to be the most popular choice with a mural or piece of artwork for a gallery being the ones most frequently seen. Photography was also prevalent, with textiles, crafts then visual communications and product design following in that order.

Unit 7 has to be taught, the content of the specification is such that without teacher input the student will not understand what is required and/or misinterpret the criteria. It is a 30GLH unit, 25 hours of which are in preparation for the 5 hour timed test. That time can readily be spent learning the "design process" by producing work which can be used in other units.

Centres are reminded that these units of work are heavily structured around responding to client expectations and that there needs to be thorough planning in place that implements this intelligently into course delivery.

In many centres learners had very evidently not learnt how to go about working with a brief. They did not mention the client and often produced something which was not asked for. The selection made from the objects provided should be made in an informed manner in respect to what design potential that object/objects might have when considered along with the chosen brief. The reasoning for those choices of objects must be given. That can only be accomplished in written form. Moderators stated that many learners gave comments that indicated a choice because "I like the..." or "it was..." of a particular colour. This approach was common place and inadequate. Other learners gave reasons for the choice of mediums rather than object or choice of process. Unfortunately, those are not reasons of the quality which would see them at pass level. The lack of understanding of this criterion "A1, selection and reasoning", means that despite good work being produced for the other criteria, the learners had to be placed in the lowest mark band.

Centres were asked to collect objects from which the learners may select in order to record. The theme for the exam and, therefore, the type of objects to be collected is published on the website in March. Even so a few centres worked to last year's theme. There were several issues with the objects collected. Centres varied considerably in what they provided in the form of objects from which to select. Some of the objects

provided were wholly unsuitable or limiting e.g. printed paper waste, which limited the opportunity for the learners to respond to the task. A very small number of centres did not provide anything and instead allowed access to the internet or printed imagery. This exam, as all others, should be conducted under controlled conditions and access to materials via internet is not permitted.

There were also instances where the learners had not read the paper, had gone straight to designing and, therefore, missed assessment objectives.

The next issue is one where learners failed to record from "primary sources". Working online is not a "primary source". Others drew from photos or printed material, all of these are not in line with the requirements of the unit and specification. Recording should be done in a manner to elicit salient information from the object. Finished art works in the form of drawing or, for instance, printmaking, whilst welcome, are not required and wasteful of time. The recording can be by any method e.g. drawn, photographed, printed direct, dry point, by rubbing etc. Careful examination and interrogation/investigation of the objects in visual form would allow the higher mark bands.

Where photography was used it was more often than not done in such a way as to not evidence the desire to elicit useful information on which to base designs. Snaps from single viewpoints were common and the use of photographic techniques which may have allowed higher marks, such as differential focus, close up, lighting etc. were limited. The use of photoshop was extensive but the application of filters was too generously seen in terms of marks given by centres.

The criterion "B" to generate design ideas was the one where most success was found. Many failed to produce ideas and worked on only one idea. Others did not develop their ideas and many produced finished artifacts. This is essentially a design ideas paper and finished work is not required. Some learners even failed to work to a brief or moved away on an irrelevant tangent. Many did not document the brief chosen and the moderators had to interpret the work produced and deduce the intention, others worked to more than one brief. Reflection/evaluation which addressed client requirements was rare. Annotation, when used, was often difficult or impossible to read. This aspect is one where marks may be lost simply because of a lack of writing clarity or through unnecessary decoration which obscures the script. All too often learners wrote large amounts unnecessarily and the content was more often than not 'what I did' rather than 'why I did it'. The use of time was rarely considered and often too little was allocated to designing or in a few centres to recording. This is an issue which can readily be addressed through teaching.

Moderators commented that many learners did not provide written evidence when it came to giving reasons. Saying they are doing something because it is part of the brief is not a reason. Centres must remember that in order to achieve high marks in this assessment reasoning must be evident in learner annotations.

When the centre has a range of ability, the learners are in year 11 or above and when the unit has been taught, we have seen some results in the distinction band. These have been in visual arts and in photography for the main part.

Accuracy of Assessment

Whilst the merit order was correct in nearly all instances, marking was often bunched at the top of the band. There appears to be a reluctance to place learners in lower mark bands even when it is clear that assessment criteria are missing. When asked if the teachers understood the comparability of BTEC with other level 2 exams they all confirmed they did and yet that comparability was very often not applied and work was rewarded with higher marks, unsupported by the assessment criteria. Frequently teacher assessors do not use the full range of the marking tools and fail to apply them accurately. Where the marking grid, grade descriptors and fine tuning document were used, centres usually arrived at a mark which was correct.

Moderators frequently reported that the "Not Met, Partially Met and Fully Met" sections of the marking grid were not understood and or mis-applied. The marks should not be shared with the learners nor should feedback be given.

Administration

The administrative procedures were carried out as required by the great majority of centres and the work was usually laid out in merit order or a list and map provided. The amounts of work produced varied considerably centre to centre. It was astonishing to see what could be achieved in both volume and quality, as well as how little and how poor in quality. There were a few instances where the work was graded rather than marked and a few where the work had not been assessed by the centre.

The paper was not provided to learners in full in some centres. Where the learner had not seen the paper they were necessarily at considerable disadvantage in that they could not work to a brief nor satisfy client requirements. The preparatory work, through which the unit may be taught, can be done using the theme, but is not allowed into the exam room, neither can it be considered when marking. For that reason it may be used in other units. Some centres only gave the learners a single brief thus limiting their potential and personal preferences.

Summary

Some key strengths and weaknesses seen in 2015 are listed below:

Strengths

- Generation of design ideas in response to criterion B was the most successful area of the assessment for many learners.
- Learners who interrogated the visual stimuli intelligently with a design focused purpose and who reflected on the client requirements performed well.
- Centres who used the full range of marking tools, following the marking grid, grade descriptors and fine tuning to conclusion were able to assess accurately.

Weaknesses

- Learners who did not provide adequate annotation providing design reasons for their choice of visual stimulus for recording were not able to access the higher mark bands.

- Learners who did not respond to the client requirements or who did not make it clear what requirements they were addressing may have found it more difficult to access highest marks.
- Centres who did not provide a wide range of suitable visual materials for learners to select from hampered learners in accessing higher marks. It is vital that a range of materials is provided for learners to complete this assessment effectively.

Grade Boundaries

Unit	Max Mark	D	M	P	L1	U
21357E – Unit 7: Recording for Creative Intentions 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>

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