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Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Art and Design

Unit 7: Developing and Realising

Creative Intentions (31833H)



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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 7: Developing and Realising Creative Intentions (31833H)

Grade	Unclassified	N	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Boundary Mark	0	7	15	27	40

Introduction

This was the first year that this unit was made available for delivery as part of the BTEC Art and Design Level 3 qualification which commenced first teaching this academic year. There were a very limited number of entries within this first assessment window which was unsurprising as this unit was designed as a synoptic unit and was anticipated to be delivered at the end of a two year programme. This would allow learners to draw on the specialist learning and skill development experienced throughout the programme.

General administration of the unit was positive with the majority of centres submitting all work by the published deadline and including all required paperwork including, centre register, authentication forms and learner record sheets. It is important that centres take the time to read the administrative guidance for this unit and submit all required paperwork to avoid a delay in the work being assessed.

This report is written to highlight findings from submissions this year. Although the size of the cohort taking this unit was relatively small, valuable insight into the unit can be gleaned and used to support future delivery.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

Task

Unit Feedback

The underlying principle of this unit is to assess the learners' ability to respond to a thematic starting point and undertake a sustained creative investigation into that theme which culminates in the production of a final piece of Art of Design work in a format of the learners' choice.

This is a 120 GLH unit so therefore learners should be allocated sufficient time to fully engage with all aspects of the design development cycle, demonstrating an explorative approach to developing work in response to the theme. This year the theme was "Journeys" and it was clear from the range of responses that this thematic starting point was accessible by all learners who took this exam. Responses to the theme were diverse and in some cases, very imaginative. However, the majority of learners had taken a very literal and unsurprising approach to the unit, which did at times lead to predictable outcomes.

The exam is split into 5 individual activities, which are designed to evidence the learner journey through the unit paper, theme and tasks. For activity 1 learners

are required to produce an annotated log of initial ideas in response to the brief. Although the evidence generated through this activity is not necessarily submitted for assessment, this provides a starting point to the project and should inform the learners' response to all other activities in the paper.

For activity 2, learners are required to produce a written proposal explaining their planned response to the brief. The proposal must be written under supervised conditions and learners are permitted to take notes into the exam. The proposal is a vital part of the unit as it should provide a statement of intent for the learner and should afford clarity with regards to their creative intentions for the subsequent work. When this was done well, learners were able to provide clear and succinct information regarding how they intended to approach the project. Unfortunately, a number of learners did not appear to fully understand the nature or purpose of the proposal and the documents did not contain the required details highlighted in the paper. Centres are free to timetable this first 2 hours of supervised assessment for the production of the proposal at a time that suits the learners. However, centres should give careful consideration to the timing of this activity to ensure learners are suitably prepared. Where proposals had been written too early and prior to the completion of activity 1 the proposals lacked any real sense of purpose and contained broad statements of planned activities such as, "I will research the theme and produces experiments to decide what I want to produce". This does not provide sufficient clarity regarding creative intention. Conversely, where the proposal were scheduled too late the learners were too specific in how they planned to undertake the remainder of the activities and used the proposal to outline exactly what they planned to produce and how they would accomplish this, including which materials, techniques and processes they planned to utilise. When learners were this specific the proposal did not provide appropriate assessment evidence. It is important to note that whilst learners should use the proposal as an opportunity to explain their creative intention, this does not preclude learners from changing their mind regarding what they plan to produce as a result of their exploration and experimentation. Learners should clearly document any changes and adaptations to their stated creative intentions in their portfolio or associated commentary.

Activity 3 provides learners with the opportunity to practically explore the theme through application of a wide range of specialist materials, techniques and processes. For this activity learners should take the opportunity to utilise the extensive range of skills and creative practise they have developed throughout the delivery of the rest of the qualification. Learners should be encouraged to undertake a sustained creative exploration in response to the thematic starting point. The practical work should be informed by the contextual research undertaken and by the original creative intention outlined in proposals. Learners should fully explore a diverse range of materials techniques and processes, fully exploiting the creative potential provided by experimentation. Ideas should be developed and refined through relevant exploration. This process should be fully documented by learners, as this will provide the material required for completion of activity 4. The method by which this work is recorded should be selected with due regard to the nature of the work being produced. However, learners should be mindful that submission of this unit is through a digital portfolio. The work produced for activity 3 should demonstrate the sophistication and competent application of creative and technical skills required at this level. The majority of work received this year lacked the required level of development and sophistication expected, and this was reflected in the marks awarded.

For activity 4, learners are required to select appropriate work from that produced in activity 1 and 3, and collate this into a digital portfolio of between 16 and 20 pages. This digital portfolio should clearly demonstrate the development and

realisation process undertaken by the learner. The digital portfolios submitted during this series significantly varied in quality. When done well the digital portfolios provided a clear and logical representation of the learner's progress through the project. The slides demonstrated each stage of the design development cycle and it was clear to understand the creative decisions made at each stage. At worst, the digital portfolios lacked any sense of chronological order and there was insufficient clarity to understand how the learner was responding to the theme. Centres should ensure that learners understand the nature and purpose of digital portfolios, as well as formatting and content conventions associated with this kind of submission. Centres should also ensure that when learners are photographing work for inclusion into digital portfolios, the quality and size of the images allow for the viewer to clearly understand the content of the image. In some portfolios, images of sketchbook pages and worksheets were of insufficient quality to read the annotation, and this could have potentially disadvantaged the student. The majority of the portfolios submitted were produced in Microsoft PowerPoint, which provides an appropriate format. However, learners should be mindful when applying themes or backgrounds to the slides as this can detract from the quality of the work being represented and at times rendered parts of the text illegible.

Task 5 requires learners to produce a written commentary to accompany each page of their digital portfolio. This task is undertaken in a 3 hour supervised period in a week timetabled by Pearson. The task is designed to provide learners with an opportunity to explain the creative journey they have undertaken, justifying decisions made and highlighting key evidence that is included in their digital portfolios. The commentary should also provide evidence of the learner's ability to critically review and evaluate the work they have undertaken throughout the unit. Evaluations should be made with reference to the original intentions outlined in the proposal produced in task 2. This is also the opportunity to explain how ideas and the creative direction of the work may have changed and developed through the process. Submissions for activity 5 this year were largely descriptive and did not fully utilise this opportunity to expand on the information provided within the portfolio. A number of submissions included a commentary that simply repeated blocks of text that were already included within the digital portfolio and did not offer any further information for assessment. The majority of the commentaries submitted demonstrated accurate use of spelling and grammar and were well laid out allowing them to be easily read.

Assessment Feedback

For assessment objective 1 students are required to demonstrate an ability to generate ideas in response to a theme. Achievement of this learning aim was quite limited and with no learner achieving higher than 50% of the available marks. Proposals produced for activity 2 lacked confidence and were very descriptive. Initial practical exploration showed limited ability to support the generation of ideas in relation to the theme.

Assessment object 2 focussed on the learner's ability to apply understanding of contextual sources to their own work and practice. Although almost all portfolios demonstrated some research into contextual sources the effectiveness of this research in informing and extending ideas was very limited. For a number of centres, all learners had researched identical contextual sources and had undertaken perfunctory practical experimentation 'in the style of'. At this level it is expected that students are identifying relevant contextual sources, undertaking independent research and applying this research to the development process.

Evidence for assessment objective 3 relates to the exploration of materials, techniques and processes. Evidence for this assessment objective was mostly contained within the digital portfolio and could have been further elaborated in the learner's commentary. As this unit is designed as a synoptic unit learners are expected to draw on the skills they have developed across the qualification to produce experimental practical work. It was not always clear within the portfolios what practical experimentation had been undertaken and how this had informed the work. Where evidence for this learning outcome was lacking, it was unclear if this is because the experimentation had not taken place, or if the learners had simply not provided evidence in their portfolio.

Assessment objective 4 requires learners to refine work and ideas by reviewing and evaluating throughout the development process. Evidence of this process of review and refinement was again quite lacking in the majority of submissions. The portfolio and commentary should demonstrate on-going evaluation with clear explanation regarding decisions made in relation to original intentions. Achievement of this learning outcome was particularly poor for those learners who indicated the exact nature of their final outcome in their proposal as these portfolios often showed no evidence of refinement of work and ideas.

Assessment objective 5 has a large percentage of the available points attached to it and assesses the learner's ability to bring together the conceptual and technical elements into a final outcome. This objective requires learners to provide evidence in a sustained creative exploration that culminates in a final outcome. As with the other assessment objectives, this assessment objective must be considered in relation to the learner's original intentions. Once again it is important to note that this does not mean learners would be penalised for producing an outcome that differs from their original intention, but it is important that any such changes of creative direction are fully documented and explained.

The final assessment objective for this unit is concerned with the learner's ability to present their work for assessment. It is inevitable that a learner's ability to achieve this assessment objective will have an impact on their achievement in all other assessment objectives. If the learner is not able to present work that demonstrates development and realisation of a final outcome, then it is likely that the evidence for all learning outcomes will be compromised. The importance of this assessment objective is again made clear by the large percentage of points available. Where learners did not achieve well in this assessment objective, it was unclear as to whether this was because they did not have the expected quantity or quality of work to include in the submission or if this was a lack of understanding regarding the presentation of work.

Summary

Recommendations for centres:

- Centres are advised to ensure learners understand the nature and purpose of the proposal produced in activity 2. Proposals should include sufficient detail to allow learners to evaluate their development and realisation in relation to the theme.
- Centres are advised to encourage learners to take an experimental and exploratory approach to this unit. Utilising the experience they have developed throughout their programme.
- Encourage learners to fully document their creative process. This should include their development and refinement of ideas, giving reasons and justifying decisions being made.
- Ensure learners fully understand the nature and purpose of the digital portfolio and commentary in providing evidence of the development and realisation process.
- Encourage learners to evaluate their work in relation to their original intentions.

