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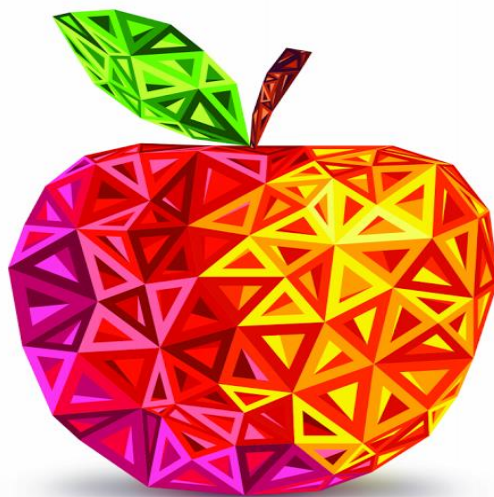


Examiners' Report/  
Lead Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Art & Design

Unit 1: Visual Recording &  
Communication (31827H)



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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 and 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:

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### Unit 1: Visual Recording & Communication (31827H)

Grade	Unclassified	Near Pass	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Boundary Mark	0	7	15	27	39

# Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

This lead examiner report is written to help you understand how learners performed this year and to support in future delivery. It should be considered in conjunction with the corresponding set task and mark scheme.

The underlying principle of this unit is the value of visual recording regardless of the chosen specialism. Learners extract information from ideas and objects pertaining to their potential when considering a response to the set theme, 'Transfiguration'. When this isn't apparent in the learner work presented, it seems to be due to a lack of understanding of this underlying principle. Centres are advised to review the requirements of this unit. Preparing learners for the timed test will help ensure that learners can achieve their potential.

Centres are urged to make good use of the research and preparatory time in allowing learners to practice developing visual recording skills and observational studies into imaginative and innovative responses to the briefs demands and constraints. Without this practice learners may struggle to cope with the demands of this paper. It is encouraging that the vast majority of learners who took this unit this year did successfully address the requirements of the brief.

Work was seen over the full range of marks. Responses achieving lower marks tended to be drawn towards more predictable responses with metamorphosis of plants and insects becoming a prominent visual characteristic. Responses gaining higher marks independently developed more exciting and varied responses, and a range of different disciplines were successfully explored.

The theme 'Transfiguration' received mixed responses, with some learners failing to properly research or understand the meaning of the word, relying heavily on sub themes such as metamorphosis. Changing or developing into something else, was how most learners interpreted 'Transfiguration' and there was no emphasis on making change to a better state. Many learners responded by changing or developing something making it into a different object which was often frightening or ugly.

However, the theme allowed all learners regardless of subject specialism the chance to explore a wide range of visual recording methods and techniques.

Centres must be commended on their approach; it was evident that the majority of centres had given their learners the opportunity to develop the theme using their own ideology, with a broad range of responses. However, it is recommended that centres encourage their learners to develop and produce appropriate content, as some learners produced work which had tenuous links to the theme. There was also, in a very few cases, some use of inappropriate imagery which might not be viewed as suitable for use within an educational setting. Centres should encourage learners to explore healthier lines of enquiry or treat sensitive issues in a more considerate fashion.

The challenge of producing physical or digital submissions was evident in the broad range of submissions. Using only 4 x A2 sheets or the digital equivalent to demonstrate an understanding of the theme can produce challenges, and is indeed a separate task, whilst also trying to demonstrate the ability to:

- record from primary and secondary sources
- research and record work by art and design practitioners
- research and record own contextual influences and factors
- produce a fully developed piece of art or design.

Examiners saw some outstanding and inspirational learner work, in many cases learners had embraced the demands of the paper and tasks, producing a wide range of ideas, responses, material investigations, contextual research and highly personal outcomes.

This was evident across all disciplines with a rich array of 3D sculptural outcomes, textiles and fashion, photography, fine art and graphics. Responses that gained higher marks used the theme in creative ways, sourcing relevant art and design practitioners to inform and inspire their creative journey. They would develop their own ideas, making excellent use of contextual research as a seed from which their own ideas and development grew.

Responses gaining less marks would often explore a wide range of contextual sources, but failed to develop their own voice, relying on pastiche copies of others work. This often led to responses that failed to show the learners own creative intent.

Again it has clearly been a challenge for learners to produce their work along with a written statement. The most successful learners were very articulate in their response to the 800 word reflection. They were found to be self-critical and aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They were positive in identifying solutions and commenting on how the work of others had informed and inspired their own development. However, a large proportion of learner's responses gaining lower marks did not acknowledge in the statement much of what was required in assessment objective 4. For example, offering only basic descriptions of ideas and judgements and often failing to reflect on strengths and weaknesses. In many cases learners had clearly not grasped the importance of this reflection. Learners who produced basic statements missed the opportunity to demonstrate their intended ideology and interpretation of the theme.

## Task

### **AO1: Understand how recording is used to communicate visually in the work of others**

The aim of this assessment objective is for the learners to understand the theme of the externally set paper, exploring what it may or may not mean, applying relevant contextual factors in the development of ideas. Learners should be visually exploring the work of others by identifying the creative intentions in their work.

Many learners responded to the contextual sources within the paper, with almost all portfolios demonstrating some research into contextual sources. The effectiveness of this research in informing and extending ideas was mixed, with the lower performing learners creating pastiche responses. 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 learners are identifying relevant contextual sources, undertaking independent research and applying this research to the development process.

The theme 'Transfiguration' was not always fully investigated or understood, this led to a lack of development within the weaker learners, often relying on artist and designers with tenuous links to the theme. Learners who had fully engaged or connected with the theme delved deeper into its meaning, allowing for a richer and more developed series of images and ideas, often finding exciting and informative contextual sources that informed and inspired their own practice.

### **AO2: Demonstrate understanding of visual communication through exploration of different methods of recording**

Evidence for assessment objective 2 relates to the exploration of materials and methods of recording. Evidence for this assessment objective was mostly contained within the presentation sheets and could have been further elaborated in the learner's commentary.

There were a wide and varied range of responses, with higher achieving learners understanding how different methods of recording can be used in the development of their ideas. They took inspiration from the work of others, but were never reliant on copying their work; they acknowledged the visual language, clearly justifying their creative decisions in the 800 word reflection. Whilst at the opposite end of the spectrum, the lower performing learner's presentation sheets contained little or no exploration of materials and methods of recording. These showed limited creative decision making, and a weak understanding of the set theme.

### **AO3: Demonstrate ability to record to communicate intentions**

Assessment objective 3 is about the learners approach to the theme and their understanding of different materials, techniques and processes in art and design practice. Learners should be able to acknowledge creative intent of others through an exploration of relevant art and design practitioners all of which inform and inspire the learners own personal journey.

Higher performing learners will take the work of others and use it as a stimulus to their own creative journey, they will explore a wide range of materials, techniques and processes, all relevant to their creative intentions and decisions in relation to their interpretation of the theme. They produce response that are rich in materials, techniques and processes, whilst remaining in control of the formal elements. Weaker learners often produced work that had little control over the visual language, reflected in their naive approach to the theme, producing literal or tenuous responses often demonstrating poor recording skills.

### **AO4: Evaluate visual recording and communication skills**

Assessment objective 4 is where the learners should be informing us of their ideology, in relationship with their chosen influences. They should identify how materials, techniques and processes have informed their decision making, whilst clearly informing their strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement. Whilst examiners did see some sophisticated evaluations, with pertinent and reflective observations, the vast majority of learners merely described what they had done, how they had done it and with what material they had achieved their work. The 800 words should be a series of self-reflections and justifications, offering an evaluation and not basic descriptions.

## Summary

Based on responses seen in this session, centres and learners are offered the following advice:

- Thoroughly understand and research the set theme
- Offer justification of choice of visual stimulus/research for recording
- Spend more time considering strengths, weaknesses and how work can be improved
- Take the opportunity to practice visual recording in response to primary sources before this unit paper is delivered
- Practice developing responses to the theme using primary source regardless of chosen pathway as a stimulus before the supervised period
- Experiment with materials, techniques and processes that inform and inspire the creative journey
- Develop individual responses beyond copying the work of others. More imaginative and inspired results come from re-interpreting others work and generating personal, meaningful responses
- Evaluate ideas as an ongoing process
- Be more self-critical and analytical
- Ensure the correct version of the externally set paper is used