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Examiners' Report/
Lead Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Art & Design

Unit 6: Managing a Client Brief (31832H)



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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 6: Managing a Client Brief (31832H)

Grade	Unclassified	Near Pass	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Boundary Mark	0	8	17	29	41

Introduction

This report is based on the second submission of the externally assessed Unit 6 Managing a Client Brief. It has been written to support assessors in understanding how students have performed overall in the preparatory and invigilated periods to complete the set task for Activity 1.

The marks have been applied holistically and there is a summary of the student responses for assessment outcomes 1 to 4.

In this unit learners are allocated up to 25 hours of research and preparatory work and five hours to collate the presentation and write the speaker notes.

The general view received from examiners and based on the standard of work submitted, is that there is significant improvement this year and teachers and assessors have entered learners as expected in year 2 of the programme for this assessment.

Centres are advised that this is a 120 GLH unit, therefore all mandatory unit content must be delivered prior to students undertaking this external assessment. As this unit is only studied and assessed as part of the larger size National Diploma (720 GLH) and National Extended Diploma (1080 GLH) qualifications it is suggested that the skills developed in this unit should be assessed in year 2 of the programmes (BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Art and Design specification).

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

There was a significant increase in the number of entries for Unit 6 this year. This was expected from the first completion of the two-year programme for many centres. Most submissions were from second year learners working towards completing the programme, however there were a few resubmissions from the previous 2017 entries, who were then in year 1 of the programme. There was good evidence of learners engaging with the creative process and responding to the client, the Design Museum, together with their chosen client brief.

This unit requires learners to investigate the process of responding to client briefs in the art and design sector, applying these skills to develop responses and present ideas. Centres should, where possible, involve employers in the delivery of this unit prior to the unit task, to ensure that learners understand real vocational practice and the range of clients and possible briefs that they may be asked to respond to for the final task assessment.

It was evident within the submissions that most learners demonstrated the ability to respond to a professional brief and demonstrate some valid professional practice at this level.

Professional practice is defined as:

- structure of presentation covering all elements within time constraints
- use of terminology appropriate to the client
- effective use of visual prompts
- organise presentation material.

The importance of presentation skills must also not be underestimated, the presentation skills demonstrated in this unit should help prepare learners for interviews into employment, an apprenticeship or higher education.

The Design Museum was an accessible, and very engaging client for learners at this level. Some learners did attempt to present their work to the client and this was highly effective within the initial stages of the presentations, however. Learners who had planned the structure and content of their slide presentation tended to have a more professional and coherent response.

The most popular selected target audience was the 'Young Creatives, 14 to 19 year olds'. Learners related well to this audience and evidenced a valid and a broad range of relevant research sources. In addition, most learners made links to their audience, including use of speaker notes, leading to a very convincing presentation. Those that did not do this had a less focused and less convincing presentation leading to lower marks.

All three Design Museum themes 1980s, 1990s and 2000s were equally popular. In most cases the themes were interpreted quite literally, however the sources did inform learners ideas and this was the intention for assessment outcome 1. More successful learners fully investigated their chosen theme using less obvious sources and with a more personal approach. Some included quite predictable outcomes were presented based on under developed initial ideas.

There was a good range of work submitted across the client briefs and specialisms. Fashion, 3D Design, Graphic Design, Photography and Fine Art were well represented, with Textiles and Interactive Media attracting fewer responses.

Task

AO1: Demonstrate ability to select relevant information and material to inform ideas

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to effectively interpret a design brief by first selecting relevant information from the following and then carrying out research related to:

- set task brief
- the set task information
- the client briefs
- the client information pack

Most learners demonstrated a valid and thoughtful selection of relevant information and materials to inform their ideas. Learners who performed well had created presentations that were directed towards the client rather than the teacher or the examiner. Learners who had taken time to research beyond that which was presented in the paper and were clearly thinking about their responses and how they might or might not be suitable for the client were generally able to access higher mark bands.

Successful presentations included a clear statement of the theme, target audience and the specialism that the learner had chosen to work with. Many learners chose to create presentations in response to the fashion and graphics pathways and evidenced research and design skills in jewellery and poster design.

There was some good evidence of independent research using the provided information as a starting point. In these examples learners had also justified their chosen research sources based on their own interpretation of the client brief.

Some learners, as in submissions seen last year, did not use the information provided to inspire their own ideas and simply reiterated or repeated information that had already been provided for them. These learners did not provide any additional evidence of research pertinent to the client or the client brief. This mostly limited the awarding of marks higher than mark band 1.

There should be a clear and valid intention at this stage of the presentation and learners should use an appropriate number of slides to introduce their research and initial ideas to the client. Learners need to identify and select relevant research to include in their presentation and this should not be used to simply include all the research they have undertaken. This should be used to summarise key areas and justify their intentions for the ideas they want to develop in AO2.

AO2: Develop design ideas relevant to client brief

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to develop design ideas that are relevant to the client brief. There must be more than one idea developed. As a minimum, more than one idea should clearly and consistently represent the chosen Design Museum theme, the target audience and the chosen specialism.

Most evidence for this assessment outcome was a visual representation of idea development such as rough design sketches, drafts, mock-up designs, layout designs and practical experimentations. In some submissions the extent to which ideas were developed was dependent on the specialism chosen to work with. The evidence presented therefore varied from showing very basic to highly skilled application. Learners must have the opportunity to develop and refine visual communication skills within their own specialism to ensure they can demonstrate the competency and assured use of these skills required for mark band 2 and higher. In addition, learners should be encouraged to present development work in the best way to represent their design ideas, for example using digital software if this is more effective.

Annotation and speaker notes to support visual development work also varied. In most cases annotations demonstrated some valid thought process, however there was also some missed opportunity where learners did not do this at all or support their development work using the speaker notes and this limited marks to mark band 2.

Often, where speaker notes were included, these were descriptive and simply described the slide content, rather than adding value with additional information, commentary and ideas. Learners did not seem to always understand the purpose of the speaker notes and this is something centres would benefit from considering with learners ahead of this task.

Learners who used the speaker notes effectively to explain and communicate their ideas process and development were sometimes able to access slightly higher marks, despite their technical and visual communication skills being quite limited. Ideas development should show consideration of the design brief possibilities and constraints and consistently refer to the theme, target audience and subject specialism students are working within.

Learners are not required to create an outcome but may find it useful to apply practical skills that best show their development. In these cases annotations, design and technical notes within the development should be included and clearly relate to the brief.

This stage of the presentation should be used to summarise the design ideas (more than one) and justify the choices made in response to the theme, target audience and chosen brief. This stage of the presentation should also clearly prepare for the selection of the final idea they want to present to the client in AO3.

AO3: Justify the decisions in relation to brief, audience and client demands

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to explain the choices they made from their initial intentions, development and final design idea. There should be some relevant reasoning based on the chosen theme, target audience and chosen specialism.

Learners who performed well held onto all aspects of the brief and referred to them appropriately in the presentation. They demonstrated a fuller understanding of what was required and who the presentation was for as well as the developed ideas. There was clear meaning and intention informing their design development. Some learners were not able to do this and some aspects of the task were therefore inconsistently displayed or dropped completely. In some presentations, it was not clear who the target audience was or why the design would be relevant for that target audience.

Some of the evidence for the assessment outcome was also evident in AO2 and this was expected due to the nature of the development stage of AO2 and how learners used the slides or speaker notes to give reasons for the choices made. However, final ideas should be clearly selected and be separate to the development work; in some cases this was not always clear. Learners who performed well had several ideas and then chose one to develop and refine further. They referenced the design constraints and presented a clear exploration of possibilities before identifying and justifying a final selection. This was then clearly linked to the client and target audience.

Learners who were found to sit most comfortably in mark band 2 could give a clear line of reasoning based on the theme and target audience. However, this was less effective in relation to their chosen brief and specialism. Learners should be encouraged to practice explaining their choices for final idea based on the client requirements rather than personal preferences or arbitrary reasons as this limits the awarding of marks to mark band 1.

Some learners were awarded marks higher than mark band 2 based on the level of visual and written communication, these learners demonstrated confidence and a coherent line of reasoning in response to the client brief and audience.

The higher achieving learners used this opportunity to explain further areas for development based on the selected ideas, client needs or limitations they experienced.

AO4: Be able to organise ideas and information for presentation, demonstrating professional practice

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to plan the presentation making optimum use of the twenty slides and speaker notes.

Marks for this assessment outcome were evident across the whole presentation, therefore evidence for AO1, AO2 and AO3 also contributed to marks awarded.

Planning should be evidenced by effective distribution of the content in a logical order and presented to the client. Therefore, all stages such as initial intentions based on the research of the theme, the chosen target audience, chosen specialism, development and final idea should all be included.

Evidence of effective planning varied from very limited with learners only using half of the allocated slides or less, to professionally presented design specifications clearly aimed at the client.

Learners who performed well had created exciting and imaginative presentation slides that were relevant to the chosen client brief and for the client. They displayed the research and development process to the best advantage and used a logical structure to inform the client. Layout, including background, borders and consideration of typography combined to support awarding of higher marks. There were a few presentations that as a whole, evidenced a thorough engagement with all aspects of the paper and these submissions accessed marks from the higher bands. This was very positive to see in what was the completion of the two-year programmes with most centres making submissions for Unit 6 for the first time.

Learners mostly had the skills to present their work using appropriate software or collating information via a PDF and this was mostly effective. However, some learners had not reviewed, refined or proof-read their presentations prior to submission and this weakened submissions and impacted on awarded marks for assessment outcome 4.

Some presentation formats were not always entirely suitable or engaging for the intended audience, the client. This was mainly due to limited planning and the actual layout of slides. In these examples this aspect of the work submitted was found to be very inconsistent and unbalanced, especially regarding the use of images and text. Some learners had not applied basic layout skills to balance the use of text and images in comparison with what they provided in the associated speaker notes. In these examples the use of language was also weak, bordering on the descriptive and narrative rather than explaining why choices had been made. The use of templated slide presentations from existing software did not showcase learners skills as they imposed a further restriction on the visual appearance.

Centres are advised to ensure learners plan their presentations and speaker notes carefully. There were some learners who did not utilise the full allocation of slides or use the speaker notes appropriately. Learners should be encouraged to practice how to select their best work to represent each stage of the activity (e.g. research, development, justifying final ideas and the actual production of the presentation).

This part of the activity should allow for significant demonstration of what the learner has accomplished and should showcase their design, visual communication and presentation skills. It is hoped that with more time spent developing presentation skills prior to the delivery of this unit, learners should be able to access the higher mark bands.

Summary

Recommendations for centres:

- Review and discuss the Lead Examiners report when results are published and use that to support action planning for future delivery
- Centres are advised that this as this unit is only studied and assessed as part of the larger size National Level Diploma and National Extended Diploma qualifications, the skills developed in this unit should be assessed in year 2 of the programme.
- Centres should, where possible, involve employers in the delivery of this unit to ensure that learners understand real vocational practice and the range of clients and possible briefs that they may be asked to respond to for the final external assessment
- Ensure learners use the allocated 25 hours of research and preparatory work effectively to work towards a personal response
- Ensure learners develop more than one idea
- Encourage learners to plan the structure and content of the 20 slide presentation in stages as Activity 1 suggests
- Ensure learners can practice and improve their visual communication skills appropriate to their subject discipline within the delivery of the unit content
- Encourage learners to look at existing examples of professional presentations relevant to their subject specialism
- Ensure learners practice collating and summarising research findings to clearly inform own ideas rather reiterating information they have been provided with
- Ensure learners use the full allocated five hours to collate the presentation and write the speaker notes. Overall ensure the speaker notes are purposeful and add value to each slide
- Ensure learners present their work to the client, not to their teacher or to the examiner
- Ensure learners review, refine and proof read their presentations prior to submission
- Ensure the presentation formats are entirely suitable and engaging for the intended audience, the client. In addition, ensure learners plan the content carefully and ensure all text and images are clear and readable.

