

Lead Examiner Report

January 2019

**BTEC L3 National 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, at Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external 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 is 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 external assessment 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 assessment, because then it would not take accessibility into account.

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Unit 6: Managing a Client Brief (31832H)

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	8	17	28	40

Introduction

This report is based on the third submission of the externally assessed Unit 6 Managing a Client Brief. It has been written to support assessors in understanding how learners have performed overall in the preparatory and invigilated tasks 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 10 hours of monitored preparation sessions ahead of 15 hours of supervised assessment.

The general view received from examiners and based on the standard of the learner work submitted this series, is that there is a general improvement in understanding the purpose of this paper. This was the first time Unit 6 has been offered in January, and the entry numbers were minimal as expected.

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 studied and assessed as part of the larger size Tech Level Diploma (720 GLH) and Extended Diploma (1080 GLH) qualifications it is suggested that the skills developed in this unit should be assessed in year 2 of any programme (Page 69 of the Extended Diploma specification).

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

There was a low number of entries for Unit 6 and this was expected as this is the first time this unit has been offered in a January series. The majority of submissions were from second year learners and there was some convincing evidence of learners engaging with the creative process and responding to the Fairtrade design brief.

This unit requires learners to investigate the process of responding to a client brief in the art and design sector and the applying these skills to develop responses and present solutions in a proposal. Where possible centres should involve employers in the delivery of this unit prior to the external assessment, to ensure learners understand the reality of vocational practice. This is also best practice for learners to undertake professional practice and receive external, professional feedback as if working for a real client.

It was evident within the submissions that most learners were able to demonstrate the ability to respond to a professional brief and demonstrate 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.

Most submissions had valid evidence of some demonstration of these professional practice skills, but lacked the refinement and consistency of these skills to achieve marks in the highest mark band. This could be as a result of learners perhaps being underprepared for the demands of this unit, for example in the first year of study on a two-year programme or that the mandatory unit content had not yet been delivered prior to learners undertaking the external assessment.

The importance of presentation skills must not be underestimated; the presentation skills required for success in this unit should prepare learners for progression, such as interviews into employment, an apprenticeship or higher education. The majority of learners continue to present their work to a tutor or to the examiner rather than the client and this is a significant misinterpretation of the activity and can limit marks awarded for Assessment Outcome 4.

This series introduced a reduced allocation of slides for the proposal presentation and this has had positive effect. Most learners used the full allocation of slides as well as using the guidance within the set task to organise their content and this has improved the quality of the presentations overall. In addition, there was much more evidence of learners demonstrating a personal interpretation of the client and accessing their own research sources in contrast to repeating information back to the client that has already been provided in the brief. Learners who did not make full use of the slides tended to have very limited research and restricted access to the full range of marks available.

Learners demonstrated good use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and clearly had the skills to present their work using appropriate software or collating information via a Portable Document Format (PDF) and this was mostly effective. There is still evidence of some learners not taking time to review, refine or proof read

content and overall presentations prior to submission, this sometimes limited achievement in higher mark bands.

This series introduced a defined maximum word count for speaker notes (600 words). This seems to have supported learners to be selective and use the speaker notes productively. Some learners provided a separate document for the speaker notes and this approach did not always provide additional assessment responses as many were repetitive of the actual slide content. The intention of the speaker notes is for learners to justify their approaches in response to the requirements of the client brief, this was not always the focus as many of the speaker notes were descriptive regarding the processes undertaken rather than the justified choices and decisions made.

Centres are advised to ensure learners plan their presentations and speaker notes carefully. There were many 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 proposal presentation). Speaker notes can be used to explain how and why ideas may be developed in the design proposal as final art and design outcomes are not required for this submission.

Fairtrade as the client for 1901 paper offered a serious and engaging client for learners at this level. Learners used this opportunity to research using a range of sources and there was a clear improvement of the use of primary sources. A few learners did attempt to present their work to the client, Fairtrade. This was mostly effective within the initial stages of the proposals; however, this was at times inconsistent.

There was a balance of the selected target audience 13-16 or 18-21 year olds. However, a few learners did not select either and chose their own, therefore this limited marks in lower mark bands. Those that did follow instructions justified their choice well and evidenced a range of relevant research sources, again there was a positive increase in the use of primary research to inform their responses.

The most successful learners were able to make consistent links to their audience throughout the proposal and state valid justifications of choices based on their target audience in the speaker notes.

The Set Task

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

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to effectively interpret a design brief by selecting relevant information from the set task on pages 5 and 6 of the paper. The client briefs have been consolidated into a broader range of accessible options and the detailed client pack has been reduced to provide a simpler, overview of the client within the set task brief. This has made the paper more compact and learners independently research the accessible client.

Most learners were able to demonstrate a valid selection of relevant information and materials to inform their ideas from a range of primary and secondary sources. Learners who simply repeated the limited information from within the paper restricted their ability to access marks to be awarded in higher mark bands.

Many proposals were not aimed towards the client, this is an important part of the task as this allows learners the opportunity to respond professionally as if they have been commissioned by a real client. In presenting their proposals to their teacher or the examiner this limited the awarding of marks in higher mark bands as this is not the purpose of the activity.

Most learners used the initial stages of the proposals to state their chosen client brief, discipline, selected target audience and was useful to set intentions and focus the remaining slides. There was improved evidence of organising research in the initial three to four slides as guided in the set task (page 6).

There was an improvement with the use of graphs and diagrams used to communicate findings and when relevant had positive impact and aided the justification of learner intentions.

The use of visuals within the research was mostly effective although at times predictable, for example using images of all of the products listed within the client brief. More successful learners used less obvious sources and attempted to find a specific area to use as inspiration.

Most learners used artists and practitioners within their research. This was not always relevant to the requirements of the set task but was useful at times to show how an idea could be developed. Some learners used these references to bolt on design ideas that became quite disconnected to their initial intentions such as the

target audience and chosen client brief. More successful learners were able to make valid links with artists and practitioners to inspire purposeful design solutions.

A02: Develop art and design proposals relevant to client brief

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to develop design ideas and present these in the proposal. It is good practice but not mandatory to include more than one idea. As a minimum, one clear idea should be developed to clearly and consistently represent the chosen client brief, chosen target audience and the chosen discipline.

Most evidence for this assessment outcome was presented as visual representations of idea development such as rough design sketches, thumbnail drawings, layout designs and practical experimentations. Evidence of visual communication varied from very basic to highly skilled. The annotations proved very useful as these supported weaker visual work. In some cases, it seemed that not all development work had been included within the proposals, this may be due to learners not selecting key pieces of work to include to best represent their development work and this limited marks in lower mark bands.

Learners must have the opportunity to develop and refine visual communication skills within their subject 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.

Speaker notes, text on slides and annotations for the development work was mostly descriptive of the content or processes undertaken. The purpose of any supporting text should focus on the development work and choices made in response to the requirements of the design brief. This is an area centres would benefit from considering with learners ahead of creating the proposals. Learners' use of digital media and technology continues to improve and should also be reminded that this is an opportunity to showcase their skills within their art and design subject specialism.

Learners are not required to create an outcome, however many learners created models, drafts and prototypes and this was useful to show development of design ideas as well as experimenting with alternative ideas. In these cases, annotations, design and technical notes proved informative.

There should be approximately seven to eleven slides allocated for this stage of the proposal to represent the development work based on the research undertaken in AO1. Links to the research should be very clear.

This stage of the proposal should not be used to include all development work. This should be used to summarise the design ideas and justify the choices made in response to the requirements of the design brief. This stage of the presentation should also clearly prepare for the selection of the final solution 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 based on their initial research, development and final design solution. There should be clear and relevant reasoning linked to the requirements of the design brief.

Some of the evidence for the assessment outcome was also evident in AO1 and AO2 and this is expected due to the nature of the research and development stages of the task. For this assessment outcome to be awarded effectively and positively, there should be a clearly evidenced final design solution, this should be selected from the development work but separate to the development work; in some cases this was not always clear.

Most learners were able to give clear reasons based on the target audience, however when trying to justify the chosen client brief this was more challenging. Learners should be encouraged to practice explaining their choices for final design solution based on the client brief rather than personal preferences or arbitrary reasons as this limits the awarding of marks to lower mark bands.

More successful learners were awarded in higher mark bands 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. In addition, these learners also used this opportunity to explain further areas for development and/or limitations they experienced.

AO4: Be able to organise information and proposals for presentation

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to plan the presentation making optimum use of the twelve to fifteen slides and 600 words of 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.

Most learners were awarded marks in mark band 2. Mark band 3 requires the visual presentation to be entirely suitable for the proposal and client and this seemed to have been quite challenging for learners to achieve.

Planning should be evidenced by effective allocation of content in a logical order and presented directly to the client. Therefore, all stages such as initial intentions based on the research of the client, the chosen target audience, chosen discipline, development and final design solution should all be included.

Most learners demonstrated effective planning and included some evidence of all required stages, however some learners submitted incomplete proposals or attempted to include too much content on to each slide. In these cases, marks were sometimes limited to lower mark bands and the define areas of professional practice was limited.

Some presentation formats were not always entirely suitable or engaging for the intended audience, the client. Some learners had not applied basic layout skills to balance the use of text and images, nor edited content to look professional or presentable.

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 easily achieve in 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 as this unit is only studied and assessed as part of the larger size Tech Level Diploma and 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.
- Encourage learners to plan the structure and content of the 12 to 15 slide proposal presentation prior to the 15 hours supervised sessions.
- Encourage learners to look at existing examples of professional presentations relevant to their subject specialism.
- Ensure learners present their work to the client, not to their teacher or to the examiner.
- Ensure learners review, refine and proof read their proposal presentations prior to submission.
- Ensure learners plan the content carefully and ensure all text and images are clear and readable.

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