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# Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Art & Design

Unit 6: Managing a Client Brief (31832H)



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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:

[qualifications.pearson.com/gradeboundaries](https://qualifications.pearson.com/gradeboundaries)

### Unit 6: Managing a Client Brief (31832H)

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

## Introduction

This unit requires learners to investigate the process of responding to a client brief in the art and design sector and applying these skills to develop a response and present a solution within a design 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. It is also best practice for learners to undertake professional practice and receive external, professional feedback as if working for a real client.

In this external assessment, learners are allocated 10 hours of monitored preparation sessions ahead of 15 hours of supervised assessment sessions. Most submissions demonstrated effective use of these allocated hours; however, some presentations were limited in development with a weak final design solution.

## Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

Most learners used the full allocation of 15 slides as well as using the guidance within the set task to organise their content. This has generally improved the quality of the presentations overall. In addition, stages of the creative process were presented in a logical order which supported the development of their ideas towards final designs.

The guidance for submissions section of the paper states some suggested yet useful allocations of slides (3-4 slides for research and 7-11 slides for development) yet most learners used much more than 4 slides for research in AO1, and in some cases nearly half of the maximum allocated slides. This impacted on the slides allocated for AO2 (development) and AO3 (final idea and justification) and in some cases limited marks in these Assessment Outcomes. Centres need to direct learners to the information regarding the allocation of slides as some learners left little room in their presentation to evidence development. This impacted on the number of marks they could be awarded in AO2.

There was a good range of client briefs selected and this was very positive to observe. Although there is an improvement of engaging with the client and the standard of presentations overall, the vast majority of learners are still presenting their work to their teacher or to the examiner rather than the client and this is a significant misinterpretation of the set task and inevitably impacted on the awarded marks for assessment outcome 4.

There was a good range of work submitted across most of subject disciplines (Fashion, Textiles, Photography, Interactive Media, 3D Design, Graphic Design and Fine Art). Fashion, Textiles, Interactive Media, 3D Design and Graphic Design were in the majority with Fine Art and Photography in the minority. There was also a significant increase in learners choosing the Interactive Design discipline, in particular mobile applications.

Some learners worked across disciplines and although this is permitted, learners were not always clear with their intentions and in some cases, this limited marks awarded across all assessment outcomes.

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
- organisation of presentation material.

It is recommended that learners submit speaker notes alongside their presentation proposals and not all learners did this. Some learners included these on the actual presentation slides/pages, and some did not include these at all. Some also submitted separate speaker notes (e.g. a word document) and these were at times quite disconnected. Although the use of speaker notes is not a mandatory requirement, it is strongly encouraged as AO3 requires justification of the selected idea and the speaker notes are good way to evidence this. Some learners used speaker notes to repeat information already evident in the slides and in these instances, it was difficult to find any added value in them.

Frog Bikes seemed to be quite a commercial yet engaging client for most learners at this level. Learners used this opportunity to research using a range of sources and there was further improvement of the use of primary sources. However, some learners did not attempt to present relevant ideas to the client, Frog Bikes. In these cases, there was evidence of learners using some valid research. As a result the development and final idea was clearly not purposely created for the client or this external assessment, nor did it use the research effectively to inform ideas.

Most learners selected a target audience 1-4 or 10-14 year olds. However, a minority of learners did not select either and chosen their own, therefore this limited marks in lower mark bands. The target audience of 10-14 years was the most popular, probably because learners of this age identify better with young teens than with toddlers.

Once selected, learners justified their choice well and evidenced a range of relevant research sources. There was a positive increase in the use of primary research to inform responses. 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.

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 proofread content and overall presentations prior to submission. This sometimes limited achievement in higher mark bands.

## 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 selecting relevant information from the set task.

As with previous papers there is still evidence of learners repeating information already given to them in the paper. Recent changes in the paper meant learners no longer receive a client information pack so there was less given material to regurgitate, but some learners still wasted a number of slides telling the client obvious information already provided in the paper.

It was positive to observe that research always contained relevant information about the client. Learners clearly had access to a wide range of information sources to support the development of their ideas.

There was a significant improvement of the use of primary research sources and the use of surveys or questionnaires with the target audience was popular.

There was less reference to practitioners as inspiration, however, this was probably not as prominent based on the nature of the client 'Frog Bikes'.

Research of the client and associated products was at times quite literal with limited personal interpretation of research and few original responses. Some learners produced pastiche studies of designs found in research and presented them as their own 'development', lacking the bravery to come up with truly unique ideas of their own. However, 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.

Most presentation proposals were aimed towards the client and remained consistently focused and this was positive to observe. In addition, most learners also used the initial stages of the proposals to state their chosen client brief, discipline, selected target audience and this proved useful to set intentions and focus for the remaining slides.

The use of visuals within the research was mostly effective although at times predictable, for example using images to represent a client profile. More successful learners used less obvious sources and attempted to find more unique areas of the briefs to use as inspiration.

## **AO2: Develop design ideas relevant to client brief**

The aim of this assessment outcome is for learners to develop design ideas and present these. 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.

As in previous papers not all learners submitted enough evidence to demonstrate the development for higher mark bands in AO2. This was mainly due to too many slides focussing in on the research required for AO1. At times, we felt that some development work may have been missing. Learners referred to much more evidence within their speaker notes than was apparent in the presentation. This may also be due to learners not selecting key pieces of work to include to best represent their development of design ideas, and this can limit marks to lower mark bands.

Most evidence for this assessment outcome was 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. Annotation provided additional supportive commentary and helped describe and support design ideas which were not always obvious in visual depictions.

Learners tended to select one 'idea' and present this rather than show how they developed more than one idea in response to their research. For more successful learners there was some excellent demonstration of visual communication within a range of chosen disciplines across a number of ideas.

Ahead of taking this paper, 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.

Some justifications given in the speaker notes, text on slides and annotations for the development work has continued to be quite descriptive and simply explained the content on slides or processes undertaken. 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 rehearsing with learners, perhaps using the sample materials on line or past papers, ahead of sitting this paper.

Learners are not required to create a final piece of work, however, many learners created models, drafts and prototypes. This was useful to show development of design ideas as well as experimenting with alternative ideas. In these cases, annotations, designs and technical notes proved very informative.

There should be approximately seven to eleven slides allocated for this stage of the presentation to represent the development work that clearly relates to the research undertaken in AO1.

This stage of the proposal should not be used to include all development work but rather to be used to summarise the design idea(s) 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.

A variety of developmental techniques were displayed throughout, with the stronger work featuring clear progression of ideas which focused towards a refined final outcome.

### **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.

Not all learners presented their proposal to the 'client' and directly stated their decisions and processes undertaken as if providing a commentary to their approach.

Most learners submitted a final idea with valid justifications that had been selected from the development work. Not all justifications were detailed or consistent with the requirements of the chosen brief. Most learners attempted to justify the final idea based on the target audience, rather than their chosen client brief. This was mostly valid but not always appropriate.

Some of the evidence for the assessment outcome was also evident in the research conducted for AO1 and development work for AO2. This is expected due to the holistic way design is approached and marked. Learners should clearly evidence at least one final design solution. This should have grown from the development work and be clearly presented.

Most learners were able to give clear reasons for choices they made based on the target audience, however, when trying to justify the chosen client brief this was evidently much more challenging. Learners should be encouraged to practice explaining their choices for final design solutions based on the client brief rather than personal preferences or arbitrary reasons as this limits the awarding of marks to lower mark bands. Lower level learners tended to write "I chose this because it's effective" and found it hard to articulate why beyond this.

More successful learners were awarded in higher mark bands based on the level of visual and written communication. These learners demonstrated confidence and had 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 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 allocated 12 to 15 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 for the assessment outcome.

Centres demonstrated an improved confidence in ensuring learners understood the importance of client expectations and this was clear in the presentations.

There were also some limited submissions that demonstrated limited layout design skills, the use of basic templates and very basic evidence of review and proof reading.

Most learners were awarded in mark bands 2 and 3. The in depth understanding of professional practice that is required for mark band 4 seemed to be a challenge for most learners.

For higher achieving learners, presentations were consistently client focused and pitched directly to the client. In addition, there was also some very good evidence of learners placing their final design idea in situ and this was very effective to demonstrate visual communication and intentions.

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 limited to lower mark bands and evidence of professional practice was limited.

Some presentation formats were not always entirely suitable or engaging for the intended 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

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

- Use the Lead Examiners report to support action planning for future delivery of the unit.
- Centres are reminded that this 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.
- Encourage learners to pitch their presentation proposals to the client
- Encourage the use of speaker notes that are informative and justify decisions made in relation to the chosen client brief.
- Encourage learners to uses the suggested allocations of slides (3-4 slides for research and 7-11 slides for development).
- Encourage learners working across disciplines to clearly state their intentions at the start of the proposal presentation.
- Support learners how to select best work to represent the development stages of their design ideas.
- Ensure learners review, refine and proofread their proposal presentations prior to submission.