



Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2020

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Art & Design

Unit 6: Managing a Client Brief (31832H)



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January 2020
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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: qualifications.pearson.com/gradeboundaries

Unit 6: Managing a Client Brief (31832H)

Grade	Unclassified	Near Pass	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Boundary Mark	0	8	16	27	39

Introduction

This report is based on the fifth submission of the externally assessed Unit 6: Managing a Client Brief. It has been written to support centres and assessors in understanding how learners have performed overall in the preparatory and invigilated activities for the individual set task.

The marks have been applied holistically and this 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.

There was quite a low number of entries for this series and this was expected as most centres use the summer series to submit work from second year learners as this unit is usually delivered towards the end of their programmes. However, for those centres delivering all four external units, we encourage use of the January series to clear the way for focus on unit 7 in the summer.

Most submissions were from second year learners, however, these included some resubmissions. There was also some evidence of entries from first year learners.

The general view received from examiners and based on the standard of the learner work submitted this series, was that there were significant lower level entries. This had impact across all assessment outcomes. This was mainly due to learners not using the full number of allocated slides and speaker notes to evidence the creative process as a whole.

There were some admirable attempts with the engagement of primary research sources, and although the use of primary source research is not a requirement, these proposals evidenced positive engagement with the RSPB theme.

There were many examples of presentations containing far too much text and limited visual representation. As the outcome for this assessment is an Art and Design proposal which we expect to be largely visual, this limited marks for AO2 and AO4.

When learners planned their presentations and considered the content on each slide, the results were professional and pleasing, and this allowed higher mark bands for AO4 to be awarded. The most successful outcomes were those that had been refined clearly illustrating exciting design ideas.

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 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

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 responses and present solutions in a professionally presented 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.

Learners are allocated 10 hours of monitored preparation sessions ahead of 15 hours of supervised assessment time. Most submissions demonstrated effective use of these allocated hours. However, some presentations were limited in development, with ideas often lifted from obvious secondary sources leading to a predictable final design solution. The use of text on slides was prolific throughout. Much of the text could have been moved into speaker notes, leaving room for a more exciting visual presentation of ideas.

Most learners did not use the full allocation of 15 slides. Most used the guidance within the set task to organise their content, but stopped short of the maximum number of slides. The different stages of the creative process were mostly presented in a logical order.

The guidance for submissions states some suggested yet useful allocations of slides. These are 3-4 slides for research and 7-11 slides for development, with a maximum of 15 slides overall. Most learners used much more than 4 slides for research (AO1) and in some cases nearly half or more of the maximum allocated slides. This impacted on the slides allocated for AO2 (development) and AO3 (final idea and justification) leaving a thin response, which in some cases limited marks which could be awarded.

There was a good range of client briefs selected and this was positive to observe. Although there is generally improvement of engaging with the client 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. For example, much time was taken telling the client, about the client. Learners need to be reminded that presentations are for the client, so they need not explain the obvious.

There was a good range of work submitted across most of subject disciplines. Fashion, Interactive Media, 3D Design and Graphic Design were in the majority with Textiles, Fine Art and Photography in the minority. Some learners worked across disciplines and although this is permitted, learners were not always clear with their intentions presenting a confused response. This limited marks awarded across all Assessment Outcomes in some cases.

The RSPB proved to be quite an engaging client for most learners, who used this opportunity to research using a range of sources. There were some bold attempts to use primary sources, although this isn't a requirement. Some of these were very successful, with learners visiting wildlife sanctuaries to take photographs of birds of

prey. Other attempts were less successful, for example photographs of birds in flight, notoriously difficult to photography successfully! Some learners ignored relevant research and went off at a tangent. As a result, some final ideas were not fit for purpose or suitable for the client brief. This clearly affected marks which could be awarded.

The majority of learners selected the target audience of 16–19 year olds. Once selected, learners 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, including market research and surveys. More 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.

It was evident within the submissions that most learners were able to demonstrate the ability to respond to a 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 effective demonstration of these skills, however, the majority lacked the refinement and consistency of these professional practice skills to achieve marks in the highest mark band. This may be directly 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 demonstrated in this unit should prepare learners for progression, such as interviews into employment, an apprenticeship or higher education. Centres are advised to ensure learners plan their presentations and speaker notes carefully. Learners should also 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).

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 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 using some initial slides or pages to reiterate information already given to them. In some cases this was also more than half of the total allocated number of slides, therefore impacting on the amount of slides remaining for development and presenting the final idea(s.) Learners do not need to reiterate information given to them in the paper. They can instead summarise, or use slide headings to capture points which should then direct independent research. Centres should direct learners to avoid using whole slides and many of them, regurgitating obvious content from the paper or the RSPB website. For example:

"The RSPB gives urgent help to birds in the UK, monitoring over 9670 species. Their focuses and missions include restoration of woodlands and public education and advocacy. They are Europe's largest conservation charity with over one million members. Although primarily focusing on the conservation of birds and woodlands, they are described to be an 'elastic' brand".

As expected, higher achieving learners were able to use the initial information provided together with independent research to develop a more imaginative research response. For example:

"I am choosing the target audience of 16-19 year olds as I am close in age to this group so I understand their general interests, way of thinking and trends........

The internet and social media are extremely integrated into this age groups lives they are more likely to buy and subscribe to things that have a good social media presence. For example, YouTuber Shane Dawson had no experience with makeup and Cosmetics. The content he produced also had no relation to the products which shows that his audience didn't have a particular interest in it as they weren't consuming his content to see that. Yet when Dawson partnered with a fellow YouTuber and businessman Jeffree Star to create a collaborative makeup line they sold 1 million in 30-minutes. This was thanks to Shane utilising his social media presence to promote the products of the dockyard docuseries showing the behind the scenes of the industry. This example shows the power of a good social media presence and the impact it can have on sales. Therefore, I would utilize the RSPB's social media accounts such as Instagram to promote the product".

Not all research evidence was focused or contained relevant information regarding the client, target audience or selected brief. Although learners clearly had access to a wide range of information sources to support the development of their ideas, some of this was much more focused on charities or 'wildlife' as a whole rather than the RSPB.

There was a significant improvement of the use of primary research sources, this was particularly successful when learners were able to use this as the basis of original idea development and this was positive to observe. There is no requirement to use primary source research, however, learners who did generally developed stronger and more successful design outcomes.

The use of surveys or questionnaires has continued to be popular, in most cases this was focused on learners intended target audience and therefore appropriate. Sometimes though this was seen very much as a stand-alone exercise and didn't always inform the development of design ideas.

Some research of existing products from the client and similar organisations was at times quite literal with limited personal interpretation of learners' own research and original responses. 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. There was also less than expected reference to artists and practitioners that learners used as inspiration.

Most learners were awarded in mark band 1 and mark band 2.

AO2: Develop design ideas relevant to client brief

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

As in previous papers not all learners submitted sufficient evidence to demonstrate the full development stages. This may be due to learners not being able to effectively select key pieces of work to include to best represent their development work. This may also be due to too much focus and slides being used for the research in AO1.

Most evidence for this assessment outcome was visual representations of idea development such as rough design sketches, thumbnail drawings, layout designs and practical experimentations. However, there was a significant increase in text based evidence and in some cases no visual references to support this at all. For example:

Development

To begin my concept, I chose to research a variety of birds of which the RSPB keeps track of. For my nature trail, I wanted to include a range of birds, for example birds you may find in the garden or in parks, but also including some birds that are less common. I felt including rarer birds could ignite fulfilment for a younger child if they saw it after completing the trail.

I felt the bird sculptures would work most effectively made from recycled plastic which would help costs of putting together the trail as well as helping the environment.

Once choosing the birds to be included on the trail, I next researched into materials and further developed my concept

For the educational sculptures,
I have decided to use a base of solid wood with a
weather protective varnish to keep its aesthetic
values. The plaques will be made with coloured
plastic, engraved by a laser cutter for the
information about the bird and to help with
conservation.

Some lower achieving responses proposed very predictable ideas, including designs which had already been developed by the RSPB. Or, first obvious solutions were latched onto, left undeveloped and at times these were and inappropriate in terms of references used for the chosen target audience.

However, positively, most learners did grasp that the client was about protecting wildlife and endangered birds particularly, making this the focus of their proposal. Most successful submissions proposed a wide range of potential outcomes from garments, accessories, games, mobile apps, to trail sculptures and craft kits. Bird box designs proved to be very popular, as were tote bags. Again, the more successful

proposals had been confidently refined and were supported with honest, reflective and evaluative comments within the speaker notes.

Many learners were able to select one 'idea' and clearly present this in response to the requirements of the design brief. 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 to present to the client in AO3.

Evidence of visual communication varied from very basic to highly skilled. Weaker learners relied more heavily on annotation to describe their ideas and much of the written text would have been better placed in slide notes rather than on the slides themselves.

For more successful learners there was some excellent demonstration of visual communication presented appropriately across a range of techniques and disciplines. For example:







My idea for the design of the fabric bag was to do a repeated print of a bird illustration. The bird on the print would be an RSPB bird to show that the charity looks after real birds with their own unique stories and characters.

I chose to do a realistic yet simple drawing of one of the owls I photographed in order to avoid it looking too cartoonish for the target group and to give the design a slight minimalistic look. I chose to have the drawing in a orange-brown rather than black to homage the vintage look which is popular among them and also match the bird it's designed on colouring.



Centres are reminded that 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 scanning drawings or using digital software.

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. Assessors should ensure learners are reminded that the purpose of any supporting text should be more analytical or

informative, rather than descriptive. This is an area centres would benefit from considering with learners ahead of creating the presentation proposals.

Learners are not required to create a final piece of work, however, many learners created models, drafts and porotypes and this was useful to illustrate how far design ideas had been developed. In these cases, annotations, design and technical notes proved very informative to demonstrate thought process.

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.

Most learners awarded in mark band 2 and mark band 3 and mark band 4 tended to be awarded to learners who had demonstrated higher levels of visual communication.

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 directly linked to the requirements of the design brief.

Most learners submitted one, clear, final design solution for AO3, and this was positive to observe. Most also 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 wholly appropriate.

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

Some of the evidence for AO4 was also evident in AO1 and AO2 and this is expected due to the holistic way this paper is marked. For AO4 to be accessed there should be a clearly evidenced final design solution. This should be developed from research and initial design ideas and be a clear step forward. In some cases this was not always clearly presented. Or, development was very short lived, first ideas stopped at that point, and became final designs.

There was an increase of learners producing a practical representation for AO3 such as a maquette, model or prototype. Although this is a valid approach, these were not always well presented. Photographs were at times poor quality, and didn't always do the work justice. Or the model or prototype was poorly crafted, with weak choices in terms of materials and finish. This had an impact on mark achieved in AO2. Similarly, final designs which were illustrated were sometimes produced with a low level of skill appearing rushed and ill conceived. When learners took care with their work, it made a huge difference to the overall feel of the presentation, making intentions clearer and outcomes shone. At this level there is an expectation that consideration will be given to materials, techniques and processes employed and how design ideas might be best presented. Some learners really excelled at this, evidencing they were well taught and well prepared ahead of taking this paper.

The January 2019 series introduced a defined maximum word count for speaker notes. This seems to have continued to support learners to be selective and use the speaker notes more productively. Some learners repeated text already on slides, therefore not adding any value. For example:

"Original sketch compared to digital sketch. Why did I do both? Using digital drawing made it easier, how come? It was easier to manipulate the image and also quicker" More confident learners had produced informative speaker notes which included their own reflective, evaluative and analytical comments as part of their refinement process. These were then presented to the client within the presentation often clearly explaining the learners reasoning and justifications. For example:



After writing out some potential ideas I would like to propose, I looked into some existing products that were similar concepts to my initial ideas. The purpose of this is to look at some of the features that make this product successful. Looking at something like this would help me determine somewhat of a success criteria in terms of what features are appealing to the user, specifically my target age range. It is also useful for helping to inspire my own ideas for potential design elements.

Overall, learners that seemed to spend more time being more selective of the content of the proposal achieved much higher in AO3.

The purpose of the speaker notes is for learners to justify their approaches in response to the requirements of the client brief and to provide a commentary to their design ideas. This was not always the focus. Sometimes speaker notes were overly descriptive, describing slide content and processes undertaken, rather justifying choices and decisions made.

Some learners did not include speaker notes relating to specific slides or JPEG images. Instead they chose to present a separate word document which contained a general summary narrative. These were at times disconnected and hard to relate to specific ideas or pieces within the presentation.

Although the use of speaker notes is not a mandatory requirement is strongly encouraged as AO3 requires justification of the selected idea and the speaker notes are good way to evidence this.

Most learners were awarded marks across mark band 2 and mark band 3. The 'exceptional' evidence that is required for mark band 4 seemed to be a challenge for most learners in the AO3.

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

The aim of AO4 is for learners to plan the presentation making optimum use of the allocated 12 to 15 slides and 600 words of speaker notes.

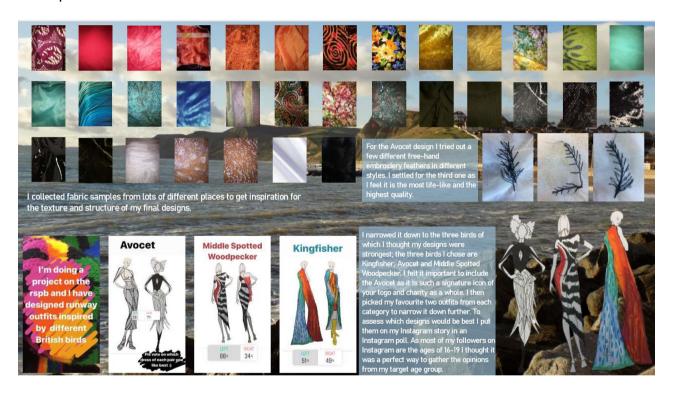
Marks for AO4 were evident across the whole presentation, therefore evidence for AO1, AO2 and AO3 also contributed to marks awarded for AO4.

As with previous papers not all learners grasped the idea that they are supposed to present their proposal to the client. Many learners created a presentation and did not fully demonstrate the defined areas of professional practice. In addition, many learners began their presentations relaying information to the client that had already been given to them in the design brief. This wasted valuable presentation space, which could have been better used demonstrating broader and more imaginative levels of research. For example:



Presentation skills overall have continued to improve which is heartening. There were still some submissions which demonstrated limited layout design skills, the use of basic templates and very basic evidence of review and proof reading. In these examples and as previously mentioned, the selection process for content and refinement seemed to be lacking overall. On the whole though, most learners evidenced a proficient grasp of the use of technology to present a digital presentation successfully.

Most learners demonstrated effective planning and included some evidence of all required stages. 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 as this doesn't reflect professional practice in presentation. Many learners would be well advised to limit the text content on slides, as in many cases there was far too much text, much of which was further repeated in slides notes. More emphasis needs to be placed on the visual impact of the design ideas being promoted. For example:



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 idea in situ and this was very effective to demonstrate visual communication and intentions. For example:



For this design I toned down the colour, opting to use earthy tones such as green and brown in the font and art. I continued with the use of simplistic art but went for a more rounded illustrated design rather than thin continuous line drawings as it still looks mature but it maintains the warm, family friendly atmosphere that the RSPB has (I feel that this was lost in the previous experiments).

In addition, higher achieving learners showed a further empathy and understanding of the client's established branding, their mission and purpose, therefore demonstrating convincing ability to engage the intended audience. Some of the work seen in response to this paper was very convincing and very pleasing to see.

Overall though, most learners achieved marks 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.

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, more learners will access higher mark bands.

Summary

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

- 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 take time to research the client and personally interpret the choice of client briefs. The extracted information in the paper should not repeat this back to the client. In addition, ensure presentations pitch proposals which are client focused.
- Encourage learners to uses the suggested guidance regarding the allocation of slides. This is: 3-4 slides for research and 7-11 slides for development.
- Encourage learners to include visuals to communicate their ideas rather than text on slides. Approaches should also reflect their chosen subject discipline.
- Encourage the use of speaker notes that are informative and justify decisions made
 in relation to all requirements of the design brief. These should not be repetitive of
 information already provided or obvious on the slides. For example: 'I took some
 photographs of birds'. Instead 'I photographed birds in flight to capture a sense of
 movement which I want to include in my designs'.
- Support learners in 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. Particular care should be taken with the use and layout of text and images as well as the readability of the text used on slides.
- Use the Lead Examiners report to support action planning for future delivery of the unit.