

CAMBRIDGE NATIONALS

Examiners' report



CREATIVE iMEDIA

J807, J817, J827

R082 (moderated)
R083 (moderated)
R084 (moderated)
R085 (moderated)
R086 (moderated)
R087 (moderated)
R088 (moderated)
R089 (moderated)
R090 (moderated)
R091 (moderated)
R092 (moderated)
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Introduction

Our Lead Moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on centres' assessment of moderated work, based on what has been observed by the moderation team. These reports include a general commentary of accuracy of internal assessment judgements; identify good practice in relation to evidence collation and presentation and comments on the quality of centre assessment decisions against individual Learning Objectives. This report also highlights areas where requirements have been misinterpreted and provides guidance to centre assessors on requirements for accessing higher mark bands. Where appropriate, the report will also signpost to other sources of information that centre assessors will find helpful.

OCR completes moderation of centre-assessed work in order to quality assure the internal assessment judgements made by assessors within a centre. Where OCR cannot confirm the centre's marks, we may adjust them in order to align them to the national standard. Any adjustments to centre marks are detailed on the Moderation Adjustments report, which can be downloaded from Interchange when results are issued. Centres should also refer to their individual centre report provided after moderation has been completed. In combination, these centre-specific documents and this overall report should help to support centres' internal assessment and moderation practice for future series.

R082 General overview

Partly due to the significant growth in the qualification, there has been a wide range of responses to the unit assignments. Some were excellent and potentially from centres that have established experience with the qualification. Others were less well developed, possibly to the centres being relatively new to delivery of the unit. Overall, the underlying processes tend to be sound and require some refinements in places.

The effective completion of the URS was inconsistent this series. Some centres demonstrated good practice by including comments that signposted the moderator to where the evidence was located. In other submissions, the comments only restated the marking criteria and on occasions, had no commentary at all. A general rule would be that the comments provide an opportunity to clearly highlight how and where the marks were credited by the centre's assessment. This can be a beneficial document to support the marks at the external moderation stage.

A higher number of submissions were seen that included witness statements. A comment here, taken from the specification in Appendix A is that indirect evidence, such as witness statements, should only be used where it would be impractical for the candidate to produce the evidence themselves. Given the nature of the practical tasks, the use of indirect evidence is not normally expected in the completion of the model assignments. Witness statements can support but not replace the candidate's own evidence and candidates should be encouraged to evidence their achievements directly. The use of a witness statement for an entire learning outcome (or significant part of it) would not be appropriate here.



OCR support Cambridge Nationals Creative iMedia Specification: Appendix A

The organisation and presentation of evidence was typically quite effective. For repository entries, the electronic evidence was clear and final graphics included as digital image files. Postal entries were not as consistent and some omitted the final graphics in a digital format either on memory stick or CD/DVD. This required moderators to contact centres to request the final products in their intended format, adding delays to the moderation process. Where these are not supplied, moderators were only able to support marks based on the evidence supplied. This would not adequately confirm the properties in terms of pixel dimensions and dpi resolution to ensure the fitness for purpose in meeting the brief and hence the higher mark bands.

A higher number of invalid order of merit situations were found in this series. This is where the moderation identifies two or more patterns in the centre's marking such that the order of merit (or rank order) of the candidates is incorrect. In these situations, the moderation could not be completed and the work had to be returned for a remark. This emphasises the importance of internal standardisation to make sure that the order of merit across the entire sample is correct. What is important with a remark is that no additional evidence can be added to support the original marks and the remark must be completed on the original submission of portfolio evidence.

Key point call out

The best fit philosophy was not always correctly applied when deciding on a best fit band and subsequently a mark for each strand. Further guidance on this can be found in the Cambridge Nationals Creative iMedia Specification in Section 4.4.1.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand the purpose and properties of digital graphics

The initial investigation of digital graphics was typically completed as a review of sample graphics, often accompanied by a more traditional analysis of the layout and conventions. This is not a specific requirement of the marking criteria and rather than look at examples within a narrow category, the stronger submissions included a broad exploration into how and where digital graphics are used. A common misconception here is that the assignment scenario should be the basis of this investigation whereas the descriptor in the marking criteria requires a more comprehensive investigation. Across all three mark bands, a summary of how and why digital graphics is needed, which does not have to be excessively detailed.

Key point call out

Candidates should be conducting their own independent investigation on the use of digital graphics to build their understanding for this unit. The tasks in the OCR model assignment should be the basis for this. The OCR exemplar for R082 should not be used as a model template by candidates for completing this first learning outcome, which has been seen in a significant number of entries. The use of the exemplar content and structure by candidates would represent bad practice in the assignment work.

Candidates of all abilities typically included a wide range of file types and formats, which are appropriate to digital graphics.

A common misconception in the second strand of the marking criteria for LO1 is the understanding of the connection between the properties of digital graphics and their suitability for use. Candidates often provide information on the difference between bitmap and vector graphics but too often there is no significant consideration of the pixel dimensions and dpi resolution, which is fundamental to the suitability for print and/or web use. Good practice would be to emphasise this in the teaching of the unit content so that candidates are better placed to achieve the higher mark band when completing their assignment.

Higher ability candidates evidenced a more thorough approach to understanding how different purposes and audiences influence the design and layout of digital graphics. The responses by lower ability candidates was under-developed and tended to focus on an analysis of existing graphics rather than applying their knowledge to new graphics projects.

LO2 – Be able to plan the creation of a digital graphic

The higher ability candidates characteristically produced an individual and thoughtful interpretation from the client brief. This demonstrated their creative ideas and understanding of the client requirements including the target audience. The lower ability candidate responses were seen to restate the assignment brief with little or no expansion, which is within the mark band 1 descriptor. On occasions this was generously marked. The final part of the first strand in the marking criteria was often overlooked, which is to draw upon relevant knowledge, skills and understanding from other units in the specification.

Key point call out

Across all three mark bands, candidates should include some evidence of drawing upon relevant skills/knowledge/understanding from other units in the specification. Good practice would be to include items such as mind maps and mood boards from R081 Pre-Production. What cannot contribute to this effectively is the creation of a visualisation diagram since the content (and marking criteria) of R082 already includes this. Therefore, it cannot be accepted as being from a different unit. In R082 and most other units, there is a misconception of what can be accepted as relevant knowledge, skills and understanding from other units, which is needed to access the higher mark band 3.

A very mixed set of responses were seen for the work plan. The higher ability candidate responses did correctly focus on the creation of the digital graphic, whereas the less developed work plans tended to include tasks for the completion of the unit assignment. This can still meet the higher mark band descriptor but would need to be detailed for the creation of the graphic, which is the relevant part of the work plan.

Visualisation diagrams were also very mixed in the candidate work. Some were quite simplistic and under-developed without any image based content, lacking any real indication of what was to be created. Others were highly complex and well annotated with details on exactly how the final graphic was to be constructed. One comment here as seen in a minority of submissions would be that the visualisation diagram cannot be an annotated version of what was produced in LO3, since that could only have been produced retrospectively. The visualisation diagram must be a planning activity to support the marks.

Good practice was often seen in the use of an asset table that identifies what [image] assets are to be used in the creation of the digital graphic. A significant proportion of the submissions were less well developed in their understanding of the potential use. In order to maintain access to the higher mark bands, some consideration of the potential use could be included in a column as part of the asset table. An alternative approach seen in some submissions is a summary paragraph that comments on the potential use of selected assets that were included in the asset table. Whatever approach is used, some understanding of the potential use of assets is required across all three mark bands.

Resources are defined as the hardware, software and equipment used to create the digital graphics to maintain the applied vocational nature of the qualification. This does not include the more general items for IT use to complete the web research for LO1. In a similar way to the use of assets, some understanding of the purpose of resources is needed to access the higher mark band descriptor. The higher ability candidates achieved this through a table of resources or paragraph of text explaining what hardware, and more importantly what image editing software was to be used. Some less well developed submissions only listed what could be used (as a broad investigation activity) instead of what they planned on using.

The final section of the marking criteria in LO2 relates to an understanding of legislation in relation to the use of images in digital graphics. A mixed set of responses was seen, with many stating generic information on copyright such as how long it lasts and how it applies to literary and artistic works. Since this is not in a context of creating the [intended] digital graphic it would only meet the mark band 1 descriptor. Slightly more developed responses stated that they could use the image assets copyright free because it was in an educational context, which is still limited and therefore more appropriate to mark band 2. The higher ability candidate responses identified the limitations and constraints of using the image assets in a commercial context, as required by the tasks in the OCR model assignment. This enabled access to mark band 3 for this element of the planning criteria.

LO3 – Be able to create a digital graphic

Key point call out

There are two strands to the marking criteria in LO3. The first strand is about sourcing, creating and preparing the assets for use, prior to actually creating the graphic in the second strand.

Across all of the submissions, it was clear to see that candidates had sourced a range of image assets. Good practice was to show these in an asset table although viewing the final graphic also provides some limited evidence for this first part of the marking criteria. Evidence of creating image assets was less well developed in many submissions. Note that for the higher mark bands, candidates must source and create, whereas it is source or create in mark band 1.

The evidence of preparing the assets for use was mixed. For the higher mark bands 2 and 3, some evidence of their preparation must be included. Here the assets may be edited or resized and some candidates demonstrated this using 'before' and 'after' versions of the asset. Some included a series of screenshots and others created folders with original assets and edited assets. The higher ability candidates were able to demonstrate the technical compatibility of the assets by resizing and/or confirming the pixel dimensions that would be suitable for use at their intended size on the print version. In general, this part of the marking criteria was rarely done well and many struggled to achieve in mark band 3. This is an area for development in the teaching of the unit content prior to candidates beginning their assignment work.

The evidence of using a range of tools and techniques to create the final graphic was very mixed. At the lower end, portfolios had no evidence of the creation process and only submitted the final graphic(s). The use of tools and techniques above mark band 1 cannot be assumed here and centre marking was often found to be generous. Higher ability candidates created some complex and effective graphics but where this was not supported by evidence of the tools and techniques were unable to fully justify mark band 3. In other submissions, some extensive evidence of tools and techniques was included to support the credit given for mark band 2. Above that, it is the complexity and effectiveness of the print and web versions of the graphics that affect the best fit mark band in submissions where both meet the brief.

Key point call out

An important part of the unit and assignment is that the final graphics meet the client brief ie that they are the correct sizes and resolutions for both the print and web versions. A significant number of submissions were seen whereby a high mark band was credited by the centre and yet the graphics were to the wrong size and/or resolution. In these situations, the graphics would not be fit for purpose. No assignment requires an A4 print product and it should be recognised that this unit is about digital graphics imaging and not desktop publishing.

The saving and exporting of the digital graphic in suitable file formats was done well in most submissions. Many chose either tiff or jpeg for the print versions and either jpeg, png or gif for the web version. A slight issue here is that gif formats do not support sufficient colours for good reproduction and this was not such a good choice. Good practice would be to emphasise the suitability of the different file formats when teaching the content in LO1.

The use of file names was consistently evidenced in the actual image files. The use of folder names and structures was not always well done and some clearer examples were seen using a screenshot of the image folder structures.

LO4 – Be able to review a digital graphic

Many higher ability candidates produced lengthy, detailed and comprehensive reviews of what they had created, easily meeting the highest mark band. Others were less well developed and at times very brief for the marks that were credited by the centre. A common misconception is that the review can be a description of the process through the unit, but that is not a good match for the marking criteria. Candidates can access the higher mark band when they produce a review of the actual graphic that discusses the strengths and weaknesses. The latter part of this is then used to inform the second part of the marking criteria, which is to identify areas for improvement and further development of the final digital graphic. Good practice would be to emphasise the importance of what should be reviewed in the teaching of the unit content, with practical examples and exercises using existing graphics.

Key point call out

The content of the review to meet the marking criteria should be based on a critical appraisal of the graphics actually created and not the process through the unit.

R083 General overview

A number of centres had made amendments to the OCR model assignment scenario. This is permissible within certain guidelines but in these situations, a copy of the updated assignment must be supplied to the moderator. This is so that the external moderation process can confirm what the candidates have done in order to meet the client brief.

It was apparent that some centres had not included the final 2D characters in an electronic/digital format. Initially the evidence was only paper based but in any unit, if candidates are aiming for the higher mark bands the final product should always be included as an electronic file. This is what would be supplied to a client in a vocational context and what is typically needed to support the marking descriptors.

A number of URS (Unit Recording Sheets) were not fully completed with candidate name and number, which is important to ensure the accuracy of for the audit trail of assessment. A good proportion of centres entering this unit demonstrated a relatively good understanding of the marking criteria.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand the properties and uses of 2D and 3D digital characters

The initial investigation into the use of 2D and 3D digital characters was generally sound. This covered a range of sectors but to achieve the higher mark band, this could have been supported with a wider range of examples within the identified sectors.

Key point call out

There are many digital characters used within film, gaming and the entertainment industries but any investigation must include references for sourced information. This is to make it clear what is the candidate's own knowledge and understanding. The relevant part of the marking criteria here is to '*Demonstrate an understanding of physical and facial characteristics of a wide range of 2D and 3D digital characters.*' This can be evidenced by their own summaries, annotations and conclusions, which is what supports any marks and minimises the risk of plagiarism concerns. This aspect should be carefully monitored by the centre's assessors in this unit.

LO2 – Be able to plan original 2D and 3D digital characters

The evidence for this first part of this planning strand tended to be under-developed. A significant number of candidates only restated the brief and therefore had limited expansion of the client requirements to gain credit in mark band 2 or 3. This relates to both the client requirements and the target audience.

In this unit, the assets to be used tended to be only listed and there was little consideration given to their potential use. Resources were handled in a very similar way, with a list but with no commentary on their purpose. These aspects are required across all three mark bands and there is an opportunity for this to be emphasised in the teaching of the unit, prior to candidates completing their final assignment.

Key point call out

Optional layout feature, used to draw particular attention to a point in the text. Can be used in any section throughout the report.

Work plans tended to have some relevant activities to be completed but with little detail. Good practice would be to estimate how long each activity is likely to take, especially when aiming to achieve the higher mark band.

Across all three mark bands, candidates should include some evidence of drawing upon relevant skills/knowledge/understanding from other units in the specification. Good practice would be to include items such as mind maps and mood boards from R081 Pre-Production. What cannot contribute to this effectively is the creation of a visualisation diagram since the content (and marking criteria) of R083 already includes this. Therefore, it cannot be accepted as being from a different unit. In R083 and most other units, there is a misconception of what can be accepted as relevant knowledge, skills and understanding from other units, which is needed to access the higher mark band 3.

Visualisation diagrams for the 2D or 3D digital character were typically quite clear, often choosing hand drawn approaches.

Test plans for the character can be thought of as checklists in this unit, which should be for the functionality. This is different to how it meets the brief, which is actually a better match for the review.

Note that peer feedback is not required in the qualification even though several examples were found in this unit.

Consideration of legal issues focussed on copyright but a broader context would be good practice if candidates are to access the higher mark band descriptor. This should also be applied to the creation of the 2D/3D character and not be just generic information, which was seen in many submissions.

LO3 – Be able to create 2D and 3D digital characters

The first strand in this LO requires candidates to source and store their assets for use, but submissions typically omitted any clear evidence. This is needed for the higher mark band and it cannot be implied or assumed that this stage was completed.

A number of submissions had screenshot evidence to show what tools and techniques were used. This is good practice so that it is clear what software application was used together with the tools in those applications. One issue was found whereby some screenshots were relatively small making it difficult for the moderation to view the required evidence. Some annotation to the screenshots could have assisted this.

Key point call out

Higher ability candidates have attempted to address the marking criteria to add and apply effects to enhance the character. Opportunities to develop this would include the use of textures and gradient fills together with any complex logos, such as on the clothing of the digital character. The tools and techniques to create these effects can also be learned as part of R082 digital graphics. The use of image editing software is considered a good approach for this R083 unit.

The requirement to save and exports the 2D or 3D digital character in an appropriate format was best evidenced by submitting the final 2D/3D character in a digital file format. The use of file names would normally be confirmed in the digital files that are supplied for the final character. This becomes more difficult when only paper based evidence is supplied. Where candidates are aiming for the higher mark bands, electronic files of the final character should always be supplied. The use of folder names and structures was not always well done. One way to achieve this would be using a screenshot of the asset and final character folder structures.

LO4 – Be able to review 2D and 3D digital characters

Most reviews made relevant and appropriate comments on the final character, which is required by the marking criteria. These also tended to include some suitable references back to the brief. For the second part of the marking criteria, a number of submissions identified areas for improvement in the character but included little or no justification of why those would be appropriate. In order to access the higher mark band, some justification would be required.

R084 General overview

Many URS were fully completed and very few issues were seen here. Some demonstrated excellent practice with detailed comments and personalised commentaries, rather than generic statements that could have been applied to all candidates. A minority of URS were very brief and omitted some key information. A comment here would be that the URS is a key document in the assessment records and must be fully completed.

Some postal entries included all of the required evidence on CD/DVD, which is considered to be good practice. This also ensures that the final product is supplied in its intended digital format.

Some centres utilised the ability to modify the OCR assignment brief. One example was for a new toy. Under these circumstances a copy of the brief should always be supplied to the moderator so that it is clear what the candidates were asked to do.

A number of clerical errors were seen in this unit. This is where the breakdown of marks on the URS adds up to a different total to what is entered with OCR. Under these circumstances a correction to the marks had to be made, which delays the moderation process and adds an administrative task. For all units and entries, centres are encouraged to double check the marks entered and that the URS are consistent with those marks.

A small minority of centres are still sending the ccs160 (centre authentication form). Note that this is no longer a requirement.

A common misconception in the qualification is that the postal entry option is for paper based submissions whereas in reality the product (in this case a comic) should always be supplied in its digital/electronic format.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand comic strips and their creation

A mixed set of responses were seen to the investigation into the origins and history of multipage comic strips. At times this was thorough when including a wide range of different comic types (and associated characters) but more limited when only looking at the superhero genre. Marvel and DC Comics featured very highly but others would be needed to be included to justify a thorough understanding, which is needed for the higher mark band.

Key point call out

There are many comics and comic strip characters but any investigation must include references for sourced information. This is to make it clear what is the candidate's own knowledge and understanding of the comics and associated characters. The relevant part of the marking criteria here is to '*Demonstrate an understanding of comic strip characters and knowledge of their physical and non-physical characteristics.*' This can be evidenced by their own summaries, annotations and conclusions, which is what supports any marks and minimises the risk of plagiarism concerns. This aspect should be carefully monitored by the centre's assessment in this unit.

All candidates included a list of software that can be used to create a comic book to meet mark band 1. The higher ability commented on the tools within the software as opposed to the general features, and at the top end (in mark band 3), some connected the tools with the layout and features of the comic pages.

Mixed responses were seen to the understanding of panel placement and story flow. The better submissions illustrated a range of panel layouts and commented on how the reader would follow the story from one panel to the next.

LO2 – Be able to plan a multipage comic strip

The evidence for this first part of this planning strand for the client requirements tended to be reasonably well done and included an expansion of the brief to gain credit in mark band 2. Where this only restated the assignment brief, mark band 1 was more appropriate. The target audience was not always considered in detail for the higher mark bands.

Key point call out

An extra requirement of the first strand in the planning for LO2 is to create a script and storyline for use in a multipage comic strip. A number of submissions lacked clarity in this requirement. The stronger portfolios included a description of the intended story as a piece of narrative text. This was then developed with a script that represented the dialogue that would occur within the comic story. In general, this approach represents good practice and would be encouraged in future. The second strand of the marking criteria then looks to incorporate both the storyline script into a storyboard that effectively becomes the draft layout of the comic. The higher ability candidates combined with potentially the more experienced centres, managed to evidence this sequence of steps quite effectively, enabling support from the moderation in the higher mark band 3.

Across all three mark bands, candidates should include some evidence of drawing upon relevant skills/knowledge/understanding from other units in the specification. Good practice would be to include items such as scripts, mind maps and mood boards from R081 Pre-Production. What cannot contribute to this effectively is the creation of a storyboard since the content (and marking criteria) of R084 already includes this. Therefore, it cannot be accepted as being from a different unit. In R084 and most other units, there is a misconception of what can be accepted as relevant knowledge, skills and understanding from other units, which is needed to access the higher mark band 3.

The intention of the storyboard for the second strand of the marking criteria is that of a draft layout for the comic. Hence this should incorporate the storyline with characters, script, panel layout, communication, focal points and locations. What was more typical in the submissions is a standard storyboard layout that would be typically used with a video or animation. Higher ability candidates sometimes include the panel layout, which is what makes the storyboard slightly different in this unit and enables access to the higher mark band.

Where assets and resources were only listed, this could only be accepted as meeting the mark band 1 descriptor. Some understanding of the potential use of assets and purpose of resources is needed for the higher mark bands. The resources should be focussed on the production of the comic but that was not consistently seen in the submissions this series.

The legislation surrounding the use of assets in multipage comic strips was under developed and not in context of the unit. The evidence was more consistently based around generic information on what is copyright, trademarks and patents, not all of which is relevant or applicable to the assets chosen. There is a misconception that general concepts of legislation meets the higher mark band descriptors but this always needs to be applied to the product and assets for the unit.

LO3 – Be able to produce a multipage comic strip

A good number of submissions demonstrated some excellent evidence of both preparing assets and creating assets. This varied depending on the type of assets to be used. The use of sourced images for the comic was more limiting but better examples included hand drawn sketches that were edited using image editing software. This also produced evidence of using skills from R082.

In the more under developed submissions, the decisions made and preparation of the panel layout was only seen in the final product. In a similar way, the sourcing and storing assets was also only implied by having a final product. This limited the marks to be within mark band 1 in the first strand of this LO.

A number of submissions followed an established pattern from other units by including evidence of the tools and techniques used to create the comic. This is not part of the marking criteria in R084 and therefore has little contribution to the marks that can be credited. As one of the more creative units, the marking criteria requires candidates to integrate the script with the [visual] storyline so that a coherent comic is produced which has a natural flow for the reader.

An unusually high proportion of submissions were supplied as paper based only comics, without it being provided in a digital format. This made it difficult to support marks for saving and exporting the comic strip using appropriate formats together with appropriate use of file and folder names and structures. Good practice would be to include the final comics as digital/electronic files in this unit, especially when aiming for the higher mark bands. Higher ability candidates demonstrated the use of version control in this unit, with multiple versions of the comic being produced.

LO4 – Be able to review a multipage comic strip

In general, the reviews made relevant and appropriate comments on the final comic, together with areas for improvement, as required by the marking criteria. To support higher marks, more justification for the range of improvements would be an area for development.

R085 General overview

This unit on creating a multipage website was very popular. The vast majority of submissions were well organised and presented. A minority had some clerical errors. This is where the breakdown of marks on the URS adds up to a different total to what is entered with OCR. Under these circumstances a correction to the marks had to be made, which adds an administrative task and delays the moderation process. For all units and entries, centres are encouraged to double check the marks entered and that the URS are consistent with those marks.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand the properties and features of multipage websites

Many submissions were well structured in the evidence of reviewing websites in the public domain. Most candidates included at least three different websites here although some were focussed on the home page rather than the site as a whole. The intention here is that candidates develop an understanding of how different features are used on different pages of the site, which they can then apply to their ideas for planning and creating a website of their own.

In general, candidates were able to provide a detailed description of the devices used to access web pages, which is a knowledge-based task and accessible to all candidates. On the other hand, the investigation into connection methods was more descriptive but lacked evidence of understanding. It is this second part of the criteria where higher ability candidates tend to achieve the higher mark band descriptor.

Key point call out

The investigation of existing websites should cover features from multiple pages and not just the homepage(s). This builds an understanding of what features can be used where, to inform the candidates planning for their own website created in this unit.

LO2 – Be able to plan a multipage website to a client brief

The OCR assignment brief was chosen in the majority of submissions. Some submissions included mind maps and mood boards for the OCR assignment brief, to enable access to the higher mark band for the use of knowledge, skills and understanding from R081. As examples, mood boards would include images of bands, music festivals and recycling initiatives.

Higher ability candidates produced some extensive evidence of planning include navigation diagrams, content of master pages and house style documentation. To fully meet the highest mark band descriptor, some further opportunities existed to show the use of actual images on the pages (not just placeholders) together with colour schemes, font sizes and styles as part of the house style.

Key point call out

Consideration of the house style in the planning section here forms the underlying ideas for the content of the master page at the start of LO3.

Throughout the qualification, assets are the images, videos and other content that will be used in the product. Resources are the hardware and software used to create the product. In order to access the higher mark bands, some understanding of the potential use of assets and purpose of resources must be included but in many cases, was little more than a list of each.

The effectiveness of test plans varied across the submissions. The more detailed versions included practical tests that would confirm the functionality i.e. navigation throughout the site and display of the content. Less well developed test plans included more simplistic checks that it met the brief but these would be more suitable in a review for LO4.

As with many other units, the stronger submissions applied the concepts of legislation to the use of assets when creating the final product i.e. a website. Generic information on copyright, trademarks and patents only met the descriptor for mark band 1. Claiming copyright free for use in an educational context was no higher than mark band 2.

LO3 – Be able to create a multipage website using multimedia components

Evidence of creating and using a master page not always well developed. This requirement should not be overlooked in the evidence requirements and a misconception is that the higher mark band can be given on the basis that an effective final website was produced. Higher ability candidates would clearly show how and where the planned house style was to be used and applied across the website.

The more complex websites were produced with some advanced techniques and content such as rollover buttons, flashing text, functional external hyperlinks, embedded videos and maps. The clarity of the navigation system showed some variation and inconsistency with the overall quality of the finished websites. The navigation buttons were clear to identify but the text placed on them was small in some and difficult to read in others (due to patterned backgrounds). In some submissions, the quality of the website was let down by the navigation and the consistency of font sizes and styles would be an area for improvement when aiming for the higher mark bands.

Some websites were not published and supplied as working html sites. The submission of .wpp files is not a practical alternative here and not an admissible file format. Note that the centre may wish to confirm what browser was used to assess the work since occasionally some issues can be found with the display.

Key point call out

Many browsers no longer support cross site scripting and teaching of the unit should emphasise that all page content should be included within the authoring software and not hosted elsewhere on the internet. Otherwise the page content may not display correctly, if at all.

For the file naming, many candidates included a home page named `_index.html`, which was considered to be good practice. Others used a varying mix of homepage, ecofest, myhomepage and with some untitled sub-pages. Such alternatives were not always appropriate to meet the descriptor in mark band 3.

LO4 – Be able to review the final website against the client brief

In general this learning outcome would be an area for improvement in this unit to support the centre's marking, which was often slightly generous. Reviews tended to be generously marked in a number of submissions. In general reviews and reasons for improvement are under developed for the marks being credited.

Key point call out

There are 12 marks available in the review strand for this unit compared to others which are more typically 6 marks. A key point is that the expectations of the evidence in this review are higher than that for R082 in order to justify the higher number of marks. The reason is that the final website is recognised as a larger media product than a single digital graphic and hence there are more elements that need to be reviewed.

R086 General overview

It was found that some submissions for this unit were sent to the moderator quite late. For any entries, the sample selection should be sent to the moderator within 3 days of the sample request email. In a related case, some marks were entered late and well after the marks deadline. This is not an ideal situation and can introduce difficulties for the moderation processes to be completed in good time.

The URS (Unit Recording Sheets) are an important administrative document to show where the centre credited marks in each strand. These were not always fully completed or uploaded correctly to the repository.

In a minority of submissions, a series of witness statements were used but these only stated that the criteria were met. This does not constitute any value to the support for marks by the moderator. Appendix A of the specification states that indirect evidence, such as witness statements, should only be used where it would be impractical for the candidate to produce the evidence themselves. Given the nature of the practical tasks, the use of indirect evidence is not expected in the completion of the model assignments. Witness statements can support but not replace the candidate's own evidence and candidates should be encouraged to evidence their achievements directly.



OCR support Cambridge Nationals Creative iMedia Specification: Appendix A

Despite a minority of administrative issues, other URS were very clear and detailed. Some included lengthy comments in the URS, which was found to be very helpful at the moderation stage.

Comments by LO

LO1: Understand the purposes and features of animation

As with any unit, sources of information when completing the research and investigation tasks must be referenced. This is to make it clear what is the candidate's own knowledge and understanding, which is what supports any marks.

A number of submissions included a slightly narrow range of animations in the exploration. Here the most commonly used was entertainment but the investigation for LO1 should always be relatively broad in scope. A common approach was to describe examples such as an animated film, sometimes more than one film was chosen. Rather than an investigation of animation in the film industry, the purpose and uses of animation is needed, especially for the higher mark bands. Using this approach, an animated film would be one example but other uses such as in advertising would also be good practice. In general, the teaching of the unit content should cover a wide range of purposes and uses of animation in addition to the techniques of how they are created. This will then provide candidates with ideas on what additional products to include in their final assignment work.

When considering the animation techniques and types, those candidates who made their investigation very clear was by creating a table, with advantages and disadvantages as headings to columns. In some submissions, the investigation of digital animation techniques to be used within LO3 for this unit was very limited, even though more traditional techniques were discussed in detail. For any unit, the investigations and research in LO1 should provide a foundation for the work through the remainder of the unit.

Key point call out

When deciding on how many to include as a range, the following definition can be applied.

A range is accepted as three or more, a wide range is five or more and a limited range is two on the basis that one is not a range.

LO2: Be able to plan a digital animation

A number of submissions were found to only restate the assignment brief rather than interpret or develop this, making it difficult to achieve much higher than mark band 1. One set of submissions expanded the target audience in terms of gender preferences (colour, mood etc) and supported this with some primary research. The concept of using questionnaires for primary research is not part of the unit but can provide some support for the marks when used carefully.

In order to draw upon knowledge, skills and understanding from other units in the specification, this should not be credited using a storyboard from R081. This is because the R086 unit on digital animation already includes a requirement for a storyboard such that it cannot clearly be from another unit. Better choices would be a mind map or mood board since these are not part of the teaching content in R086. It was found that the stronger submissions in this planning strand made good use of both mind maps and mood boards, which clearly demonstrated some good practice.

Candidates often listed a limited range of file formats for use with digital animation but evidence of their properties and suitability were less well developed.

The marking criteria refer to creating a detailed storyboard that identifies a wide range of resources and assets. It should be noted that a storyboard is not likely to include resources, which for the purposes of the qualification is the hardware and software.

A typical approach for the understanding of legislation was to consider the copyright on the use of image based assets. In this particular unit, if aiming for the higher mark band legislation should also cover ideas and concepts since these are included in the marking criteria. In one set of submissions, additional opportunities existed for the use of background music in addition to image based assets.

LO3: Be able to create digital animation

A significant number of submissions were under developed in the first strand of this learning outcome, making it difficult for the moderation to support the marks. Here the sourcing and storage of assets was only implied in the final animation product, which would limit the evidence to the descriptor in mark band 1. If aiming for the higher mark bands, some clear evidence of the processes would be needed.

Some test plans were omitted and comments included on the URS. In places, this was not always taken into account when applying the best fit philosophy and choosing an appropriate mark. Other test plans were more simplistic in the identified tests, which were based more on whether it met the brief. This is not a good match for the marking criteria, which is to test the functionality. A better approach here would be to consider the duration, frame rate and finished size.

Key point call out

This unit requires the use of animation software, which is not the same as video editing software. Note that the marking criteria states 'Use tools and techniques within the animation software to address the client brief, to create the digital animation'.

The stronger submissions included a select range of screenshots from Flash, which helps to support the higher mark bands since it clearly evidenced the use of animation tools and techniques. Examples included shape and motion tweens together with key frames. The management of assets was also clearly evidenced here, which is good practice. In some submissions the actual assets used were quite basic and examples would be pixton style characters that are static within the frames and repeated in multiple places. Other submissions used basic stick men style characters with motion tweens across a background scene. Here, the final product would have a relatively simplistic style but still managed to demonstrate the use of a range of animated movement that was created within the animation software as required by the marking criteria.

Key point call out

A common misconception is that stop motion approaches a good approach for this unit. Note that the marking criteria require the use of functions within the animation software to enhance and animate movement. Here, stop motion would be accepted as one technique i.e. using key frames. Additional techniques should be used if aiming for the higher mark bands such as shape and motion tweens. Stronger approaches should use dedicated animation software if aiming for the higher mark bands.

Very few submissions included any evidence of carrying out testing of the digital animation at intervals during production. In general, the suitability of the test plan and its appropriate use to meet the marking criteria is under developed in a large proportion of the entries.

The saving of electronic files using file and folder names and structures was partially evidenced in most submissions. The final animation with a suitable name contributed towards this but could have been further supported by a screenshot of folder structures and their chosen content.

It was found that submissions with a more comprehensive portfolio of evidence included the animation files in both fla and swf formats. This is considered to be good practice.

LO4: Be able to review a digital animation

As with a number of other units, some candidates reviewed the process through all the learning outcomes rather than the finished product. This should comment on what worked and what didn't, whilst referencing back to the brief to ensure it is fit for purpose. In general, the responses to this LO were often under developed, sometimes only restating the brief and confirming that it was met. Very few made comments on the final animation.

The second part of the review also tended to be under developed, which should review areas for improvement and further development of the digital animation. A minority made reference to the frame rate and how a 12/24fps would make the animation smoother. Opportunities for comment would include the use and choice of assets, which could often be much more appropriate to produce an effective and visually appealing animated product.

Overall, it was found that many candidates could further develop their approaches and content to this final LO in order to access the higher marks bands.

R087 General overview

The majority of submissions for this unit were prompt in the supply of the sample to the moderator, which is both good practice and appreciated so that OCR can meet its turnaround timescales. Unfortunately some of these submissions did also include clerical errors, which is where the marks on the individual URS (Unit Recording Sheet) were different to the marks entered with OCR. In these situations, a clerical error amendment had to be made which is an additional administrative task that also delays the moderation process.

Other submissions demonstrated some good practice. These included a CD (or memory stick) of the candidate work, clear/concise comments of the URS and logical names of files and folders, which aids the moderation process.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand the uses and properties of interactive multimedia products

The evidence for this first learning outcome was not consistently well done and often under developed. The main issue in restricting this to mark band 2 was that candidates had not explored a wide range of suitable products, resulting in marks being slightly generous. What is required here is that candidates investigate a wide range of products, not all of which should be interactive websites. The detailed identification of design principles was also under developed.

Key point call out

In the marking criteria, the command verb to 'identify' means that a list could be suitable as long as it covers both create and view. For the use and purpose, the command verb is 'understanding'. Therefore a more detailed discussion should be included if aiming for the higher mark band.

Many candidates evidenced their knowledge of the limitations caused by connections, bandwidth and data transfer speeds when accessing interactive multimedia products but the evidence of understanding these was less well developed for the higher mark band.

In both of these areas, any information sourced must include suitable references. This is to make it clear what is the candidates own knowledge and understanding, which is what supports the marks.

Candidates tended to identify a range of file formats but often lacked comments on their suitability for different platforms, which would be needed for the higher mark band.

Across most of the submissions, references design principles were under developed. The higher ability candidates included some fairly brief consideration but this is an area to be covered in more detail as part of teaching the unit content, so that candidates have an opportunity to include it within their assignment work.

LO2 – Be able to plan the interactive multimedia product

The higher ability candidates again were found to produce a thoughtful interpretation of the client brief. This demonstrated their creative ideas for the interactive media product, including consideration of the target audience, who they were and what they wanted. The lower ability candidate responses tended to restate the assignment scenario with little or no expansion, limiting the evidence to be within the mark band 1 descriptor.

The requirement to draw upon relevant knowledge, skills and understanding from other units in the specification was mixed in the responses. Some included a range of R081 pre-production planning documents and others were given credit for editing graphics (R082) and/or video (R089). All of these are suitable for the criteria.

A number of work plans covered the entire unit and not just the production of the interactive media product. Good practice here and in any unit would be to focus on the tasks and activities required to make the product in a vocational context rather than the four learning outcomes.

Key point call out

One area that was under developed in the submissions was the requirement to plan the product with consideration of design principles. A comment here is that design principles are typically not being explored in LO1 and therefore the required knowledge and understanding has not been developed sufficiently for it to be applied in LO2.

Across the range of submissions, visualisation diagrams tend to be done quite well. These typically cover a range of pages/slides showing the content and layout. This is a key element of the planning.

The effectiveness of test plans varied across the submissions. The more detailed versions included practical tests that would confirm the functionality throughout the multimedia product. Less well developed test plans included more simplistic checks that it met the brief but these would be more suitable in a review for LO4.

As with many other units, the stronger submissions applied the concepts of legislation to the use of assets when creating the final product i.e. an interactive multimedia product. Generic information on copyright, trademarks and patents only met the descriptor for mark band 1. Claiming copyright free for use in an educational context was no higher than mark band 2. In a significant number of submissions this evidence was quite generic and not in context of the unit or assignment.

LO3 – Be able to create interactive multimedia products

There are two strands to the marks in this learning outcome. The second strand, to create the actual product was often done well to support the marks. Many candidates achieved in mark band 3 here. On the other hand, the evidence for the first strand was much less developed with sometimes very limited evidence of preparing any assets. The marking criteria require that candidates source, create and re-purpose the assets to be used in the interactive multimedia product. This was only implied in a high proportion of submissions. A minority of higher ability candidates did include some more extensive evidence here, by showing the editing of images and graphics in Photoshop plus editing a video clip (which used skills from R089). By repurposing these to more suitable sizes and resolutions, they could be credited in mark band 3.

Combines a **wide range** of different planned asset types with a **clear** and coherent navigation system to create a working interactive multimedia product. **All** elements work as intended.

Key point call out

A website is an accepted product outcome from this unit but unlike R085, here it must include a wide range of different types of asset i.e. a wide range of media. Text and graphics would be appropriate for R085 but this limited approach would only meet the mark band 1 descriptor in R087.

The saving and exporting of the product was mixed, especially when creating the product using PowerPoint. Here, the product should be exported as a 'show' file as the minimum to meet the exporting requirement. Those submissions that omitted this step and only supplied the PowerPoint .ppsx file did not fully meet the descriptor.

Key point call out

If using PowerPoint for this unit, it is important that the final product does not appear like a presentation. This is possible to achieve but some discipline is needed in how the content is displayed and how the navigation is implemented.

For the file and folder naming, many candidates evidenced this using a screenshot of their folder structure. Without this, it was not always possible to support the higher mark band.

LO4 – Be able to review interactive multimedia products

A significant proportion of submissions included a detailed review of the process through the unit, at times this was more like a diary or log of what they did. Such a summary is not a good match for the marking criteria here. This led to some inconsistent marking by the centres, giving credit to those with lengthy and detailed reviews that were actually not meeting the criteria.

R088 General overview

This unit on digital sound sequences is a barred combination with R089 (digital video), which tends to restrict its popularity. It does work well for those centres who have resources in the form of recording microphones and Audacity, which is by far the most common approach to the unit.

In the submissions seen this series, the organisation of evidence portfolios was not always good. One example appeared to be mixed with animation work from R086 but care should always be taken with holistic approaches, especially until such time as experience has been built with the qualification requirements. Some evidence was not organised by learning outcome making it difficult to identify where the required evidence was to support the marks. The signposting on the URS would be very important in these situations.

In other submissions, some URS comments were very informative and the sample was well organised. A number of submissions did not arrive with the moderator within the 3 day timescale, which is important for the turnaround time by the moderator.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand the uses and properties of digital sound

Candidates investigation of the uses for digital sounded tended to be quite good but with mixed responses to the properties. Some had only brief details on the audio file formats, which should be evidenced in the form of sourced information.

Key point call out

The investigation must include references for sourced information. This is to make it clear what is the candidate's own knowledge and understanding. This can be evidenced by their own summaries, annotations and conclusions, which is what supports any marks and minimises the risk of plagiarism concerns. This aspect should be carefully monitored by the centre's assessors in this unit.

The evidence of understanding environmental considerations and limitations relating to audio recording was generally quite brief. The candidate responses were more typically within mark band 1 or 2 here. This would be an area for development in the teaching of the unit content. Examples would be the effect of wind noise on the microphone and the directional nature of any background noise, which then affects the choice of microphone and other accessories.

LO2 – Be able to plan a digital sound sequence

A number of candidates did little more than restate the assignment brief, which only meets the mark band 1 descriptor. On the other hand, some candidates included mind maps, which is good practice to show the use of knowledge and skills from R081 (pre-production). Some candidates also included a mood board but this would not be as useful in this unit on digital sound. A significant proportion of the submissions had no effective knowledge, skills or understanding from other units in their evidence portfolios.

A common misconception in the creation of the work plan is that it should cover the entire unit. In these submissions, the consideration of tasks and activities relating to the sound sequence were quite brief. A better approach here is to focus the work plan on the production of the digital sound sequence and omit references to the four learning outcomes.

The reasons for choosing equipment and software were not well covered in many submissions. This tended to be a list of equipment, limiting the support of marks to be within mark band 1. Note that in this unit, identification of success criteria should be included.

Legislation was generic in some submissions but relevant in the consideration of copyright on music and sounds that were sourced.

LO3 – Be able to create a digital sound sequence

The first part of the marking criteria often had very little evidence, especially for recording. Some candidates included evidence of sourcing their sounds and sound effects, sometimes documenting these in an asset table which is good practice. This also gives opportunities to identify and restrictions on their use.

Key point call out

An important part of the criteria is to also record sounds for use in the sound sequence. The most common approach was to record a voiceover but this was only really evidenced by listening to the final product. To support the higher mark bands, evidence of the recording process needs to be more explicit and in general, the evidence of this is under developed.

The evidence of sound editing and mixing was typically included with selected screenshots from the editing software. This was often done quite well, without an excessive number of screenshots that often do not strengthen the evidence approach. A key number of screenshots together with the final sound sequence underpin the evidence for this learning outcome. Evidence of the limitations of different file formats generally was generally under developed. In a number of submissions, this element was completely overlooked.

Key point call out

In addition to the use of editing tools and techniques, the complexity of the sound sequence affects the best fit mark band. If aiming for mark band 3, a wide range of sounds would need to be included that are mixed effectively to create the final sound sequence.

The saving and exporting of the sound sequence was typically done well using .mp3 file formats. One comment here is that Audacity project files are little use without the source audio clips and do not need to be included.

LO4 – Be able to review a digital sound sequence

Many reviews made suitable comments on what had been produced. Others had limited reference back to the original client brief and hence under developed to meet the marking criteria. Some good opportunities to comment further on the areas for improvement were available. Examples of where this was done effectively included comments on the quality of their own recordings and mixing of the different sounds, especially in terms of the volume level for each element.

R089 General overview

A good number of submissions were well organised and included excellent annotations on the URS (Unit Recording Sheet). Others were not well structured and did not have the evidence organised by learning outcome, making it difficult for the moderator to locate the required evidence.

In some submissions, some inconsistent marking was identified at the external moderation stage. This is where the centre's assessment is generous in some portfolios and harsh in others. This can be due to either a misunderstanding of the marking criteria, or more often a lack of internal standardisation by the centre. In these situations, an invalid order of merit can mean that a remark is required by the centre, which introduces some significant delays.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand the uses and properties of digital video

This first learning outcome was typically done quite well, with candidates identifying uses across a range of sectors. This was slightly under developed in places where the main area was films. Other uses and sectors would be encouraged if aiming for the higher mark band. Inspiration could come from the wide range of content on YouTube together with TV advertisements.

Key point call out

In any unit, a range is defined as three or more, a wide range is five or more and a limited range is two, on the basis that one is not a range.

The evidence of describing a range of video file formats tended to be quite thorough. A comment would be that any sourced information must be adequately referenced so that it is clear what is the candidate's own knowledge and understanding, which is what supports the marks.

Key point call out

The marking criteria refers to describing different audio file formats but in this unit, would be more appropriate as different video file formats. The credit and support for marks can be given for either of these but good practice would be to cover video file formats.

LO2 – Be able to plan a digital video sequence

The candidates own interpretation of the brief varied quite significantly in this unit. Some stronger portfolios demonstrated a clear engagement with the scenario whereas others were under developed. This continued through the remainder of the planning criteria in LO2, with varying levels of evidence in the detail for the shooting script and storyboard.

For the use of knowledge, skills and understanding from other units in the specification, note that a storyboard does not contribute here since it is already included in R089. Mind maps, mood boards and potentially a script could be used from R081 pre-production.

Key point call out

Some misunderstanding of the unit content and marking criteria is apparent in this unit. What is required is a work plan, shooting script and storyboard. The work plan should cover the overall activities in LO2, LO3 and LO4, to plan, record, edit and review a digital video. The shooting script should identify what scenes are to be recorded on what days and where. This does not have to be a linear sequence for the content of the digital video (e.g. they could first record scene 3, then scene 1 and finally scene 2). The storyboard should be a linear sequence for the final video and is used at the editing stage i.e. scene 1, scene 2, scene 3.

Candidates would typically list the equipment to be used but evidence of its justification was often under developed. Note that in this unit, success criteria can be identified and referenced in the justifications.

The understanding of legislation in relation to the use of video footage (sourced and recorded) was rarely comprehensive. Some consideration of copyright on sourced materials was typically well done. Permissions and releases were also included in the recording of footage by the higher ability candidates, which is good practice. Few considered copyright on what they had produced themselves.

LO3 – Be able to create a digital video sequence

A number of excellent submissions were seen this series, demonstrating the use of extensive video footage. Higher ability candidates sourced footage using the centre's drone for an aerial view and edited this together with their own footage to produce some high quality outcomes.

There are two strands to this learning outcome, with very clear requirements. The first strand is about recording (and sourcing) video footage. The second strand is about editing that footage to create the final video sequence. Evidence for the first strand should not be just implied in the viewing of the final video and some evidence of the process should be included if aiming for the higher mark bands. Some submissions included an assets table and shot list to support this. Any type of video camera can be used here since the marking criteria requires a range of camera techniques, which can be shot types (e.g. long, mid, close up) and movement (e.g. pan, tilt, zoom).

Sourced footage must be clearly identified in the evidence portfolios. This also an opportunity to confirm what ownership (and copyright) is on the sourced material. This can be from other candidates in addition to web material or video libraries. This aspect was not always well developed and yet is an important part of the marking criteria.

Limitations of the software tended to be under developed and would be an area for improvement in future. It was often clear that there was more engagement with the editing of the video than the writing up of elements to meet all aspects of the marking criteria.

The higher ability candidates would include some evidence of the editing processes using selected screenshots, which is good practice. Others relied upon the final video to evidence the use of editing tools and techniques. This is acceptable up to a point as long as the techniques are clear. Annotations to the URS can be helpful here. Examples would be the reference to transitions and titles whereas cuts cannot be clearly evidenced in just the final video. In general, the editing of the video sequences was well done and many of the submissions showed some complexity to meet the higher mark band descriptor.

Key point call out

Optional layout feature, used to draw particular attention to a point in the text. Can be used in any section throughout the report.

The exporting in a suitable file format was generally well done. Across the submissions, the awareness of limitations imposed by different file formats was under developed.

LO4 – Be able to review a digital video sequence

A significant number of submissions review the process through the unit including comments on the pre-production planning. This is not required by the marking criteria and led to some inconsistencies in the credit of marks by the centre.

The content of the review should be more about the content of the video sequence in terms of camera shots, camera techniques and the editing. This will then provide opportunities for candidates to identify areas for improvement in all these aspects. In many submissions, this tended to be quite brief for the marks credited by the centre.

R090 General overview

The administration of the unit was quite mixed. Some submissions were excellent with good annotations clearly signposting where the evidence could be found. Others only restated the marking criteria, which does not assist with the external moderation process. Not all submissions included a suitable URS with the candidate work, which is an essential document.

Most submissions were sent promptly to the moderator upon receipt of the sample request, which is good practice. A small number of centres used a modified assignment brief to the OCR scenario. In these cases, a copy of the revised assignment must be sent with the sample to the moderator. This is so that the moderation process can confirm that the final photographs meet the client brief, which must be set in a clear vocational context with the same level of demand as the OCR model assignment.

Key point call out

Some approaches to the unit were found to be based on a workbook. This is not appropriate for any unit and the use of the OCR model assignments is mandatory in the qualification. This becomes especially problematic where over guidance is included in the workbook. Centres would benefit from reviewing the OCR Guide to Generating Evidence, which is available to download from the OCR website.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand the features and settings of digital photographic equipment

The investigation of camera features was often based on camera manufacturers' information, which doesn't evidence much of the candidate's own understanding. Sources of information were not referenced in a high proportion of submissions, making it difficult to confirm what was the candidate's own knowledge and understanding of composition, which is what supports the marks. The investigation for this first learning outcome was problematic in a significant number of submissions and needs to be monitored carefully in future.

The suitability of camera for a range of scenarios was evidenced quite well in a good number of submissions. Here candidates identified the use of a DSLR for many situations but also how more compact cameras can be effective such as for travel purposes.

LO2 – Be able to plan a photo-shoot

The interpretation of the client brief and consideration of target audience tended to be under developed. The evidence of using knowledge, skills and understanding from other units in the specification was also quite limited. Some examples here would be the inclusion of mind maps and mood boards from R081 Pre-production.

In a small number of submissions, the use of pro-forma documents was included within the approach to the planning. Similar to the use of workbooks as commented earlier, this is not a good approach and reference to the OCR Guide to Generating Evidence should be made.

Work plans for the photo-shoot also tended to be under developed. More detailed consideration of when, where, how and what with would be good practice here. In this unit, a Gantt chart is not necessarily the best approach and a more descriptive plan similar to a shooting schedule for R089 (Digital Video) would also be a good approach.

The marking criteria refers to a list of the equipment and software to be used. In nearly all submissions, the list was appropriate but demonstrated a good number of opportunities for further development. For example, identifying 'camera' is quite simplistic for this unit on digital photography and would only support mark band 1. The use of success criteria can be included in this unit and the justification of equipment in relation to this forms part of the marking criteria. Justifications for the equipment in relation to the success criteria would be needed for mark band 3.

Key point call out

The understanding of legislation in relation to the taking of photographs and the production of a digital photographic portfolio should include reference to model and property releases. This is an appropriate content for this unit, which does not require generic information on copyright.

LO3 – Be able to take and display digital photographs

Key point call out

There are two strands to the marking criteria in this learning outcome. For the first strand, the use of a range of features and settings is required but in frequently, this is unclear in the submissions. The intentional selection of exposure settings that are appropriate for a specific photograph cannot be assumed just by viewing the final image. These should be annotated with an explanation of why the settings were chosen to demonstrate the candidate's understanding. In general, this is a common area that needs to be significantly more developed in this unit.

Few candidates included evidence of the features and settings used or how they organised the scene and subjects. A wide range of photographic compositions is needed to achieve the higher mark band. Some submissions included visually strong photographic images but these were not always a good match for the assignment scenario. Here the final images must be suitable for the client brief.

A final portfolio of around 10 images would be recommended for this unit. Selecting the best one on its own is not the intention of the unit and effectively limits the opportunities to achieve the higher mark band.

The strongest submissions included a photographic portfolio as image files, where they used a dedicated digital camera (not smartphone) using a range of features, settings and compositions that meet the client brief. Lower ability candidates had more limited evidence of their skills in photographic techniques, sometimes incorrectly labelling images as demonstrating the rule of thirds. A number of these used smartphones to take their photographs, which is not a recommended approach if aiming for anything higher than mark band 1.

Key point call out

The final images should always be supplied as a portfolio of image files (e.g. as jpg files). Inserting these into a PowerPoint show is not a good approach above mark band 1. This does not permit the moderator to view the image properties such as exposure settings and camera used and would not be suitable for the client defined by OCR in the mandatory model assignment. Any change to the model assignment to only produce a PowerPoint file with photographic images would not be a suitable modification and a common misconception.

LO4 – Be able to review digital photographs

A significant number of submissions misunderstood the requirement of the review in this unit. Several examples were seen whereby they commented on areas for improvement in each mark band and in other cases, commented on the pre-production the process or their individual performance. These aspects do not support any marks in this final learning outcome.

Key point call out

The review should look at the portfolio as a whole together with comments on each individual image chosen for the portfolio. This could discuss the composition, use of camera settings, lighting and content of the subject/scene. This is also an opportunity for the candidates to justify why the photographs were chosen. Additional comments on other photographs that were rejected would also help to support these decisions.

R091 General overview

In the relatively low numbers of entries for this unit, some excellent organisation of the portfolios was seen. This demonstrated a good structure and URS annotations that clearly justified marks for individuals

One comment here would be that the candidate and centre authentication forms do not need to be sent to the moderator. These should be completed and stored by the centre.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand digital game types and platforms

Some very detailed research was produced for this unit. The analysis of digital games evolution was extensive in a number of submissions, covering a wide range of games, game genres and game objectives. As with the research for any unit, sources of information must be referenced so that it is clear what is the candidate's own knowledge and understanding, which is what supports the marks.

Key point call out

For the purposes of definitions, a wide range is accepted as five or more, a range is three or more and a limited range is two, on the basis that one is not a range.

LO2 – Be able to plan a digital game concept

The initial interpretation of the brief was not evidence in any great detail, whereas candidates tended to move quickly on to the generation of ideas. There are some close links between these activities and the use of a mind map to explore game ideas worked very well. This also evidenced their use of knowledge and skills from R081 (Pre-production). Few mood boards were seen in this planning section but could have included scenes from related game genres to inspire the generation of ideas.

The requirement to generate game ideas was generally sound but few achieved in mark band 3. This is because of the relatively brief consideration of game play outlines and consideration of success criteria. Candidates tended to briefly identify a range of ideas and then discuss one chosen idea in more detail quite quickly.

In terms of using knowledge, skills and understanding from other units, one set of submissions made good references to shot types from R089 (digital video) in the scenes for the game environment, which is a good example of something other than from R081.

LO3 – Be able to design a digital game proposal

A good number of submissions were well structured in the game proposal by using sub headings from the unit content. The higher ability candidates and strongest submissions included a separate proposal document, with title/cover sheet, list of contents and a well formatted document. Other submissions were under developed in the formatting and layout of the final proposal. Note here that the proposal is the product output for the unit, which should not be merged into a single document with all other evidence for the entire unit.

Many candidates tended to explain the idea and gameplay but others lacked many references to design constraints as required by the marking criteria. This restricted the evidence to be within mark band 2 in some places.

Key point call out

Visualisation for the game a key element of the proposal. These do not have to be hand drawn or depend upon the artistic ability of the candidate. The visualisations can be for a selection of the game characters, game environments and game menus (e.g. start screen, game options, game over screen).

Some candidates included visualisations of the game menus that were created in PowerPoint, which is a good approach for this requirement. At times, the inclusion of game characters and game environments was less well developed.

The legislation aspects were not consistently well done. In this unit it is not just the use of assets that contribute but also the use of ideas and concepts. Hence the intellectual property in the form of ideas from other games and film character profiles should be included.

The saving of electronic files using file and folder names and structures was briefly included in most submissions. Although there is no media product other than the proposal, a screenshot of different versions of its development would be a good approach to this.

LO4 – Be able to review a digital game proposal

There was a lack of clarity between the game proposal and the review of the game proposal. For this final learning outcome, an explanation or discussion of how the different elements work together would be a recommended approach i.e. the game components, narrative and integration to produce a playable game.

Key point call out

Many submissions were under developed in the final review. Given the creative nature of the unit, there should be a wide scope for potential content in this game concept unit

R092 General overview

Most of the submissions for this unit were supplied on a USB memory stick, which often works more reliably than CD/DVD. The work was well organised. In general, there was a high level of organisation and structure to the submissions, perhaps related to the structure and clear process that is required to create or program a playable game. Overall, there were very few issues with the organisation of work and associated URS (unit Recording Sheets)

A number of submissions used a modified brief. In these cases, a copy of the modified assignment must be supplied to the moderator so that it can be confirmed that the candidates have responded to the needs of a specific client brief.

Comments by LO

LO1 – Understand game creation hardware, software and peripherals

The investigation was generally well done for the marks given. Many candidates covered a range of software applications whereas some focussed their evidence on one in more detail (which is then used later in the unit). Most candidates included some good evidence of hardware and peripherals to create games but this was under developed for the testing of games. This limits the access to the higher end of mark band 3 and an area for development in the teaching of the unit in future.

LO2 – Be able to plan the creation of a digital game

A significant number of candidates only restated the brief for this unit. This is partly due to the fact that the OCR assignment brief is actually quite specific and a characteristic of the unit. As seen with a number of other units, the use of knowledge, skills and understanding was also quite limited. The impact of this is that the evidence for the initial part of the planning criteria was under developed.

Work plans also tended to be under developed with more time spent on creating the game rather than planning it. This would be an area for development in future submissions for the unit.

The test plans were more practical and at times, quite extensive. It is important that this range of tests is focussed around the functionality of the game to support the higher mark bands.

The evidence of considering pathways, game play and game mechanics was quite mixed but many candidates did identify a series of success criteria.

Key point call out

Overall, many candidates covered key points of the planning criteria but often struggled to achieve in mark band 3. The more engaging content for the unit is found in LO3 where the game is actually created but the process through the unit and availability of marks should still be highlighted.

The sourcing and storage of assets for the game was often more implied in the final game. A clearer approach to evidencing this part of the criteria would be encouraged.

The legislation aspects were not consistently well done. In this unit it is not just the use of assets that contribute but also the use of ideas and concepts. Hence the intellectual property in the form of ideas from other games and film character profiles should be included.

LO3 – Be able to create a digital game

A significant part of the marking criteria was not always well evidenced in this unit. Here, it is not a good approach for the evidence to be assumed or implied by having a playable game as the outcome. For example, the use of geometric parameters to manipulate object(s) and environment(s) was often under developed in many submissions. This resulted in some generous marking in the first strand of the marking criteria.

Key point call out

The playability of the games is often an issue with this unit. This depended on the game platform used together with the format of game file submissions. Note that any game should be supplied to the moderator and not be hosted on internet based websites.

The creation of a wide range of interactions within the game can be evidenced in the final game, unlike some other aspects of the marking criteria. Good practice would be to include more explicit and clear evidence, potentially using screenshots but a functional game does confirm that interactions are working. In general, this was well done in the submissions for the marks given.

Game play controls were also evidenced by the playability of the game. Other elements of the marking criteria, such as the use of algorithms was more under developed and would benefit from clearer evidence.

Saving and exporting the game was often limited by the options available in the game creation software. This is where a careful choice should be made when delivering this unit to make sure options are available that allows candidates to access the higher mark bands.

LO4 – Be able to review the creation of a digital game

Reviews of the game tended to be slightly better than some other units, making clear reference and comments to the final game product rather than the process through the unit. One additional part of the marking criteria is the testing of the game. Signposting would be recommended in the URS here, where this is only included in the test plan that is drafted earlier in the unit.

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