

Cambridge National

Creative iMedia

Unit **J807**: Level 1/2 Cambridge National Award in Creative iMedia

Unit **J817**: Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Creative iMedia

Unit **J827**: Level 1/2 Cambridge National Diploma in Creative iMedia

OCR Report for Centres for June 2015

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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R081 Pre-production Skills

General Comments:

A good level of knowledge about what certain pre-production documents are and what they contain was again demonstrated this session. However the understanding of why these documents are used and who the target audience is, for these documents is still weak. This indicated once again that candidates have been taught how to create these documents within specific projects without the understanding of why they are being used at that stage. This was clearly evident in the responses for question 7 where the review of an existing document was assessed.

This paper is vocationally focussed and so is based on a context that runs throughout the entirety of the paper. This session has again seen a rise in the number of candidates answering questions with a generic slant and not applying their knowledge to the context given. This requirement to apply the knowledge to the context is what sets this exam and course apart from a GCSE. Hence general answers were not credited.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No.

1ai. This question was generally answered well. There were however a number of answers that were too vague. For example, ideas or descriptions of what a mood board is, rather than its purpose.

1a.ii. There was a wide variety in the quality of answers for this question. Whilst most candidates responded well there was clear evidence of candidates learning to answer this style of question by completing past papers and then using these memorised responses without considering the context of the question and paper.

1a.iii. This question was intended to stretch candidates by requiring them to provide specific examples of how a mood board could be used in this context of the paper scenario. The question was poorly answered with many generic answers worth no credit. There was also a high number of answers where candidates referred to a product in general or the magazine and not the adverts for the magazine. This showed a lack of understanding of the context of the question.

2a. This was generally answered well; however there were a lot of responses where camera angles and lighting were identified. These were not relevant to the context of the question, a radio advert. Centres are advised to ensure that their candidates identify clearly the context of each question as marks are being lost due to a failure to do this.

2b. Once again this was a question that was poorly answered as candidates were required to apply their knowledge of scripts use to the context of the radio advert. There was a large number of responses that contained generic answers related to films, shows and TV rather than the radio advert. To gain the full marks candidates needed to provide more specific answers to the context of the use the script.

2c. This was generally answered well; however there were far more incorrect answers than expected. This showed a lack of understanding of the use of different file types.

3ai. This was generally answered well showing candidates were well-versed in using client briefs in other units of the specification.

3aii. This question was intended to stretch candidates in their understanding of why an organisation would stipulate the use of certain colours in their advertising. This was to test the candidates' knowledge of how house styles are used. This was generally poorly answered with a large number of responses seen where candidates discussed why colours were needed in the advertising campaign generally. The understanding of why a house style would be stipulated with the intended consequence of the use of a house style being omitted.

3bi. This question was answered poorly with a large number of candidates providing generic unrelated answers about other target audience factors seen in previous sessions. Too many candidates also missed the relevance of target audience income on the content of the advert, focussing on the relationship between the 'Three Oaks' having enough money to make a good quality advert. These marks were generally lost due to poor exam technique and candidates not reading the question properly.

3bii. This question had a mixture of responses. Candidates failed to gain full marks by not identifying a category, which are stated in the unit specification, using an example to show the category instead. There was also a large number of repeated answers for one category provided by candidates. This again indicated a lack of exam technique in how to apply knowledge to the paper context.

4ai. This question was answered poorly showing that candidates' understanding of work plans still needs to be developed. Centres are advised to develop this aspect as they are key documents when carrying out any media production and are included in a number of other units in the specification.

4aii. This again referred to the contents of work plans and was not answered well, with candidates often referring to contents of other pre-production documents. Where correct answers were seen candidates were clear about what makes up a work plan using the specific terminology used in the specification.

4aiii. The answers provided in the responses seen for this question were generally not specific enough to gain full marks. Candidates did not apply the use of the work plan to the context, nor provide clear examples of how it helps the process of working in a large team.

5. This question was generally answered well, with candidates showing that report comments from previous sessions have been taken on board. Candidates are clearly indicating the colour schemes being used and annotating the diagrams well. There was a number of candidates, however who did not understand the term visualisation diagram, producing a mind map instead.

6ai. This was a generally well-answered question; however a number of candidates identified non- visual characters such as the 'female voice over' or were not specific in their identification of the character , for example, male or female.

6aii. This question was generally well-answered.

6b. This question was intended to test candidates understanding of why camera shots are used in the context of the advert. There was a wide variety in the quality of the responses seen, with full marks not being awarded as often as would be expected. Candidates again did not explain the impact of the view of the whole shop and its relationship to the advert in the mind of the viewer.

6c. This question was answered poorly with a large number of candidates answering about the content of the scenes themselves, not the quality of the pre-production document itself. Instead of focussing upon aspects such as no clear direction, lack of camera angles and timing candidates referred to 'say more than "aah"' or 'say "Three Oaks supermarket" more'.

6d. This question saw a wide variety in the quality of answers provided. There were far more responses than expected that indicated that candidates did not know the difference between graphic and video file types. When the correct file types were identified full marks were not often gained due to not applying the answer to context of a pop-up advert online.

7. This question was answered poorly in general. The level of understanding regarding the use of the mood board was low, with very few candidates able to relate the use of a mood board to its correct audience and purpose. The vast majority of the answers seen were based upon providing a critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the specific items on the mood board rather than the document as a whole. A large number of candidates also did not read the question correctly referring to the mood board as being the advert itself and how it would be used to promote the sale. This supports the view that this unit of work and the pre-production documents it refers to are being taught mainly through work in other units. There are very few references to mood boards in other units, hence the understanding of this pre-production document is poor. It is suggested that centres develop candidates' understanding of this pre-production document for future sessions.

R082 – R092

General Comments:

It has been good to see a substantial number of Centres entering units for the first time having taken up the qualification. With any new qualification this invariably introduces a learning curve in terms of the administration requirements, the standards for achievement, interpretation of the marking criteria and the nature of the evidence being produced. In this respect, some Centres opted for the visiting option and although only general feedback can be provided, this will clearly assist their planning and preparation for delivery starting in September. Note that if any centre has selected the repository or postal options, guidance and clarification on the qualification and marking criteria can still be obtained through the OCR Customer Contact Centre or social forum.

It is important to realise that the Cambridge Nationals are not just a renamed version of the older OCR Nationals and that a similar approach to assignment work cannot be used or accepted. In order for the qualification to be supported by DfE performance tables a more rigorous structure is needed. This introduces a number of changes such as the mandatory use of the OCR model assignment, which have limited options for permitted changes. Furthermore, coursework based approaches with supportive guidance and formative assessment of work is unsuitable. In all of the Cambridge Nationals qualifications, the final assignment must be completed as a summative assessment, which closely follows the concepts of a controlled assessment.

For this qualification, templates and writing frames must not be used and it is recommended that the OCR model assignment is used unchanged. It needs to be understood that additional support or guidance must not be provided when candidates are creating their final work and that they only respond to the tasks in the model assignment. This also applies to the use of online resources that are now available. In general, these should only be used to assist the teaching of the unit content and not form part of the assignment work.

Where centres have followed the administrative requirements and used the appropriate assignments, some high quality and technically creative work has been seen. This is very reassuring to see and it is hoped (and expected) that this trend will continue. In particular, some excellent examples have been seen in R082 (Digital graphics) and R089 (Digital video). In some cases, very high quality work is also supported by lengthy and detailed write-ups of the unit. In these cases, it becomes difficult to see how the work could have been completed in the 10-12 hours available for the assignment. This is an area that needs to be monitored to ensure that results are fair and appropriate to the assessment of the units.

As seen in all previous series, the final work is not always being supplied in its intended (digital) format. There appears to be some confusion at times such that the postal entry option (/02) does not mean that all evidence must be paper based and electronic evidence is still required either on disc or memory stick. Some centres omit sending the actual product, which is the primary outcome that is created for any unit. This even applies to websites and interactive multimedia units and overall the product that is created for any unit is considered a fundamentally important piece of evidence.

A number of centres has demonstrated good practice making internal moderation records available. This concept of internal checks needs to be more thorough in many cases since a large number of clerical errors has been seen. This is where the marks on the URS are incorrectly added and transferred to the MS1 mark sheet that is sent to OCR. Where these errors are found, a delay in the moderation process is introduced, which has been quite problematic this series. Centres are strongly advised to double-check the submission of marks onto the MS1 in future so that the administrative correction processes can be minimised. In terms of administration, one additional comment would be that the CCS160 was not always supplied. This is the centre authentication form, which is not to be confused with the candidate authentication form.

Comments on Individual Units:

Unit R082

Following the release of additional assignments last year, this series has seen all three assignment briefs being used. Although the DVD cover has been the most popular, the work for the 'Timechaser' brief has produced some highly creative, engaging and inspiring work. Centres are encouraged to review all of the model assignment briefs that are available for each unit and to monitor the OCR website for updated information.

It should be emphasised that this unit is not about desktop publishing and the use of desktop publishing software can hinder the access to higher mark bands for LO3. Digital image editing software applications should be used, as stated in the qualification specification.

It is unfortunate that templates and writing frames are frequently seen in this unit, partly because it is the mandatory unit and there are a number of online resources available to support it. However, as mentioned in the general comments section of this report, templates and writing frames are only suitable for use in the teaching of the unit content and should not be used when completing the final assignment work.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO1: The properties of digital graphics. This needs to cover pixel dimensions and dpi resolution to fully address the criteria. These properties underpin the remainder of the unit and it should be noted that all of the assignments require the graphics in both print and web formats. This should not be limited to just file formats and the properties should confirm that the graphics are fit for their intended purpose.

LO2: The first part of this is to provide an interpretation of the client brief but many candidates are typically only re-stating the brief without any of their own interpretation. One example of how to approach this would be to comment on what sort of content is to be included and why it was chosen. This part of the marking criteria allows for the candidates own creativity to be demonstrated and is to be encouraged wherever possible.

LO2: An understanding of the use of assets and the purpose of resources. A simple list does not cover this.

LO3: In the first strand, the technical compatibility of the assets is rarely evidenced very well. One of the issues with sourcing images and graphics from the internet is that they tend to be relatively low resolution and 72 dpi. This can mean that they are unsuitable for use in a print product and this concept represents the practical applied context for the properties of graphics from LO1 (see above).

LO3: The use of tools and techniques to create the digital graphics are not always well evidenced. This contrasts with some other units whereby the process of creating the final work can be well documented. It is not clear why this unit is characteristically weaker in this respect. For mark band 3, the use of advanced tools and techniques is needed and these cannot be implied by viewing the final graphic.

LO3: The final graphics in the correct pixel dimensions and dpi resolution as both a print product and a web graphic are needed. It has been observed that a significant number of submissions are visually creative but not to the correct dimensions, which limits the marks that can be supported.

Overall, there has been some very good work but in future it is hoped that the knowledge and understanding graphics properties from LO1 is applied more successfully to the creation of work for LO3, regardless of which assignment is being used.

Unit R083

Although one of the less popular units, it provides opportunities for the development of skills in using imaging and graphics software applications. The submissions for this unit tended to be quite good and were strengthened by the inclusion of multiple views of the final character such as front, side, rear and even facial close ups. The process of the character development was also typically well evidenced.

One of the particular issues with this unit continues to be the research into digital characters for LO1. It must be clear what sources are being used and referenced accordingly. When applying the marking criteria, these must be in relation to the candidate's own knowledge, interpretation, summary of their findings whereas merely copying and pasting from a web source (even when referenced) does not support any marks.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO1: The evidencing and summary of research into digital characters as described above.

LO2: The candidate's own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO3: Saving electronic files that are appropriate. In a number of submissions, no electronic evidence was supplied and the characters were only printed on paper. This does not provide any evidence for this part of the marking criteria. As mentioned in the general section, the final work in its intended digital format should always be included.

Unit R084

In contrast to R083, this is one of the most popular of the optional units. The nature of the submissions covered the full range of marks available, from high quality and entertaining multipage comics to quite basic single page strips. The choice of software has a significant impact on the outcome for this unit. At a more basic level, Microsoft Publisher is a popular choice whereas at the higher end, Comic Life is frequently seen.

One of the particular issues with this unit continues to be the research into multipage comics for LO1. As with R083 (or any unit) it must be clear what sources are being used and referenced accordingly. When applying the marking criteria, these must be in relation to the candidate's own knowledge, interpretation and summary of their findings. Merely copying and pasting from a web source (even when referenced) does not support any marks.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO1: The evidencing and summary of research into multipage comic strips as described above.

LO1: The exploration of software that could be used to create the comics and in particular, what tools would be used. Note that access to a range of software is not essential to this part of the criteria but an investigation into the features and capabilities would be required.

LO2: The candidates' own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO2: An understanding of the use of assets and the purpose of resources. A basic list does not cover this.

LO2: The requirement for a storyline, script and storyboard. These would be recommended as three separate items of evidence.

LO3: A comic that has an illustrated story over several pages. In some cases, a single page comic has been credited in mark band 2 or 3, which may not always be appropriate.

LO3: Saving electronic files that are appropriate. In a number of submissions, no electronic evidence was supplied and the comics were only printed on paper. This does not provide any evidence for this part of the marking criteria. As mentioned in the general section, the final work in its intended digital format should always be included.

Unit R085

This unit is again quite strong as seen with previous series. Submissions tend to have a detailed approach and evidence of the investigation, planning, production and review. Most submissions have a good structure to the evidence and effective websites as the final product. In a number of submissions, the choice of colour schemes and house styles are perhaps more individual rather than being commercially suitable and this can be compensated for in the marking criteria (use of appropriate master page and house style). Occasionally some browser compatibility issues are seen and it would be useful to know what the centre has used to view the website when deciding on a mark. This will allow the moderator to replicate the same system and therefore be in a better position to support the centre's marking.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO2: The candidates' own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO2: An understanding of the use of assets and the purpose of resources. A basic list does not cover this.

LO3: Creating the master page with a house style. In a number of submissions this is only implied in the final website, whereas this needs to be more explicit.

Unit R086

This unit is again quite strong as seen with previous series. As with R085, submissions tend to have a detailed approach and evidence of the investigation, planning, production and review. A popular choice of software is Serif DrawPlus although Adobe Flash also features strongly. Many of the final animations were a good match for the requirements of the assignment brief. Exported file formats were usually either .gif or .swf, both of which are suitable for this unit.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO2: The candidates own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO2: A description of the animation file formats and properties. Note that this is a planning activity rather than theory for LO1 and therefore needs to be in an applied context for the assignment brief and scenario.

LO2: An understanding of the use of assets and the purpose of resources. A basic list does not cover this.

LO3: Carrying out testing of the digital animation at intervals during the production (and not just at the end when everything works).

Unit R087

Although traditionally PowerPoint has been used for this unit a better approach is being seen with a number of centres, which is based on creating a multimedia website. These include images, graphics, animation and video. The final products were better when the assets were embedded rather than just externally linked and it should be noted that all the work that is to be moderated needs to be supplied. As with R085, colour schemes were found to be quite individual at times and where created in PowerPoint, often tended to be more of a slideshow than a multimedia product where the user could navigate at will.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO1: The investigation of a range of interactive media products as opposed to platforms. In this respect a product would be what is created in software and a platform is what it is used on. Some candidates are investigating platforms such as games consoles and smartphones but these are not multimedia products as required by the unit

LO1: The identification of hardware, software and peripherals to create and view interactive multimedia. There are two sections to this – what is used to create the product and what is used to view the product ie the target platform.

LO2: The candidates own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO2: An understanding of the use of assets and the purpose of resources. A basic list does not cover this.

LO3: To source, create and re-purpose assets for use in the multimedia product. In particular, creating and re-purposing are typically not being evidenced very well.

Unit R088

This is also one of the less popular units, perhaps in part because it is a barred combination with R089 digital video. Based on the few submissions for the unit Audacity is a popular choice of software application and editing has been reasonably well evidenced for LO3.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that should be monitored in any future submissions. These are as follows:

LO1: An understanding of the environmental considerations and limitations when recording audio.

LO2: The candidates own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO3: Evidence of recording and sourcing sounds.

LO3: Demonstrating an awareness of the limitations imposed by different file formats and sizes.

Unit R089

This unit has allowed some good creativity to be shown when using the Port4wd assignment brief. Many of the final trailers were often completed to a high standard with media conventions being followed. One particular convention is that of using a camera in a landscape orientation. At times, an iPhone or equivalent is being used in a portrait orientation that does not follow video layout conventions and really needs to be avoided when aiming for mark band 3. There has been a number of group working issues and although group working is permissible, the evidence must confirm the individual contribution for each candidate and only credit the marks for what each did in direct relation to the marking criteria. Note that there are no marks that can be given for acting or directing since these do not form part of the marking criteria. In a number of submissions, the only evidence for LO3 was the final video file. This cannot be used to imply that all of the remaining marking criteria for LO3 have been adequately covered and a final mark must not be based on just the quality of the video.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO2: The candidates' own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO2: The creation of a work plan, shooting script and storyboard. All three items are required here.

LO3: An understanding of the limitations of software.

LO3: An awareness of the limitations imposed by different file formats and sizes.

Unit R090

The range of photographic skills has varied quite significantly in this unit and the approach to the assignment needs to be considered carefully. As seen in previous series, problems continue with the use of suitable digital cameras. In this respect a smartphone is not a good choice since there are very few settings that can be adjusted on such a basic camera, which limits the opportunity for achievement of the higher mark bands in LO3. A secondary issue is what photographs are actually being submitted. In some cases, holiday photographs are being included but it is difficult to see how the centre authentication statement could be valid under these circumstances. Centres must be confident that the candidate took all photographs and that they are in response to the assignment brief that is being used. Note that this unit should not be a collection of the candidate's best pictures from the last year or so.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO1: The candidates' own evidence of their understanding, which cannot be demonstrated by quoting specifications and sourcing information without any individual annotation or commentary.

LO1: The suitability of digital cameras for a range of scenarios.

LO2: The candidates' own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO2: Justifying the selection of camera equipment in relation to identified success criteria.

LO3: Using features and settings of the digital camera (note that these cannot always be implied in the final photographs or found in the metadata)

Unit R091

This unit on game concepts does not require any specialised software but does provide significant opportunities for creativity and ideas development. The outcome from this unit should be a game proposal and the format would be encouraged to be a document or presentation file that could be supplied to a client, which would be more consistent with the vocational nature of the qualification. In many submissions this series, candidates merely included the proposal as part of the write up for the unit that covered all four learning outcomes.

It was good to see some excellent hand-drawn visualisation diagrams that were scanned and inserted into the proposal evidence. It is clear that many candidates had some excellent artistic skills, which were used to good effect even though not specifically part of the marking criteria.

Although many proposals included evidence to address the marking criteria, it was not always clear exactly what the player would have to do as part of the game play. This would be an important part of any practical game proposal for use by a client.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO1: The candidates' own evidence of their understanding game platforms, which cannot be demonstrated by quoting specifications and sourcing information without any individual annotation or commentary.

LO2: The candidates' own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO3: Consideration of design constraints.

Unit R092

Scratch is popular choice for this unit although this can (and has been) problematic in ensuring a version is submitted for moderation purposes. Games or any other final work must not be in the public domain and furthermore, stored securely for the duration of the series, moderation window and enquiries about results service.

The capabilities of Scratch have progressed significantly over the last 2-3 years in terms of creating playable games. Screenshots of the creation process has often been very good in this unit, which contrasts with some other units that have little evidence of the tools and techniques used other than the final product. An approach that encompasses both the final work and evidence of the creation process would be encouraged for any unit if aiming for the higher mark bands. Many of the games produced for this unit were highly playable to a good standard.

There are a few areas of the marking criteria that are commonly weak in their evidencing. These are as follows:

LO1: The candidates' own evidence of their understanding 2D and 3D game platforms and software, which cannot be demonstrated by quoting specifications and sourcing information without any individual annotation or commentary.

LO2: The candidates' own interpretation of the client brief, which provides opportunity for some creativity (see comment for R082).

LO2: Understanding the key aspects of game creation and their contextualisation for the brief.
LO2: Applying design techniques with references to pathways, game play and game mechanics.

LO3: Using algorithms to create the game play

LO3: Exporting and publishing the game in a suitable format.

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