



Rewarding Learning

GCSE

Contemporary Crafts

Planning and Writing
Assignments Checklist

Key Questions to Ask when Planning and Writing Assignments

Background

What is the craft context for the assignment?

Do the assignments relate to contemporary craft practice and activity?

Project Brief

What are we asking learners to do...and why?

Are the briefs based on the 'design process'?

Are the briefs 'staged' in a logical and managed manner? Tasks, research, technical skills, development, selection, decisions etc.

Are the written briefs/projects specifically and identifiably assignments for the specific course and level?

Is there a detailed curriculum plan and scheme of work that clearly shows how and when each assignment is being delivered, and how the assessment objectives/criteria are mapped against each activity? This then should cross-check with the brief.

Is the format consistent and accessible? Alternative accessibility?

Is there a clearly stated deadline for each stage?

Is the assignment written in a readable and engaging way?

Is the language at the right level? Does it 'speak' directly to the student?

Are research starting points included in every brief?

How will that research help each learner to progress their work?

Learning Activities

How is the effective use of sketchbooks encouraged?

How is specialist terminology introduced and explained?

Is there a student pack with sheets on visual language, colour, media, materials, techniques and processes, risk assessment, evaluation, 'what ifs', 'it pays to ask' etc.?

Are you encouraging learners to investigate/develop more than one possible idea?

What do we mean by context? Can your learners make connections between their work and that of working craft makers, designers and artists?

Research

How do you teach research skills?

What do we mean by primary and secondary sources? Does everyone understand what these mean?

How is the library involved? Can they help by producing a project pack?

Do you teach your students how to 'cite' references? Remember they will need to work in more than one discipline.

Evaluation

Do students know the purpose and value of evaluation?

Have they been trained to write an evaluation?

Ensure you ask for proper reflective annotation in sketchbooks, not simply 'I like this'.

Other considerations

How are other essential transferable skills such as literacy, numeracy and key skills built into every assignment?

Are homework tasks built into the assignment schedule?

Progressing Learning

Personalised learning: how is this identified and then developed and supported?

Planning and progress: how is the learner taking responsibility for their own learning – perhaps through a journal or diary system? Tracking the personal journey: how about using a blog?

What incentives do you use for improvement and raising achievement?

Assessment (ongoing department procedures) consider:

- Do briefs cover the assessment criteria more than once, giving opportunities to **plan, do, review, and do again** and to apply the ‘Design Process’?
- Do your learners understand the assessment objectives?
- Are the assessment criteria listed in the brief itself?
- Are assessment criteria discussed with and explained to students at the outset and referred to correctly?
- Tracking individual achievement of assessment objectives/criteria in each component. How is this done, and how can it be improved?
- How are assignments internally standardised?
- Who is responsible for approving the publishing of each assignment brief?
- How can you use critical friends who are seeking to raise quality not seeing it as an undervalued bit of necessary paperwork?

Grading

Are the assessment criteria included and clearly related to the separate tasks listed in the project?

Has the assignment been written in a way that allows every student to achieve all of the grades, right through to the highest?

Are interim grades based on a continuous tutorial process with actions agreed by the teacher and the student (studio book, nudge book, tutorial sheet)?

What system do you use? Where are agreed decisions logged and tracked?

Assessment (complying with the regulations) consider:

- The controlled assessment regulations.
- Preparation for the externally set examination.
- Preparation for Moderation: visits, paperwork, edited portfolios, learning files, preparatory work, final outcomes, evaluations, internal standardisation documentation.
- What happens after the moderator's report has been submitted?

Points for Staff to Address in Managing and Organising the Course

Consider the following for discussion and development focus:

- Is time allowed for curriculum planning, preparation, assignment design and presentation?
- Are there any staff training requirements needed before the course can be successfully run?
- Are the resource requirements in place before the course can operate properly and safely?
- Who writes the briefs?
- Trips/visits/location work.
- Visiting speakers.
- Links with industry: Contemporary crafts galleries, studios, outlets, organisations etc.
- Links with local art teachers' network and/or links to a local college.
- Live assignments.
- How is the curriculum planned? Are the assessment objectives/criteria being fully addressed enough times and at the right depth?

Grading and Standardising

Do staff attend awarding body agreement trials?

Do staff standardise sample work and how do you resolve issues over contentious decisions?

What effective processes have been adopted recently that can be disseminated?