Principal Moderator Feedback

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Applied GCE

Information and Communication Technology (6951)

Paper 01 - The Information Age

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General Comments

The advice contained in previous reports was followed by a number of centres. However, there are still some centres using inappropriate software or approaches to this unit. Please take care in reading this document.

The approach required by the specification is the e-book should be capable of being read in a browser. The best examples seen were produced using web authoring software to produce pages that could be read in that way.

There were still several examples of work submitted in inappropriate file formats, such as long, document-style PDF files with few links for e-book presentations. This type of approach does not produce an e-book in line with the specification.

Some centres use software to produce "exe" files and these cannot be accepted for moderation in this unit.

Most assessors made appropriate comments on the e-record sheets which were helpful, and showed how the marks were awarded this often helps the moderator to agree the marks awarded by the centre.

Stand A: On-line services

The majority of assessors are accurately assessing this section. The content for this section was generally of a good standard; some good examples of work in MB3 were seen.

Better candidates produce work in required depth of coverage of each of the services. Giving good examples and very detailed descriptions of services supported by good examples. Using images and screen shots to enhance the information.

QWC levels generally matched the mark band standard in which the evidence was placed.

Stand B: Life in the Information Age

The majority of assessors are accurately assessing this section.

Most candidates now produce work that covers requirements of this strand. They describe how peoples lives have been changed by the use of information technology, often using interviews with adults as a source of information. Some also take this as an opportunity to demonstrate recording skills by including brief sound files of the interview.

Weaker candidates still describe the technology again or review the technology with little or no reference to the impact on life. Candidates could be encouraged to summarise and comment on the overall impact of ICT on life in the Information Age. This is essential to access the higher mark ranges

It is also essential that in this section candidates use research from a range of sources and not just the internet as is often the case.

Stand C: Digital Divide

The majority of assessors are accurately assessing this section.

An improvement in the coverage of this strand was also noticed, there were some good examples of work in MB2 and MB3. Candidates who achieved in the higher mark bands gave a detailed description of at least 3 factors contributing to the digital divide and went on to look at the impact of the divide and the measures taken to bridge the gap. Weaker candidates tend to describe the factors but then fail to identify any measures taken to bridge the gap and therefore could not be awarded higher marks.

Stand D: The e-book

In some extreme cases it was difficult to moderate the work. This was due to work not being created according to the requirements in the specification. As stated, the specification requires an e-book that can be read in a browser, the best approach to this is to use web authoring software, or other software that can create pages in html.

Most candidates had used appropriate software, there were some good examples of e-books produced using Dreamweaver, or FrontPage. Pupils who achieved higher mark bands showed consistency when using background, text and layout. They also managed to comfortably accommodate text on the screen and offered the user a means of navigation from page to page, sequential and non sequential.

Better candidates addressed audience and purpose by using an introduction; often simple in nature but still making the audience aware of the purpose of the e-book.

Scrolling is becoming less of an issue, with better candidates using a variety of techniques to reduce scrolling or using frames and style sheets to reduce the effect of the reader. The most important thing is that the user is always able to navigate around the e-book and that vital links are not lost if the page scrolls.

A few candidates did not produce an e-book but linked PDF files to their work, this limited access to marks in this strand.

Standard ways of working were not always observed in that filenames were not meaningful and external assessors had difficulty in finding the start of the e-book.

Stand E: Components and structure

Better candidates used suitable ready made components which related to the topic discussed. Weaker candidates often included inappropriate multimedia, for example in the form of un-necessary animated gif files. Occasionally, the candidates seemed to be unaware that the choice, positioning and mix of components had an effect on the e-books.

The use of original components is still rather weak. Better candidates opted to use an interview, which is a good idea, although candidates need to make sure that questions asked are relevant. Candidates must use an adequate range of appropriate components to be awarded marks at the top end of the range. It is not

sufficient to simply include components that are not in some way related to the page being look at.

Separate evidence of testing is still often provided in the form of test plans and screen dumps, as stated in previous examiner reports this is not necessary .Testing is demonstrated by the fact that a fully function e-book had been produced.

Stand F: Evaluation

The higher achieving candidates attempted this aspect well and evaluated both their own performance and the performance of the eBook. They also incorporated feedback and made recommendations for improvements. In most cases the evaluation had been placed correctly outside of the eBook.

Lower achieving candidates still make poor use of feedback, and suggest improvements to their work that are trivial. The inclusion of completed questionnaires alone does not provide evidence that they have acted on or analysed the feedback.

Standard Ways of Working

In most cases, the only evidence the external assessors had for this aspect was the bibliography and the file structures and names used by the candidates. In some cases it was difficult to locate the e-book or e-portfolios of candidates as these were often not well named.

Bibliographies are the main source of evidence to support the range of sources of information used by the candidate; too many candidates still give "Goole" "Yahoo" and other search engines as the source of the information when clearly the source was a website found using them. Many candidates only quoted web sites, the specification requires a wide range of different sources to used for strands (b) and (c).

General Administration
Most samples were correctly submitted with folders clearly labelled with centre numbers, candidate number and first 2 letters of surname and first of Christian name. It would help if the erecord sheet naming convention is the same

The centre assessor should use the erecord as an opportunity to help the moderator find the evidence required to agree the marks given. The comments by centres often contained only 1 line comments, in other cases no comments at all were provided. Some centres placed all units on the same CD, this can cause problems for the moderation team as samples of units frequently need to sent to different people during the moderation process.

Grade Boundaries

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