

Moderators' Report
Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

Applied GCE
6951 01 – The Information Age

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General Comments

The advice contained in previous reports was followed by a number of centres. There are still a number of centres using inappropriate software or approaches to this unit.

The majority work seen was appropriate and gave the candidates good opportunities to meet the requirements of the specification. Although of e-portfolios moderated very few mentioned the requirement for the content to be read in 100 years time. Candidates who are clear about the purpose of the e-book from the outset tend to produce better content that is fit for purpose and address the audience in an appropriate manner. These candidates often start with an introductory page outlining the purpose of the e-book mentioning the audience in 100 years time.

The e-book should be self contained and allow the user to navigate from section to section and from page to page. The best examples are written using web authoring software and open in a browser environment. Unfortunately there were still examples of work submitted in inappropriate file formats, such as PowerPoint presentations which had not been converted to html format, or 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 continue to supply evidence of design in the form of diagrams of page layout and navigation charts, this evidence does not need to be supplied as part of the ePortfolio, the design is assessed by looking at and using the e-book itself. This also applies to testing, there is no requirement to supply test plans or screen shots showing the testing. The testing is implicit in the e-book; if it is fully working then good testing must have taken place.

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:

A good range of marks were awarded for this section with some candidates scoring full marks in this section.

Better candidates produce very detailed descriptions describing the purpose and functions of each of the services, supported by good examples. They also included evaluative comments, sometimes in the form of advantages and disadvantages of the service. Weaker candidates still tend to simply evaluate websites for this strand, rather than the services themselves.

The majority of centres commented on QWC on the e-sheet and used the criteria correctly. However some misunderstanding was evident in a few cases.

The rules for QWC are as follows.

The content of the work is marked, identifying the band and the mark that the work is worth.

The QWC is assessed and the mark is then adjusted, within the band, to give a final mark.

The content mark cannot be increased on the basis of QWC.

If the content mark awarded is at the bottom of a band, the student's mark cannot be reduced further.

QWC should not be assessed elsewhere in the unit.

Stand (b) Life in the information age:

The better candidates are able to see the difference between this strand and the previous one, their work covers how aspects of people's lives have been changed by the use of information technology. Most candidates find it easy to describe how they are using the technology in their own life style, however only the very best candidates are able to use good examples of how the life others is affected. The overall impact was often not discussed by many candidates. 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.

In this strand it is expected that candidates will use a variety of sources to locate information to support there work. To gain marks above MB1 candidates must use sources of information other than the internet. One of the main sources of evidence for this is the candidate's bibliography. Frequently this consisted of a list of URLs and nothing more. In some cases the information presented was merely copied from sources, with no evidence that candidates understood what they were writing about.

Candidates should also include the benefits and drawbacks of the technologies being described.

Stand (c) Digital Divide:

Evidence was often weaker than previous sections. The better candidates appreciated the need to research the extent of the divide and the measures being taken to bridge the gap. Many candidates had focussed on specific projects for bridging the divide without considering their impact. Candidates often listed of gave a brief comment on factors such as wealth and environment but did not evaluate the impact or the extent. Government measures to bridge the gap were rarely mentioned.

Candidates often demonstrated limited research. They often produce only a general discussion of the divide with very little specific detail at the three expected levels. The measures taken to bridge the gap were often only briefly considered and restricted in the depth of analysis.

Stand (d) The e-book:

Most candidates had used appropriate software, although there are some centres using software that was not appropriate for an e-book. In some extreme cases it was not possible to moderate the work. The specification requires an e-book that can be read in a browser, the best approach is to use web authoring software, or other software that can create pages in html.

Very few candidates addressed the awareness of audience and purpose. Some wrote the e-book as if it was an ordinary assignment to be given in to the teacher. Many e-books used external links with no thought that they may not be available in 100 years time, Better candidates used extracts from website that were contained within the candidates e-book so no external access was required.

Centres are using a range of techniques to make the e-book user friendly, and a range of techniques were used to either avoid scrolling or to minimise the effect of it. The most important thing is that the user is always able to navigate around the e-book and that vital links are not lost when the page scrolls. The use of frames is one way of achieving this.

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:

Candidates clearly enjoyed the construction aspects of this unit and many good examples of well constructed e-books were seen. Whilst some products demonstrated a well constructed structure there were still examples of poor colour schemes. Some candidates included inappropriate multimedia, for example in the form of un-necessary animated gif files

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:

Most candidates managed to make brief evaluative comments about their e-book and their own performance. Candidates solicited and recorded feedback comments often in the form of questionnaires. 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 "Google" "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 websites; the specification requires a wide range of different sources to be 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 e-record sheet naming convention is the same

The centre assessor should use the e-record 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 be sent to different people during the moderation process.

Grade Boundaries

Centres are reminded that the GCE in Applied ICT is an Awarded qualification. As such, grade boundaries are subject to review each series for both written paper and coursework units.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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