

Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2010

Applied GCE

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Information and Communication Technology (6952)

Paper 01 - The Digital Economy

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General Comments

This was the first time the work was assessed on the updated version of the specification.

Being a core unit, there were a large number of entries again this summer with moderated marks of 2-59. Again it was good to see a large number of eportfolios accessing marks in the 40s and 50s. Many candidates are producing work of a good quality and many centres are assessing to national standards.

However there are still a number of centres who are not assessing to national standards. In some cases, weaknesses that have been identified to centres in previous Principal Moderator reports have not been addressed. Some centres have not referred to the revised specification when awarding marks to the 5 strands for this unit.

It is important that centres read the advice given in the previous Principal Moderator's reports for this unit as the same weaknesses are being observed in the assessment by many centres.

Centre Administration

The majority of centres submitted the CDs on the due date. Most centres had included candidate authentication sheets either on the CD or by the signed mark sheet which is printed off when marks are inputted on line. However, there were still a significant number who had neglected to include candidate authentication which meant that moderators had to chase this.

Correct naming conventions were normally used for the eportfolios but often not for the esheets. There were also some disks without labels. Overall the feedback on the esheets was more helpful and related to the marks awarded. However, there will still some esheets with no feedback and many centres are still using a cut and paste approach which led to inaccuracies including strand f being given marks!

Some centres did not send the correct sample and there were several cases where the highest scoring candidate was not included in the sample. Assessors should ensure they are familiar with the Guidance for Centres: Moderation of ePortfolios document which is on the Applied GCE ICT section of Edexcel.com.

Most eportfolios used the correct file formats, ie html or pdf. A small minority of centres submitted a mdb file for evidence for strand d which is incorrect.

QWC

This was assessed for the first time under the updated specification. 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 candidate's mark cannot be reduced further.
- QWC should not be assessed elsewhere in the unit

Strand A

Some excellent evidence was presented for this strand with many candidates accessing mark band 3 with some achieving all the marks. Overall this strand was assessed to national standards.

Most candidates chose suitable transactional websites to evaluate but there were still instances of eBay being used. Candidates who chose Amazon did not always address the requirements of the strand well as Amazon includes so much that is not relevant to this strand and is not a good choice. Candidates who addressed this strand well tended to select smaller sites which enabled them to look at the overall design of the site more effectively.

Many candidates appeared to be following a set checklist with similar evidence across a cohort. Candidates accessing the higher mark bands should demonstrate a more independent approach and consider 2.3 and 2.5 in the features described and evaluated. Very often, high marks were awarded as a range of features had been covered but the detail and evaluative comments were limited which did not support the marks awarded. Detailed descriptions are required for mark band 2 and comprehensive descriptions of the main features of the site's designs for mark band 3.

Many candidates did not address the transactional aspects of the website well and this could be seen with the payment methods described but almost nothing on the shopping basket, checkout process, capturing data.

Some candidates are still concentrating on the products and content of the site rather than evaluating the effectiveness of the site's design. Many of the improvements suggested related to the products rather than improvements/enhancements to the design of the site.

Many Assessors referred to Quality of Written Communication in the feedback for this strand which is now a requirement in the new specification. However, some Assessors had added marks on for this which is incorrect.

Strand B

The majority of centres are assessing to national standards for this strand with more candidates accessing mark band 3. There were some candidates who did not address many aspects of 2.4 and neglected to address the back office processes which is an essential aspect of this strand.

More candidates attempted to show payment systems relating to transactional websites which involve third parties but there are still many diagrams that just show manual payment methods.

There were still some instances of plagiarism with diagrams taken from textbooks and downloaded from the ICT microsite, although there were fewer instances than in the past. Candidates are required to create their own diagrams in order to access this strand.

Candidates being awarded marks at the top of mark band 1 are required to produce at least 2 diagrams and a comprehensive set to access mark band 3. There were instances when candidates were being awarded marks in mark band 2 but had only produced one diagram.

Strand C

Many candidates are still producing general notes for this strand rather looking at the threats to the data held by an organisation and how the organisation could put in place preventative measures to protect the data collected from customers. There were also many instances of candidates looking at these issues from their own point of view and the threats to their own computers. Stronger candidates related their evidence to the transactional website examined in strand a.

There is still a tendency for many candidates to reproduce the wording of the legislative acts rather than describing how they can be used to help prevent threats and evaluating their effectiveness.

There was evidence of cohorts producing very similar evidence supporting a very structured approach to the strand. Candidates should look at 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 when addressing this strand.

Strand D

Although many candidates are now addressing the strand well, this strand was often very generously assessed. It is also apparent that not all centres referred to the revised specification and clarification given in the assessment guidance when awarding the marks to the strand. The main problem this series was emphasised in last summer's report; "Candidates need to clearly evidence the manipulation of the database created."

Most centres are using the datasets provided, although other datasets are being used. These must be given to the candidates as one csv file so that the candidates are able to create their own structure. The datasets should also be large enough to enable trends to be identified. Although datasets do not have to be 5,000+, as is the case with the ones provided, it is unlikely that less than 100 records would enable trends to be identified. Candidates should not be provided with 2 or 3 separate tables nor should they key in the data themselves.

All too often the evidence was similar across a cohort, with the same validation rules, same queries, same graphs etc being presented. Candidates accessing the higher mark bands should demonstrate an independent approach to their work.

There were a lot of candidates who had been awarded marks at the top of mark band 2, or in mark band 3, even though there were no processes evidenced to support the output. Candidates are required to show the manipulation of the database created and this is stated clearly in the revised specification. Graphs and charts without the evidence of the queries used to produce them is not sufficient evidence. Many candidates who did produce the queries in design view often used limited

manipulation techniques and had not addressed the requirements listed in the assessment guidance. There were also many candidates who did not demonstrate that the database created had at least 2 tables with an enforced one-to-many link. Such evidence is required in order to access all the marks in mark band 1.

There were many instances when a relational database with a one to many relationship had not been produced. Either due to the omission of enforcing referential integrity or by using the flat file to produce the output.

Many screen shots were too small to read and blurred when the zoom feature was used. It is important that candidates ensure the evidence presented can be read easily.

The evidence presented should demonstrate that the candidate has:

- examined a dataset
- created a suitable structure for a relational database, with at least 2 tables with an enforced one-to-many link, to include appropriate:
 - field names
 - field types
 - field sizes
 - validation
- tested the structure prior to importation of the dataset
- tested the dataset has imported into the created structure correctly
- manipulated the database to extract meaningful data
- presented the data extracted in a meaningful way (too often only datasheet view was used; database reports contained inappropriate headings and repeating data; pie charts not used properly, poor labelling of charts)
- Identified at least 2 trends (mark band 2)
- Made recommendations based on trends identified (mark band 3)

Few candidates produced good evidence of the use of search criteria in the manipulation of the databases created. There was a reliance on group and count. To access the higher end of mark band 2, there should be clear evidence of search criteria used on more than one field in a table and across tables for mark band 3. It is expected that at least fields from 2 tables are included in the output presented and there were many instances when all the evidence presented was using one table only.

Candidates need to be able to demonstrate how a database can be used effectively. Many seem to be following structured tasks without understanding how the appropriate use of search criteria can extract meaningful data and trends to enable decisions to be made. Poor presentation of the output often rendered it useless. Candidates did not appear to understand the difference between the various charts and graphs used. There were many examples of a Pie Chart being used to supposedly depict a trend. Many candidates did not seem to understand how validation can ensure databases performed efficiently.

Strand E

Many candidates did not seem to appreciate what was required in order to access the marks in this strand. Very often the evidence was a list of what had been done in order to create the database and the problems that had occurred when using Access. Candidates are required to evaluate the performance of the database they have created. Many said it performed well but didn't understand how limited most of the

databases were and how this could be put to good effect in the evaluation. How a limited database of only 2 tables and no user interface could support a database that is easy to use is very questionable. The use of feedback was often poor and not always convincing and few candidates incorporated the feedback properly into the evaluation. Often the feedback was listed but not used but still marks were awarded in mark band 2.

Many candidates neglected to evaluate their own performance on the unit which is a requirement for mark band 1. Others evaluated their eportfolio, or sometimes their ebook.

Unit Results

Grade	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Boundary Mark	60	48	42	36	30	25	20
Max Uniform Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	0-39

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-39.

Note

Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject.

Qualification Results

Advanced Subsidiary (Single Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Maximum Uniform Mark = 300	240	210	180	150	120

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-119.

Advanced GCE (Single Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Maximum Uniform Mark = 600	480	420	360	300	240

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-239.

Advanced Subsidiary (Double Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Maximum Uniform Mark = 600	480	450	420	390	360	330	300	270	240

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade EE will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-239.

Advanced GCE with Advanced Subsidiary (Additional)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Maximum Uniform Mark = 900	720	690	630	600	540	510	450	420	360

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade EE will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-359.

Advanced GCE (Double Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Maximum Uniform Mark = 1200	960	900	840	780	720	660	600	540	480

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade EE will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-479

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