

Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2013

Applied GCE ICT 6952

Unit 2: The Digital Economy

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General Comments

Although the entry was not as large as a summer series, there was work at all levels. It was good to see the majority of eportfolios submitted for this core unit were assessed accurately this series. Some high marks and top grades were secured.

There were still examples of over-generous assessment and high marks being awarded which were not supported by the evidence submitted. This was particularly noticeable in respect of strands (d) and (e). Additionally, often assessment placed the work in the correct mark band but the full range of marks available was not utilised. This led to some eportfolios not being assessed to national standards.

The requirements for 6952 are well established and defined in the specification. The assessment criteria indicate the primary focus of the work to be submitted and the assessment guidance documents explain how and where marks are accessible and to be awarded.

It was disappointing to note the very structured approach being followed in some centres with the provision of writing frames and/or lists of topics/content. This approach negates the candidates' opportunity for independence – as required to access the higher mark bands.

Comments on strand a

Some very good reports were submitted for this strand and many candidates secured well deserved marks in MB3.

Usually the sites chosen varied across a cohort which reflects independence of choice. There were still examples of ill-chosen sites which did not facilitate addressing the strand well. The principal requirement of the site chosen is a virtual shopping basket facility that enables goods to be ordered from stock and delivered to a stated address. Auction sites, fast food delivery and ticket sales sites should be discouraged.

Most candidates addressed the requisite aspects of 2.3 well but some neglected to consider the transactional aspects of the site, ie the virtual shopping basket, payment methods and the capture of customer data in these processes. The reports were usually well illustrated with screen shots and the more able candidates evaluated the features in relation to the design of the site which is what is required.

As mentioned, a structured approach was often apparent with all candidates from some centres considering the same less obvious features or comparing two sites – which is not required.

Occasionally, high marks were awarded where the level of detail in the descriptions and/or the features considered did not support the mark. Some candidates concentrate on the products and content of the site rather than features of the site's design.

Comments on strand b

The majority of centres assessed this strand accurately and at national standards. It was pleasing to see the numbers accessing MB3; usually candidates who had related the diagrams to their transactional websites, demonstrating good understanding of the processes.

There were many candidates who considered little more than the events leading up to the purchase of a product; the back office processes often being omitted. Stock and payments are two essential aspects of a transactional website and some mention of these is expected.

Comments on strand c

This strand is being addressed well by candidates and assessed correctly in the main. Some very good evidence was seen for this strand, with the evidence being presented from the point of view of an organisation which is correct. Many candidates had looked at the effectiveness of both protective measures and legislation which is good practice.

Comments on strand d

As with strand (a), some centres appear to be taking a very structured approach to this strand. As mentioned, this negates the candidates' opportunity for independence – required to access the higher mark bands. There were examples of entire cohorts using the same structure including adding unnecessary fields, identical input masks, lookups and validation; creating generic queries and presenting exactly the same output.

At this window, the most notable weakness in the evidence presented was in respect of testing. There were few good examples of comprehensive testing of the empty structure, including the relationship, prior to importing the dataset. Much of the testing appeared to have been carried out after the tables had been populated. Direct evidence of importing the provided data to the created structure was also often omitted.

There were still candidates who did not evidence the queries well. Often there were no design views, frequently one type of query was used several times, e.g. all group/count queries and evidence of use of more than one table was limited in many portfolios. More use of search criteria, not just count and sum, and the relational aspects of the database would be expected to support some of the high marks awarded.

Comments on strand e

Many candidates submitted a narrative on how they used the database software rather than evaluating the performance of the database they had created.

There were many examples of candidates awarded MB2 although there was no reference to any feedback in their evaluative comments. Listing feedback and not using it does not address MB2.

Again, in the evaluation of their own performance, candidates often commented on what they had done, usually well, with little or no evaluative content.

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