

Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE Applied ICT (6952) Paper 01 The
Digital Economy

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General Comments

In June 2013 there were a large number of entries moderated for this AS core unit; there was some good accurate assessment and much was to national standards. Eportfolios with marks across the whole range were moderated and it was pleasing to see a good number gaining marks in the 40s and 50s.

The requirements for 6952 are well established. 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.

Some centres are failing to address previously reported issues and 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 (a), (d) and (e). Additionally, some assessment placed the work in the correct mark band but the full range of marks available wasn't utilised.

Some centres are still taking overly- structured approaches to the unit, including the use of writing frames and/or topic lists, particularly in respect of strands (a) and (d). The resulting work is often very similar across an entire cohort. This approach is not expected at this level of qualification and negates the candidates' opportunity for independence – as required to access the higher mark bands.

Individual reports are written for centres at the time of moderation and it is important centre review and consider the points raised. Some centres still are not sufficiently addressing the main requirements of this unit; particularly in relation to the nature and content of strand (d).

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 is as expected. There were still instances of ill-chosen sites which did not afford the opportunity to address 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, downloads and ticket sales sites should be discouraged.

Most candidates addressed the aspects listed in 2.3 of the spec but some neglected to consider the transactional aspects of the site, eg 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 expected.

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

Some candidates concentrated on the products and content of the site rather than features of the site's design.

Assessment was general accurate but in some cases the level of detail in the descriptions and/or the features considered did not support the mark.

Comments on strand (b)

Assessment of this strand is frequently slightly generous with MB2 awarded to material that does not map well to the requirements. It was pleasing to see the numbers of candidates who related their diagrams to their strand (a) transactional websites rather than considering generic processes.

There were many candidates who considered little more than the 'front-end' events - login, authentication, navigating the site, choice of products etc - leading up to the checkout and omitted mention of the back-office processes entirely. Stock and payments are two essential aspects of a transactional website and some mention of these is expected even in MB1.

Comments on strand (c)

The descriptive content in respect of threats and protective measures is usually addressed well by candidates, but often little understanding of associated legislation is shown. Assessment is regularly slightly generous with top MB2 awarded based on the descriptive content rather than the expected consideration of the effectiveness of both protective measures and legislation.

Comments on strand (d)

Assessment of this strand is frequently very generous indeed. Despite the longevity of the unit, there are numerous centres/candidates that seem unaware of the requirements of the strand and ill prepared to undertake the necessary database work and provide the requisite evidence.

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 series, there were examples of edited and abbreviated versions of the provided datasets being used. In some cases this disadvantaged the candidates.

As at previous series, the main weakness in the evidence presented was in respect of testing. There were few good examples of comprehensive testing of the empty structure, including the relationships, prior to importing the

dataset. Some of the testing had undoubtedly been carried out after the tables had been populated. Direct evidence of importing the provided data to the created structure was also often omitted.

The evidencing of interrogating the system is haphazard. Often there were no design views, frequently one type of query was used several times 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

Innumerable candidates submitted a commentary on the creation of their database rather than evaluating the performance of the finished artefact.

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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