

Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE Applied ICT (6954) Paper 01 -
System Design and Installation

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Unit 4 Principal Moderator's Report

General comments

There was a small drop in the number of entries for this summer's moderation and many of the points raised previously are still valid.

It was pleasing to note that most centres had taken into consideration points raised in previous reports and the evidence produced indicated that the requirements of all aspects of the unit were being more fully appreciated by the centres and candidate work seen supported this. Lack of proof reading was still very evident throughout a relatively high number of submitted portfolios with many examples of evidence containing uncorrected errors still being submitted. With the Quality of Written Communication being applied to strand b it is important that candidates are recommended to proof read all their work thoroughly.

It was again disappointing to see that, some centre assessors are still giving very little useful feedback. Assessors are again advised to use the e-sheet to explain how they reached a grading decision and to indicate if the candidate worked independently which is a requirement of the higher mark bands. It is also important that centres adhere to the set number of marks allocated to each mark band and strand.

Strand (a) - Needs Analysis

The production of a proper needs analysis for a client with complex needs is the central aim of this strand and centres are again reminded to refer their candidates to section 4.1 of the unit specification. Some candidates are still not submitting evidence that they have carried out and produced outcomes from at least two different investigations as part of their needs analysis this is a requirement in order to access the top of mark band 1 and move into mark band 2. A blank questionnaire and then a completed one constitutes only a single investigation as does using the same questions twice in a questionnaire and then in an interview with their client.

Candidates had little problem in finding two existing systems but again a significant percentage could not describe how these systems matched their client's requirements. There was still a distinct lack of evidence from a significant number of candidates when it came to being able to evaluate fully the benefits and perceived drawbacks of the chosen systems in order to give their client an informed conclusion, this restricted many candidates from accessing marks in the highest mark band.

Strand (b) - System Specification

The main requirement of this strand is that the chosen system needs to be recommended to the client through a detailed and informative systems

specification (section 4.7 of the unit specification). The completed report should be written as a non-technical explanation justifying as to why all the components, both hardware and software have been chosen. Many candidates did not offer their clients any pricing information. Details of which software the candidate was recommending to their client in the main consisted of an operating system and a Microsoft office package. Whilst a large number of candidates recommended specialist software packages in their specification very few actually gave a detailed reason as to why it was being included.

For the higher mark bands candidates should offer their client alternatives to those components chosen. This latter point was either omitted completely or very briefly mentioned in a large number of candidates' evidence for this strand.

Again as in previous moderation series candidates selected furniture, which they claimed to have ergonomic qualities but failed to explain why they would be suitable for their client. Quality of Written Communication was judged in this strand but the standard was in the main corresponding to the mark band awarded.

Strand (c) - System Build

As mentioned in previous Principal Moderators reports the system being built does not need to relate to the system recommended in strand (b) but there should be some indication as to the requirements and anticipated use of the system. However, it is important that candidates show sufficient annotated evidence for this strand as there is still a tendency for candidates to be shown sitting in front of an array of hardware components or pointing at the shell of a PC case but little actual evidence to show their progress in building a standalone PC. Witness statements and activity checklists are supporting evidence to the build and should not be the sole piece of evidence presented, also a written narrative must be supported with annotated photographs or short video showing the candidate undertaking the actual work.

The evidence for the configuration activities still did not reflect the candidates' level of work. It is important that centres advise candidates to address several of the activities listed in 4.9 of the unit specification. Many candidates still did not address working safely.

Strand (d) – Testing

It was again pleasing to see evidence of some good practice with candidates giving detailed accounts of how they tested the final system and also some end user testing. Photographs and screen dumps of error messages were included.

Candidates should be encouraged to produce annotated evidence of a variety of tests that have been undertaken if they wish to achieve a mark in

grade bands two or three. A testing checklist without photographic evidence or screen shots is not an acceptable alternative.

Strand (e) – Evaluation

The evaluation in this unit is about the performance of the built, tested and configured system and whether or not it met the needs of their client not about the performance and structure of the candidate's eportfolio. Feedback from others was often omitted and when present was found to be vague and lacking evidence of who provided the feedback and why.

It was again evident that many candidates found it difficult to accurately evaluate the work undertaken in this unit and comment reflectively on their own performance.

Grade Boundaries

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

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