

Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2010

Applied GCE

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Information and Communication Technology (6956)

Paper 01 - Technical Support

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Publications Code UA023485

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General Comments

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

Assessors are making better use of the e-sheet to explain where evidence is located, how marks were awarded and, comments that the candidate worked independently (this is a requirement of the higher mark bands). It was still evident however that a minority of assessors were not stating how or why a particular mark for a strand had been given, and moderators were finding that the comments box was either not completed or contained comments such 'good level of work', or 'did not work hard enough'. It was also found that some assessors just copy and paste comments from e-sheet to e-sheet and all candidates end up with identical comments even though the marks were different.

Lack of proof reading was still evident and a high number of submitted portfolios contained many examples of evidence containing uncorrected errors. There are still centres submitting eportfolio evidence in incorrect formats, i.e. Word files and eportfolios with links not working which indicated a lack of summative testing. As stated previously it is not the moderators' role to have to search through eportfolios and folders to find the relevant evidence. This however is only a small but a significant percentage of the eportfolios submitted, however the majority were submitted in a format, which allowed the moderator to easily find the evidence.

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 student's mark cannot be reduced further.
- QWC should not be assessed elsewhere in the unit.

Centre Administration

Candidates need to supply explicit evidence to support their achievement of the criteria in the various marking grids. It is easier to confirm marks if the evidence is easy to find and supplied in an explicit form. Assessors must use the e-sheets as an opportunity to explain why they have awarded marks, there are two advantages to this for the centre. If the moderator can see why and where marks are awarded it is

easier to agree with the centre marks, secondly if the centre marks cannot be agreed then the moderator can give better guidance to help future assessment.

A number of centres still do not meet deadlines for submitting work to the moderators. The deadlines are published in advance and must be adhered to unless special permission has been obtained in advance from Edexcel. Permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Centres who miss the deadline risk having the results delayed or the candidates recorded as absent. Each unit must be on a separate CD, even if sent to the same moderator.

Strand A - Upgrade

Candidates are required to undertake and test an upgrade of a current computer system. The upgrade should be at a minimum one new hardware component and either a software upgrade or the installation of a new item of software. Many candidates do not take into account the specific requirements of their client, tending to undertake the upgrades without any rationale or reason.

The strand is not only about installing or updating new hardware and software. To access top marks in this strand candidates must demonstrate they have ensured full functionality and optimised the systems performance. Examples of evidence to show optimisation could include:

- Cleaning up of disk errors
- Removal of temporary files
- Rearranging data (De-frag)
- Reduce web page history
- Not saving encrypted web pages

Those candidates who obtained the higher mark bands provided clear screen shots and photographs explaining through detailed commentaries what was happening and why it was being undertaken. Many candidates still did not include any evidence of relevant testing the upgrade or ensuring that the hardware components were, where appropriate, compatible with the original system.

Candidates wishing to gain marks in the higher mark bands should produce annotated evidence of a variety of tests undertaken, covering all aspects to cover the hardware and software upgrades.

Again the most common upgrades were the installation of more RAM or a larger Hard Disk or DVD|CD-ROM Drive and the installation of an anti virus package or service pack, but even after comments in previous reports it was evident that a number of candidates were still not explaining what the rationales behind the upgrades were.

Strand B - On-screen Support Manual

It was pleasing to see that both candidates and assessors have become more aware of the different user categories the manual is aimed at. In mark band 2 the level of user is an ICT Technician and in mark band 3 the audience for the manual is someone who should be able to use the information provided without having to refer to others for assistance. Unfortunately a minority of candidates are still producing a manual in the format of a self-help guide to users.

It was still evident that a minority of candidates failed to recognise the fact that the manual was to be viewed on screen and produced a product which needed the reader to continually scroll up and down and in some instances from side to side.

Strand C - Collaborative Working Tools

Candidates were able to identify and describe the collaborative working tools listed in the specification (section 6.6) and centres have recognised that these are only some of the tools which could be used. There were once again major omissions from the evidence produced in that many candidates failed to indicate significant points relating to the capabilities and limitations of the tools chosen. To access the top of mark band 1 and move into mark band 2 the candidate must make some comparisons between the chosen collaborative tools. These omissions were not always reflected in the grading of this strand by centre assessors.

As stated in previous Principal Moderators Reports and the unit specification it is essential that candidates who wish to gain marks in mark band 3 must have used a range of (at least 3) well chosen examples which fully evaluate the key features of each of the four chosen tools. At this level they must be able to show that the chosen tools are totally suitable for particular tasks and fully describe the processes involved in setting up and using a particular tool. This was once again the major omission from the evidence presented for moderation.

Strand D - Communication needs of a small business

Even after reinforcing and repeating the comments in previous Principal Moderators Reports a number of centres are still allowing candidates to produce a generic report rather than undertake an investigation into communication needs of a specified small business.

The candidates are required to select a small to medium sized organisation carry out an investigation into its communications needs and then produce a report, in relatively simple and non-technical language, with justified recommendations for internet connectivity, security procedures, an internet policy and the use of email. It was pleasing to see that a large majority of candidates were able to produce recommendations for each of the above points, which is a requirement to reach the top of mark band 1.

Those candidates who gained marks in mark band 2 produced sufficient detailed evidence of an SME's communication needs and were able to make detailed recommendations for all the required topics. At mark band 3 it is essential that the report includes some future-proofing elements with a full and detailed justification of the SME's communications needs.

Quality of Written Communication [QWC] was applied to this strand for the first time, after the content mark has been determined by the assessor. Assessors had taken this change on board and marks awarded reflected this.

Unit Results

Grade	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Boundary Mark	60	46	40	34	28	23	18
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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