Principal Examiner Feedback

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Applied GCE 6962

Unit 12 – Customising Applications

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General Comments

In this moderation window it was pleasing to see that most centres submitted the sample required on one disk and had included the e-sheets and candidate authentication sheets. The majority were labelled according to the correct naming conventions as detailed in the document "Moderation of e-Portfolios: Guidance for Centres". Many candidates' e-portfolios were in the correct file formats, within the stated file size of 25 MB and most contained a clear index file which started the e-portfolio. It was also good to see many assessors giving clear feedback in the e-sheets explaining the assessment decisions made and marks awarded. Refer to the section on administration at the end of this report which details some poor practice relating to the submission of work for moderation.

On the whole most candidates addressed the strands correctly and most assessors awarded marks according to the specification. However, there are still instances of candidates being placed in too high a mark band for the evidence produced.

Comments on strand (a)

On the whole, candidates are producing good functional specifications whereby moderators can clearly see who, what, where etc. However, there are still instances of full marks being awarded when the success criteria given is not really measurable.

Comments on strand (b)

It was nice to see how many candidates addressed this strand well and had clearly included evidence of the design of selection, iteration and sequential searching. However, there are still many instances where the design of coded events is not really documented or present. It is expected that the candidates will provide evidence that clearly shows what events are going to take place and, for the higher mark bands, how they are going to happen. This can be done using a range of techniques eg flow charts, DFDs, pseudo code etc. It is imperative that the design clearly shows selection, iteration and a sequential search.

Prototyping was usually present and it was clear some candidates had spent a great deal of time and effort providing detailed prototypes and detailed evaluations of each. It would appear that where candidates do this very well there is good evidence of liaising with a client and clear evidence that they have developed the product following feedback, fully documenting the entire process. However, at times it was missing altogether or candidates included a prototype system/commentary of system that did not really address the higher marks ie the top of mark band two requires detailed comments about how well it meets the functional requirements.

There were very few instances where candidates presented details of what they had done rather than what they planned to do and, where it had occurred, it was nice to see assessors taking it into account when awarding the marks.

Comments on strand (c)

Most centres are providing projects which are suitable for A2 and it was very pleasing to see candidates using loops and different types of selection appropriately. However, at times, there is evidence of candidates being placed in too high a mark band for the evidence present. It is a fundamental requirement of this unit/strand that candidates write their own code to include selection and iteration. At mark band two and higher it is expected there will be different types of each. At times there was some evidence of selection but iteration was missing entirely. It is not enough to just use macros or wizards in this unit. There has to be clear evidence of the candidate writing their own code to include the above.

Standard ways of working are also important in this strand. With regards to programming, this means code that includes good use of indentation and comments that clearly explain the purpose of the code. Very few candidates included comments in the code and very few identified what was their own code.

Comments on strand (d)

Those candidates who had included good measurable objectives in their specification did this very well indeed, as did those who had worked closely with a client. On the whole this strand is being approached very positively with candidates including detailed test plans and evidence of the results. There was some very good evidence of formative testing in conjunction with clients/prototyping and refinements. There were very few cases of test plans being put forward with no actual proof of results.

Comments on strand (e)

There are a significant number of marks for evaluation in this unit and again, those candidates with a good functional specification including clear objectives and success criteria and those who worked closely with a client produced some excellent evidence.

Many candidates are now ensuring there is a clear evaluation of the code they have written themselves and there were some very thoughtful considerations of alternative solutions. However, some candidates are still not appreciating the importance of this aspect of the evaluation. It is worth reiterating that Mark Band 1 requires candidates to comment on the effectiveness of their coding and reach some conclusion about whether or not it was the best way to meet the requirements. Mark band two requires consideration of alternative solutions and the justification for the use of coding. Mark band three requires full justification for the use of coding.

Grade Boundaries

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