Examiner's Report

January 2010

GCE Applied ICT 6964 Paper 01

Programming

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Overall Comments

Important information

This specification has been updated and ALL candidates will be assessed on the updated version from SUMMER 2010. This version which has a blue cover and has been sent out to centres, many centres have attended the free inset sessions.

Moderated Units
Assessment Issues
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 kept 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. Each unit will forwarded to different principal moderators for monitoring and auditing purposes.

Unit 14: Programming (6964)

General Comments

There were very few entries for this unit in this window. Most centres submitted the sample required on one disk and included the e-record sheets and candidate authentication sheets all labelled according to the correct naming conventions as detailed in the document "Moderation of ePortfolios: Guidance for Centres". Many candidates' eportfolios were in the correct file formats, within the stated file size of 20 MB and most contained a clear index file which started the eportfolio. It was good to see many assessors giving clear feedback in the e-record sheets explaining the assessment decisions made and marks awarded. See the section on admin at the end of this report which details some poor practice relating to the submission of work for moderation.

In a few instances there was evidence of centres adopting a very structured approach with all candidates producing very similar evidence. Whilst it is acceptable for the Assessor to act as "client" and give the same brief to all candidates, the brief should be sufficiently open ended to enable candidates to adopt an independent approach to a solution – as is required for the higher mark bands.

It is essential that a **full listing of the program is included** in the eportfolio. Preferably as a text document. Without this it is difficult for the moderator to follow the structure of the code. A **working exe copy of the program** should also be provided. This comment is made in every Principal Moderator's report yet there are still cases where an exe version is not included.

It is not a requirement for the candidate to produce the functional specification; however one must be included to enable a judgement to be made as to how far the design meets the specification.

Comments on Strand A

It was nice to see that the majority of candidates had produced designs that were linked back to the functional specification. Where this had been done it was clear to see whether the design met the needs of the client. Very few candidates presented details of what they had done this time around. However, it is worthwhile reiterating that screenshots of the final system are not design and that it is the level of detail within the design that leads to the mark band placement. For the top of the higher mark bands the design needs to be detailed with, at mark band two, explanations of how input data will be validated and at mark band three identification of the processing to be carried out in each event. Please take note of the comments given in strand B regarding programs that are of a simplistic nature.

Comments on Strand B

There were some good examples of challenging and sophisticated programs which were well designed and executed. However, it was apparent that some Centres are allowing the creation of very simplistic programs that appear to meet the strand criterion if a 'tick box' approach is used. This is not acceptable. Programs have to be of appropriate complexity to open up all of the mark bands. Very simple programs will limit the marks available in strands A to D to mark band 1.

Standard ways of working are important in this strand. With regards to programming code this includes good use of object names, indentation and comments clearly explaining the purpose of the code.

How the candidate uses code etc determines the mark band placement. Mark band two requires **appropriate** use of controls, event procedures, selection and repetition, local and global variables whilst mark band three requires **effective** use of the aforementioned and general procedures/parameter passing. Higher marks are hard to justify where candidates have produced very simple programs.

Evidence for this should be in the form of a **complete listing of the program in text form, and a working executable version of the program** in a format that can be used by the moderator

Comments on Strand C

Please see comment given in strand B with regards to programs of a simplistic nature. If the candidate has good measurable objectives in their specification this section is fairly easy. It only becomes complex if the program is not specified well. Evidence of some of the successful tests should be shown and for the higher mark bands there must be evidence of testing using a good range of data to test boundaries i.e. normal, out of range and illegal. Good evidence will specify what the test data is. There is no penalty if the program works perfectly.

Comments on Strand D

Please see comment given in strand B with regards to programs of a simplistic nature. Candidates must also include two separate documents i.e. technical and user guide. It is not appropriate for both documents to be in one file.

Comments on Strand E

It was nice to see that there was very little evidence of candidates being placed in too high a mark band in this strand in this moderation window. Where the higher marks had been awarded most candidates had included an evaluation that was well rounded and included an evaluation of the quality of the user and technical documentation and the efficiency of the final program including data structures.

Grade Boundary January 2010

6964	Total	A	B	C	D	E
Raw Mark	60	46	40	34	28	23
UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40