

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Applied ICT (6951)
Paper 01 The Information Age

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Summer 2014

Publications Code UA038024

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General comments

The majority of work seen was appropriate and gave the candidates good opportunities to meet the requirements of the specification. Work was seen covering the full range of marks.

The aim should be to produce an e-book for an audience in 100 years' time. The better candidates include an introduction on the first page outlining the audience and making clear that it is for people in the future.

There were some examples where the work was completed in text based documents such as pdf files, which were then linked together with a simple index type page. This type of work is not in line with the specification, an e-book should be constructed so that it is self-contained with links between sections and pages. The ideal way is to use software that will create a product in html.

Centres are reminded that the e-book should only use file formats that are listed in the moderator's tool kit. There were still examples of work submitted in inappropriate file formats. The e-book should be viewable in an internet browser.

Most assessors made appropriate comments on the e-record sheets which were helpful, and showed how the marks were awarded this often helps the moderator to agree the marks awarded by the centre.

Stand (a) On-line services:

A good range of marks were awarded for this section with some candidates scoring full marks in this section.

Better candidates produce very detailed descriptions describing the purpose and functions of each of the services, supported by good examples. They also included evaluative comments, sometimes in the form of advantages and disadvantages of the service

Some good examples were seen in which candidates described the facilities and services available, and evaluated them in terms of their functionality. The best work uses illustrations in the form of screen shots, photographs and sometimes small video clips to show for example how email is used.

Candidates should be using their own words rather than simply copy and paste from internet sources, specific websites should be used to illustrate

how the service works rather than comparing the websites in terms of functionality and features.

QWC levels generally matched the mark band standard in which the evidence was placed.

Stand (b) Life in the information age:

The majority of assessors are accurately assessing this section. The content for this section was generally of a good standard; some good examples of work in MB3 were seen.

This strand is about how the technologies available to us impacts on personal life, social life and working life. The majority of candidates are now covering this section correctly; however there are some who still place too much emphasis on how the technology works.

The better candidates are able to see the difference between this strand and the previous one, their work covers how these aspects of peoples' lives have been changed by the use of information technology. Most candidates find it easy to describe how they are using the technology in their own life style, however only the very best candidates are able to use good examples of how the life others is affected.

Some of the best work includes interviews with candidates peers, and other adults, there were some good examples were candidates used the opportunity to introduce a short video or audio interview for example someone describing their use of email.

Candidates could be encouraged to summarise and comment on the overall impact of ICT on life in the Information Age. This is essential to access the higher mark ranges

It is also essential that in this section candidates use research from a range of sources and not just the internet as is often the case. To gain marks above MB1 candidates must use sources of information other than the internet. One of the main sources of evidence available to the moderator is the candidate's bibliography. Frequently this consisted of a list of URLs and nothing more.

Stand (c) Digital Divide:

This section is often covered in less detail than the other strands, perhaps due to time constraints, with the topic coming last in the specification. The coverage of this strand has improved however there is a tendency for candidates to simply copy material from internet sources rather than write in their own words.

Most candidates find it easy to look at the divide at an international level, the better candidates look in detail at the divide that exists nationally and locally.

The measures taken to bridge the gap were often only briefly considered. Some of the better candidates use specific examples of working projects both at home and overseas that attempting to bridge the divide. However many candidates had focussed on specific projects for bridging the divide without considering their impact.

Candidates often listed or gave a brief comment on factors such as wealth and environment but did not evaluate the impact or the extent. Government measures to bridge the gap were rarely mentioned.

Stand (d) The e-book:

The choice of software to produce the e-book has a major impact on this strand. Most candidates used appropriate software, although some centres submitted work using software that was not appropriate for an e-book.

The specification requires an e-book that can be read in a browser, the best approach is to use web authoring software, or other software that can create pages in html.

Candidates showed better awareness of audience and purpose by demonstrating that the e-book will be looked at in 100 years' time, better candidates included a simple introduction or title page that made it clear that they had understood the brief.

There examples were the language used in the e-book did not match this purpose, and there were still examples where the work appeared to be written as a report to the teacher or in the form of a class presentation.

Some candidates used external links as examples for strands a) b) c) this is not appropriate in a product that is written to be viewed in 100 years as the links may not be available.

Centres are using a range of techniques to make the e-book user friendly, and a range of techniques were used to either avoid scrolling or to minimise the effect of it. The most important thing is that the user is always able to navigate around the e-book and that vital links are not lost when the page scrolls.

Standard ways of working were not always observed in that filenames were not meaningful and external assessors had difficulty in finding the start of the e-book.

Stand (e) Components and structure:

This strand covers a number of aspects of the work.

Better candidates included an adequate range of appropriate components and were awarded marks at the top end of the range. It is important to note that for higher mark ranges the components need to be appropriate and used effectively, they should add to the user experience rather than act as a distraction.

It was sometimes difficult to decide if the components were ready made or original better candidates included an assets list as part of a bibliography or referred to the component in the text in a way that identified its origin.

Separate evidence of testing is still often provided in the form of test plans and screen dumps, as stated in previous examiner reports this is not necessary. Testing is demonstrated by the fact that a fully function e-book had been produced.

Stand (f) Evaluation:

Most candidates managed to make brief evaluative comments about their e-book and their own performance. Candidates solicited and recorded feedback comments often in the form of questionnaires. The inclusion of completed questionnaires alone does not provide evidence that they have acted on or analysed the feedback.

Standard Ways of Working

In most cases the only evidence the external assessors had for this aspect was the bibliography and the file structures and names used by the candidates. In some cases it was difficult to locate the e-book or e-portfolios of candidates as these were often not well named.

Bibliographies are the main source of evidence to support the range of sources of information used by the candidate; too many candidates still give search engines as the source of the information when clearly the source was a website found using them. Many candidates only quoted web sites, the specification requires a wide range of different sources to be used for strands (b) and (c).

General Administration

The sample should be sent to the moderator on a single CD for each unit, the CD should contain all the candidates in the sample, the work of the highest and lowest scoring candidates should also be included as extras if not already in the sample selected.

Samples should be submitted with folders clearly labelled with centre numbers, candidate number and first 2 letters of surname and first of Christian name. It would help if the record sheet naming convention is the same:

[centre #]_[candidate #]_[first two letters of surname]_[first letter of first name].

The centre assessor should use the record as an opportunity to help the moderator find the evidence required to agree the marks given. The comments by centres often contained only 1 line comments, in other cases no comments at all were provided. Some centres placed all units on the same CD, this can cause problems for the moderation team as samples of units frequently need to be sent to different people during the moderation process.

