Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCE Applied ICT (6958)
Unit 8 Managing ICT Projects

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General Comments

There were a large number of e-portfolios moderated this series with a range of marks represented. Many of the e-portfolios had been assessed too generously with weaknesses in the evidence of managing the project and a clear handover with feedback on the management of the project which feeds into the evaluation.

There are still a significant number of centres that are assessing too generously and should ensure familiarity with the teaching and learning strategies within the specification along with comments within this report. In addition centres are able to seek further guidance and clarification through the Ask the Expert service.

Comments on strand a

Most centres are assessing this strand correctly. Few candidates are producing work to support mark band 3 which requires clear and measurable objectives to be included within the documents. In order to support other aspects of the unit stakeholders need to be identified and described and there should be a clear project handover date suggested at this stage.

There was better evidence of project risks which were often categorised and the impact of the project on personnel and practices.

When this strand had been assessed too generously it was often linked to brief or no descriptions of stakeholders or project roadmaps which lacked clear precise dates. Some candidates included screenshots of their project plan as the project roadmap which should not have been produced at this stage until the project has been agreed.

Comments on strand b

The evdience for this strand had improved but there were still some candidates who produced a series of different plans with tasks 'ticked' as completed but no explanation to confirm whether these were completed on time or if any problems had occurred that resulted in them using any planned contingency time. Such evidence only addresses marks in mark band 1. Other candidates produce different plans which had tasks added to them with limited evidence that the plan had actually been used to monitor the progress of the project. The best candidates produced explanations of progress against the plan which were communicated to the stakeholders and explained the changes that they had made to the plan to utilise their contingency time in order to meet the final deadline.

There were fewer instances when MS Project file formats were the only evidence included of the project plans. This is not an acceptable file format which resulted in no or low marks being available for this strand.

There was better evidence of risks being identified and categorised according to impact or likelihood of occurring which is needed to achieve marks at the top of mark band 2 and above.

Comments on strand c

The evidence for this strand was varied and there were some signs of improvement with different meetings being held with the client (focussing on the product development) and the senior manager (which focussed on the progress of the project against the plan). Frequently, the timing of the meetings was not consistent across the project life cycle. Many meetings were held initially but few during the main product development when it would be useful to gain client feedback. There were fewer examples of good project progress reports. Many centres preferred to use a diary approach which is acceptable if the level of detail allows clear explanation of the issues that have arisen during the management of the project and what actions were carried out to make sure that the project is completed on time.

The quality of the documentation produced varied with some candidates recording the information in a script like format rather than summarising the discussion and recording the actions needed by different stakeholders. Some minutes were extremely brief which does not provide good evidence of the decisions made. It is important that all minutes are dated.

There was a variety of evidence produced for informal communication and there was some evidence of this by most candidates.

There was still significant number of candidates who did not appreciate the role of the handover or end of project review meeting. This meeting needs to include feedback from a range of stakeholders on the way that the project was managed so that this can be used within the evaluation as well as confirming that the project was competed on time.

Comments on strand d

There is better understanding of this strand. Generally the evidence for this strand is provided by evidence presented for strand b and c along with the completed product rather than separate evidence. The inclusion of progress reports or project diaries supports this. There is a requirement for the product to be completed and on time, as confirmed at the handover meeting, in order to access marks in the higher mark bands. In some instances there was a lack of clarity of the actual planned handover date which is important to achieve marks in the higher mark bands. It is important to realise that feedback is needed on the management of the project and this should be documented so that the candidate can use this to contribute to the evaluation.

Comments on strand e

This strand was frequently assessed too generously. The issues observed remained the same as in previous series. Many candidates had produced detailed evaluations which covered the three required aspects namely; the success of the project; effectiveness of project management methods and their own performance as a project manager. However in many instances the feedback gained and used from the end of project review meeting did not justify awarding marks in the higher mark bands. Other evaluations focussed too much on the product and the skills needed to develop this which is irrelevant to this unit.

Quality of Written Communication is assessed this strand and should be commented on in the e-sheet for this strand and this was rarely seen.

Comments on Administrative Procedures

Most centres submitted the CDs by the deadline. Generally the work had been well organised and the evidence was easy to access.

Most centres named the eportfolios with the correct naming conventions but many did not do so for the naming of the esheets.   Most centres provided candidate authentication in the form of individual sheets scanned on to the CD or provided hard copy format of these. There were some e-portfolios with broken links which made the moderation of this unit quite difficult

Grade Boundaries

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http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx