

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Applied ICT (6954)
Unit 4: System Design and
Installation

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General comments

It was pleasing to note that most centres entering students' for the unit had taken into consideration points raised in previous reports. The evidence produced indicated that the requirements of all aspects of the unit were being fully appreciated by a large majority of the centres and the student's work evidenced this.

There was a significant drop in the number of entries for this summer's moderation as the award comes to an end but many of the points raised previously are still valid.

Feedback from centre assessors would help both the students and moderators if they were more in-depth and gave pointers to help clarify issues or suggest improvements for next time. Assessors are again asked to use the e-sheet to explain how they reached a grading decision and to indicate if the student worked independently which is a requirement of the higher mark bands.

Lack of proof reading was once again evident in a significantly high number of submitted portfolios, with many students' evidence containing uncorrected spelling and grammatical errors on final submission. With the Quality of Written Communication being applied to strand (b) it is important that students are recommended to proof read all their work thoroughly.

Strand (a) - Needs Analysis

The production of a proper needs analysis for a client with complex needs is the central aim of this strand and centres are again reminded to refer their students to section 4.1 of the unit specification.

A minority of students were still not submitting evidence that they have carried out and produced outcomes from at least two different investigations as part of their needs analysis; this is a requirement in order to access the top of mark band 1 and move into mark band 2. A blank questionnaire and then a completed one constitutes only a single investigation technique as does using the same questions twice in a questionnaire and then as the outcome of an interview with their client.

Students had little problem in finding two existing systems but again a small but significant percentage could not describe how these systems matched their client's requirements. There was improvement in evidence from students when it came to being able to evaluate the benefits and perceived drawbacks of the chosen systems in order to give their client an informed conclusion.

Strand (b) - System Specification

The main requirement of this strand is that the chosen system needs to be recommended to the client through a detailed and informative systems specification (section 4.7 of the unit specification). The completed report should be written as a non-technical explanation justifying as to why all the components, both hardware and software have been chosen. There was an improvement relating to the details of which software the student was recommending to their client which no longer just consisted of an operating system and a Microsoft office package. A large number of students recommended specialist software packages in their specification and a larger number were able to give a detailed reason as to why it was being included.

For the higher mark bands students' should offer their client alternatives to those components chosen. When this was either omitted completely or briefly mentioned by students' it restricted them from gaining the higher marks in the strand.

As in previous examination series, students selected furniture with ergonomic qualities but need to explain why they would be suitable for their client. Quality of Written Communication was judged in this strand but the standard was in the main corresponding to the mark band awarded.

Strand (c) - System Build

As mentioned in previous Principal Moderators reports the system being built does not need to relate to the system recommended in strand (b) but there should be some indication as to the requirements and anticipated use of the system. However, it is important that students show sufficient annotated evidence for this strand as there is still a tendency for students to be shown sitting in front of an array of hardware components or pointing at the shell of a PC case but little actual evidence to show their progress in building a standalone PC. Witness statements and activity checklists are supporting evidence to the build and should not be the sole piece of evidence presented.

It was pleasing to see that written narratives supported with annotated photographs or short videos showing the student undertaking the actual work were being put forward by those students gaining marks at the higher end of the strand.

Strand (d) – Testing

It was great to see evidence of some good practice with students giving detailed accounts of how they tested the final system and also some end user testing. Photographs and screen dumps of error messages were included.

To achieve a mark in mark bands 2 or 3, students should aim to produce annotated evidence of a variety of tests that have been undertaken. A

testing checklist without photographic evidence or screen shots is not an acceptable alternative.

Strand (e) – Evaluation

The evaluation in this unit is about the performance of the built, tested and configured system and whether or not it met the needs of their client not about the performance and structure of the student's e-portfolio. Feedback from others was often omitted and when present was found to be vague and lacking evidence of who provided the feedback and why. It was again evident that many students found it difficult to accurately evaluate the work undertaken in this unit and comment reflectively on their own performance.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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

