Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Applied ICT (6956)
Paper 01 Technical Support

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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 student work seen 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.

It was again disappointing to see that, some centre assessors are still giving either no, or almost meaningless, feedback. Comments like 'well done' or 'nice screenshots do not aid either the student or the moderator. 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 (d) it is important that students are recommended to proof read all their work thoroughly.

Strand (a) – Upgrade

As in previous examination series, the most common upgrades were the installation of more RAM or a larger Hard Disk or DVD|CD-ROM Drive and the installation of an anti-virus package or service pack but even after comments in previous reports it was evident that a small number of students still were not explaining what the rationales behind the upgrades were.

Testing of functionality and optimising the system are requirements at the higher mark band, evidence showing real understanding of testing is more important than pages of similar test evidence. Students did not always demonstrate standard ways of working notably safety precautions undertaken prior to and whilst performing the upgrade to the hardware components.

Strand (b) - On-screen Support Manual

This strand was in the main well evidenced and assessed. It is important that students are aware of the different user categories the manual is aimed at. In mark band 2 the level of user is an ICT Technician and in mark band 3 the audience for the manual is someone who should be able to use the information provided without having to refer to others for assistance.

The inclusion of step-by-step trouble shooting strategies for **several** potential problems was included by a significant number of students. Most of the students included, to different standards, a realistic and suitable

maintenance schedule which in previous series its omission had prevented many students moving into mark band three.

It was pleasing to see that all students recognised the fact that the manual was to be produced in a format which would enable it to be viewed on screen, a requirement for marks at the top of mark band 1. Navigation and presentation of the user manuals has improved over the series and very few students produced manuals which the reader had difficulty in navigating from section to section or page to page.

Strand (c) - Collaborative Working Tools

Students were, in a large majority of presentations produced, able to identify and describe, albeit at times somewhat briefly, four collaborative working tools. The range and scope of the chosen tools has grown as technology has advanced. There was again, in a minority of presentations, major omissions from the evidence produced in that many students failed to indicate significant points relating to the capabilities and limitations of the tools chosen limiting them to the lower mark bands.

To enable the student to access the top of mark band 1 and move into mark band 2 the student must make some comparisons between the chosen collaborative tools. This point has been raised in all previous Principal Moderators reports but is still not being addressed by a small but significant number of students. These omissions were not always reflected in the grading of this strand by centre assessors.

At this level students must be able to show that the chosen tools are totally suitable for particular tasks and fully describe the processes involved in setting up and using a particular tool. Again, the major omission from the evidence presented for moderation was that a number of students did not evidence the setting up of collaborative tool only its use.

As stated in previous Principal Moderators Reports and the unit specification it is essential that students who wish to gain marks in mark band 3 must have used a range (of at least 3) well-chosen examples which fully evaluate the key features of each of the four chosen tools.

Strand (d) - Communication needs of a small business

This strand requires students to select a small to medium sized organisation on which they will carry out an investigation into its communications needs. They then produce a report, in relatively simple and non-technical language, with justified recommendations for internet connectivity, security procedures, an internet policy and the use of email.

It was pleasing to see that a majority of students were able to produce recommendations for each of the points mentioned in the first paragraph, which is a requirement to reach the top of mark band 1. There are still, however, centres giving high marks when one or more of the four major points were omitted.

Those students' who gained marks in mark band two produced sufficient, detailed evidence of an SME's communication needs and were able to make detailed recommendations for all the required topics. At mark band 3 it is essential that the report includes some future-proofing elements with a full and detailed justification of the SME's communications needs. Quality of Written Communication was judged in this strand but the standard was in the main corresponding to the mark band awarded.

It was disappointing to see that even after reinforcing and repeating the comments in previous Principal Moderators Report a small yet significant number of centres are still allowing students to produce a generic report rather than undertake an investigation into communication needs of a specified small to medium sized business.

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