Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE Applied in Information and Communication Technology (6960)

Using Multimedia Software

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General comments

Some candidates are stills producing web sites with very little in the way of a multimedia experience. This is not what the specification requires, although the product may be accessed via a browser. The main focus should be multimedia, combining videos, animations and sounds. Candidates who produce many pages of text will only access minimal credit.

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 the first two letters of surname and first letter of forename. It would help if the e-record sheet naming convention is the same

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

The centre assessor should use the e-record sheet 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.

Strand A

The functional specification should describe the purpose of the product with the context and intended audience described in sufficient detail. Unfortunately, most candidates provided only brief comments. Higher achieving candidates explained what the finished product must do and how they would measure the success in terms of what the product will do when completed. This is a vital section as it leads to better evaluations when there are criteria to refer back to.

Not all candidates produced functional specifications that described the purpose of the product, the context and intended audience in sufficient detail most provided only brief comments. Higher achieving candidates had a 'real' end user for the product and could, therefore, produce a detailed functional specification for the client. Candidates who combine units 8 and 10 often produce a document common to both units and, therefore, do not include enough detail, or confuse project deadlines in unit 8 for success criteria in unit 10.

Some centres provide too much in the way of an assignment, which almost provides the function specification. In some cases, all candidates from the same centre produce similar products. This is not good practice.

Strand B

This area is often assessed generously by the centre.

This is a multimedia product and it is essential that the multimedia elements feature prominently in the design. A storyboard for a video including scenes, timings and transitions would be a good example. Those who set out to produce a web site often did not provide sufficient design documentation for the multimedia. Often, the only reference to a video is on a page layout indicating the position of a video.

For a multimedia product page, design and layout only form part of the design. To gain higher marks in this section, the design must include more information and details about the multimedia elements.

The use of prototypes is another weak area where few candidates involved others in evaluating them, or the prototypes consist of very basic changes to screen layout. A working prototype is not required as this might be difficult within the size limits. However, it should be possible to include some screen shots showing the development of the product. Again, candidates who had real clients produced better work for this strand.

Strand C

A number of centres used formats that are not in the Moderator Toolkit for this unit. The product must be capable of running using only these file types. The toolkit is updated each year and centres are reminded of the need to check the contents before starting the unit, so that candidates are aware from of the requirements.

The product should be capable of running largely standalone, and away from the development environment. This should be possible from within the e-portfolio, from where the product should be launched for the purpose of assessment.

Higher achieving candidates ensured that the product met the functional specification, and delivered a product that was rich in multimedia elements. The multimedia was the main source of information with videos and animation being used to fulfil a definite purpose. Weaker candidates simply included animations on a page of text with the animation serving little or no purpose on the page.

The multimedia product should contain some combination of video, sound, animation, and images. It is not necessary for all to be present, but a combination of at least two of these should be in a basic product. The product should be interactive in some way, allowing the user to control the experience to some extent, for example choosing from a selection of videos, or controlling a slide show.

Strand D

Almost all candidates produced a test table, however, this often only covered the basic navigation between pages and did cover items such as the functioning of an animation, or the timing of a video.

As well as the test table, there should be some evidence of testing having taken place, this can be in the form of screenshots. Higher achieving candidates insert links into the test table to the screen shots.

Candidates at the lower end of the mark range tended to produce little feedback from others, apart from in the prototyping stage of the project. Involvement of others was very poorly evidenced. The use of test users featured in some work, however, the

evidence to support this was sometimes weak, consisting of a questionnaire with little in the way of feedback against the functional specification.

Those who had real clients produced better work for this strand.

Strand E

The evidence in this e-portfolio was often mixed with that for unit 8. It is important that candidates are aware of the different requirements of the evaluation for this unit. This unit requires the product to be evaluated, unit 8 requires that the project management be evaluated.

All candidates produced work which evaluated the whole of the unit but not all commented upon whether the final product met the specified requirements. In order to achieve MB3, candidates need to produce well-rounded analytical and critical evaluations. Few candidates provided any evidence of feedback on their work.

Candidates who listed measurable success criteria in their function specification often did well in this section. The best approach is to start with the success criteria and then analyse the extent to which these have been met. Feedback from others and, if possible, the client helps candidates achieve higher marks.

Standard Ways of Working

In most cases, the only evidence external assessors require for this aspect was the file structures and names used by the candidates.