

# Examiner's Report

June 2016

Pearson Edexcel

Level 1 Certificate/Diploma in  
Digital Applications

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## **DA101 - Developing Web Products**

### **Overall**

DA101 is the mandatory unit for both the Level 1 CiDA and DiDA qualifications. Two SPBs were available to students for this series: The Road to Fame (September 2014 SPB) and App Spotlight (September 2016 SPB).

The Road to Fame SPB required students to produce a website to promote a band and the App Spotlight SPB focused on a website to review apps popular amongst young people aged 11 to 13. Students generally produced a website that met most of the requirements of the SPB and, in the main, the work submitted for moderation only included file types and formats accessible through the Digital Applications moderators' toolkit.

Centres are reminded that the web pages must be saved as .html files so that they can be viewed through a web browser.

### **Strand (a) – Design a consistent page layout**

The design stage in the project lifecycle is an opportunity for students to establish the intended purpose and audience for the website and generate ideas in response to the client brief. The planning evidence should be sufficiently detailed to illustrate the size and position of each asset, how it will look and, where appropriate, how it will function. Although it was common for students to produce design work that gave an indication of the structure of their website and the layout of assets on the page, only a minority of students annotated their plans appropriately to show design features such as colours, fonts, font style and font size.

Further annotation to explain how the design of the web pages relates to the purpose and target audience for the site, supported the awarding of marks in the top mark band.

The second aspect of this assessment strand is the consistent application of page layout and design. Although some students were able to create pages that were consistent in structure and appearance, it was common for the page size, the size and position of the banner, the navigation bar, colour scheme and fonts and font sizes to vary considerably from page to page.

On the whole, students would benefit from further experience in planning an appropriate page layout and design and applying it consistently to each page in their website.

### **Strand (b) – Select, prepare and present content**

In order to meet the assessment criteria for the top mark band in this strand, most of the content gathered and prepared by the student should be appropriate for audience and purpose, the assets should be prepared appropriately and consistently and students should provide specific information about the development process.

Many of the assets used by students were not suitable for the intended audience and purpose; for example, unappealing or unrelated images, low-resolution images and incomplete or unsuitable text were all common in responses to both SPBs. It doesn't matter if the assets come from primary or secondary sources providing that they are appropriate to the scenario and some of the more successful students used their assets tables to assess the relevance of each asset.

Preparing content is an essential part of the production process and although some students provided evidence of preparation techniques such as converting audio and video files and optimising graphics, the vast majority of students would benefit from further guidance on how to prepare assets. Practicing techniques such as creating buttons, editing text, cropping and re-sizing images and compressing files would better enable students to prepare assets consistently and effectively.

Although some students provided specific details of how each asset was prepared in the assets table, the majority of students who used the assets table to show the asset preparation process offered general, rather than specific, information about the development process. Annotated screen shots proved to be a more effective way to evidence key aspects of the development process.

### **Strand (c) – Create web pages using web-authoring software**

As in the previous moderation series, students were often over-rewarded for their ability to use web-authoring software to create web pages. In the best examples, text presentational techniques such as headings, bullets and alignment were used, sufficient assets were included on the pages and the page design helped to communicate the purpose of the site.

However, it was also common to see pages with very little content, images that had been distorted, blocks of text without any emphasis, links that hadn't been styled and a lack of balance between text and images. Students need to develop the ability to use web-authoring software in order to control the alignment of text and images, to resize images in proportion, to enhance text and images through appropriate presentation features and to manipulate colour if they are going to meet the assessment criteria for the top mark band in this strand.

### **Strand (d) – Produce a functional website**

Most students were appropriately rewarded for the extent to which they produced a functioning website that met the requirements of the brief. Where the links did not function as intended, this was generally recognised in the marks allocated by the assessor.

The requirement to include an external link in the App Spotlight SPB was not as successfully accomplished as the requirement to include an email link in The Road to Fame SPB and centres are reminded that to be fully prepared for the task, students need to be able to create different interactive components, such as navigation bars, internal, external and email links, rollovers and hotspots.

Although students do not need to provide evidence of testing, appropriate testing clearly helps to highlight issues such as broken links, overlapping text and images and missing content.

The multimedia content was generally incorporated within the site effectively, although there were some instances where the demo audio track was not included within the website because the student had provided a hyperlink to an external site, which did not meet the requirements of the brief.

One area for development remains the design of the links, which were not always effective due to the choice of font, colour or graphic content.

### **Strand (e) – Review the website**

In general, the reviews lacked reflective comments regarding strengths and weaknesses of the websites, effective responses to feedback from users and appropriate suggestions for future improvements, which was not always recognised in the marks awarded by the assessors.

Although there were some detailed reviews, it would appear that most students would benefit from further guidance on how to produce a review that contains meaningful comments about the functionality, usability and effectiveness of the final website in relation to the intended audience and purpose.

## **DA102 - Creative Multimedia**

### **Overall**

For the 0616 series most candidates submitted work for the 0914 SPB 'Clueless'. There was also a small entry for the new 0915 SPB 'iPies and Puds'. The majority of the work submitted for moderation had been completed to an appropriate standard for this level.

### **Strand (a) – Design multimedia products**

The design work required is identified in each SPB and, although similar in scope, does vary from one SPB to the next. For this series many candidates produced designs that were carefully presented and demonstrated a coherent link between the proposals for each product. The more successful candidates identified most of the assets they would need for implementation and included comments relating design decisions to the requirements of the brief. Some of the best designs were hand drawn although some of these suffered from poor scanning where much of the detail had been lost.

Less successful candidates presented outline designs, which lacked coherence and gave only a rough indication of function and likely user experience. In these examples comments on design decisions were missing and few assets were identified.

Several examples of design documents that appeared to have been produced in the minimum time possible were seen and a small number of candidates produced design documents that were clearly retrospective and therefore should not have been awarded marks.

### **Strand (b) – Produce digital assets**

Most candidates included an assets table with information relating to the assets gathered for use in their products. Many candidates correctly acknowledged their sources although search engines or 'The Internet' were often quoted as secondary sources.

Several candidates included information about the assets they produced, including video and audio assets in addition to images and covering the two original assets referred to in the assessment grid. Less successful candidates provided minimal information about the assets, although most candidates did produce some original work.

In some instances, marks in this strand were not agreed because of the poor standard of the assets used. In particular problems were noted with distorted images and variable sound levels on videos.

### **Strand (c) – Develop multimedia products**

The following observations, from the 0615 series, regarding products for the 0914 SPB 'Clueless' remain relevant;

Presentation – several simple, text based, slideshows were seen. More successful examples made effective use of standard transitions and incorporated a range of images as required by the SPB.

Video screen test – centres need to consider the suitability of locations for recording e.g. background light and noise levels and make available equipment such as tripods to improve quality. Audio levels need to be tested and adjusted for clarity.

Mascot animation – candidates should design and create their mascot with features that will enable them to demonstrate animation skills, including use of motion and shape tweens.

Team web page – the web page should be created using web authoring software. The positioning and control of objects on the page and the development of text are areas requiring further development.

Observations, based on a limited number of examples, regarding the products for the 0915 SPB 'iPies and Puds';

Recipe Page – Several candidates used the recipe as an opportunity to demonstrate a range of features for the development of text, with examples of tabbed content, use of tables and bullet points. Accurate alignment of the recipe text tended to produce a successful page. The most successful candidates embedded the required video, provided suitable controls and turned off any auto play facility.

Introductory animation – The more successful animations included audio assets and had been created using time-line based software. Where stop frame techniques had been used these did not always include sufficient images to produce the required motion and the examples where video files had been edited to produce a stop frame effect did not work as intended.

Presentation of ingredients – Generally well done, with good use of effects and the standard transitions available in presentation software.

Video of critics – Candidates should be reminded of the requirement to optimise file sizes for on screen viewing when publishing their video work.

### **Strand (d) – Present work**

At this level, candidates are required to create an index page for their work, a standard template should not be provided.

Most candidates created a functional index page with links to the products and supporting evidence. The more successful index pages were well organised with clear links arranged in a logical manner.

There were few moderators' toolkit issues arising, although the use of appropriate file names remains an area for improvement. In several cases redundant files within



folders, in particular raw video files, unedited audio files and pre-published animations had been retained. These significantly increased the size of the candidates' folders.

### **Strand (e) – Review the products**

Most candidates were able to make some descriptive comments on the strengths and weaknesses of their products and many recorded interim feedback received during the development of the work.

Where full marks were agreed for this strand the candidates had included reflective comments and made suggestions for further improvement of the final products, based on ideas arising from their consideration of end user feedback.

## **DA103 – Artwork and Imaging**

### **Overall**

A total of 185 students were entered for the Get Fresh SPB with 26 entered for the Fun to Read SPB.

In general, the work was generously assessed by some centres and the following points are put forward to assist centres to deliver the unit and assess students' work.

It was noted that some students appeared not to have used suitable software packages, which would enable them to produce the level of work required for this unit.

To gain marks for strand (b) students must have demonstrated skill in using drawing and editing tools. Word processing and desktop publishing packages do not generally provide the correct range of tools to allow the student to achieve this.

Copyright requirements mentioned in both SPBs and the Support Notes give clear guidance about how the requirements of copyright should be met. It is not sufficient to simply acknowledge the sources of any copyright images used, however it was not uncommon for students to use images which were clearly subject to copyright and to quote the source on the elements table.

In some cases, just the search engine was quoted as the source or it was stated that the image was primary, as it had been edited by the student.

Centres should encourage students to use primary sources wherever possible and students must use primary sources where it is a requirement of the SPB to do so. Due to the nature of this unit, students do not necessarily need to use any secondary sources as they can create their own elements. However, where secondary sources are used, students should use images with a Creative Commons licence.

### **Strand (a) – Design and develop graphic products**

In order to access the higher mark bands in this strand it must be clear how the students arrived at the final design for their products. Students must include designs that give an idea of how the products will function and what the user experience will be. In general, design work was weak and rarely supported the marks awarded by centres. There must be comments on each of the designs describing what is expected in the final product.

### **Strand (b) – Create graphic elements**

Each product in the SPB is designed to allow students to demonstrate their ability to use graphic tools but some students failed to take advantage of the opportunities provided.

Students are expected to provide information on both drawing and editing tools to state which ones were used to create each graphical element. Where information

was provided it tended to be for the use of drawing tools and there was little, if any, on editing tools. There were instances where there was evidence of editing tools being used in the products but there was no information on which ones were used.

The project allows students the opportunity to edit images to appear on their various products. Most students just inserted images without carrying out any form of editing.

### **Strand (c) – Produce artwork and images**

This strand allows students to evidence the finished products. The products produced must be such that they not only meet the requirements of the SPB but are of a suitable quality and take into account the audience and purpose of each.

It appeared that some students used the requirements of the SPB as a checklist rather than looking at the quality of the products created.

### **Strand (d) – Present work**

The recommended size for the eportfolio is 35MB as stated in the SPB, however it was not uncommon for centres to submit eportfolios that were significantly larger than this, in some instances eportfolios were over 150MB. In most cases this was the result of duplication of word processing and PDF files or image files, which had not been prepared correctly for inclusion in the eportfolio.

Some centres submitted eportfolios containing files that could not be accessed by the moderator. The Digital Applications moderators' toolkit specifies the file types that all moderators can view. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that their eportfolio only includes files in the listed formats.

Most students produced eportfolios with an index page including links to all evidence. Most were organised appropriately to showcase the final products and the supporting evidence.

### **Strand (e) – Review the products**

Students need to provide comments on the strengths and weaknesses of each of their products and the assets used to create them.

Feedback provided to students should be suitable to allow them to offer suggestions for improvement. If weak products are given good feedback there is no room for students to improve their work.

### **Assessment**

Centres are encouraged to hold an internal standardisation of students' work before submitting it for moderation, especially where there is more than one assessor for the unit.

Centres should also check that Centre Assessor Sheets and eportfolios are named according to the conventions listed in the Administrative Guidance for internally Assessed Units document.

## **DA104 – Game Making**

### **Overall**

A total of 46 students were entered for this unit, with 31 of these being entered for SPB01. A number of excellent games were seen and the majority of the work submitted for moderation had been completed to an appropriate standard for this level.

### **Organisation**

Not all candidates were entered for the correct SPB, this is an important procedure. Centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the correct SPB when submitting marks. The presentation of the eportfolios submitted this series generally used the specified naming conventions for the eportfolios and Assessor Record Sheets. Some centres did not include the eportfolios of candidates with the highest and lowest marks and had to be chased by the moderator. In some instances, the detail on the Assessor Record Sheets did not match what was available for viewing on the CD. In a small number of instances, the work on the CD/DVD did not work as expected. Centres should be reminded to check the work on the CD prior to despatch to the moderator.

### **Assessor Record Sheets**

Generally, centres provided detailed comments on the Assessor Record Sheets. However, a small number of candidates had Assessor Record Sheets which were not fully completed, or the comments they provided were not beneficial to the moderation of the samples.

### **Strand (a) – Design and development**

The requirements for this strand are that candidates produce an overview/proposal for their game. Also this strand is important because it shows the design and development process of the game. Key design documentations such as storyboards, assets table, and rules table are also required for this strand.

Some centres assessed this strand very generously. Marks appeared to be awarded for the mere presence of evidence rather than the quality of it. It was disappointing to see that some centres had awarded marks in the top mark band for what was almost entirely retrospective design work. Centres should also be aware that the moderator does need to see all the design work that the centre has based their assessment on. In a small number of cases centres had stipulated on their Assessor Record Sheets that they had seen the evidence and marks had been awarded as a consequence but that this evidence was not available in the eportfolio.

In most instances the proposal/overview documents were completed reasonably effectively but on some occasions these tended to be very limited. It was disappointing to see that very few candidates showed evidence of obtaining approval from their teacher before carrying on.

Candidates should have created a sequence of drawings (either hand drawn or electronically) that show the levels of the game or the different scenes and goals. Each storyboard should include some annotations to describe such things as the events on the screen, assets used etc.

A significant number of storyboards were clearly retrospective, with some again, being merely screenshots of the final game. These make no contribution to the game design process. Others were extremely basic with simple drawn boxes with no annotation. The game could not be made from these designs. A number of candidates who produced maze games simply used an image of a maze from the Internet. Again these could not be considered as designs. A small number of candidates produced no storyboards as part of their design work.

All computer games have rules. In fact, all games have rules. The rules determine what happens in the game. They have to be programmed into the software for the game to work. An initial set of basic rules needs to be created before commencement of building the game. Rules should not be created as the game is built but pre-planned and therefore the candidate also has a test plan to work to later in the process. Some candidates did this effectively but others often only had three or four rules identified.

Assets used in the game were often well recorded in an assets table, but there was little evidence as to what the candidate did with these assets, for example how they were edited or where they were used within the game.

### **Strand (b) – Game functionality**

The games seen during this moderation window were generally of good quality for this level, however there were a number of games that did not function as intended. A small number of candidates did not produce games which were suitable for the target audience of the SPB or relate to the theme of the SPB. In a small number of cases the games were just not appropriate for this level of work. For example, a character simply moving around a maze with no 'enemies', lives or scoring is not of suitable quality.

The best games seen during the moderation process had introductory screens, clear user instructions for the keyboard and/or mouse controls and explicit game objectives. The games had a number of levels which progressively got harder. In some cases the games could not be fully played and in others there seemed to be little differentiation in difficulty between different levels. In some games the ending came and the player was unaware that they had either won or lost.

Whilst most candidates included user instructions either as part of the game or as a separate document, it was disappointing to see that a number of games still had no user instructions at all. Some of the best games had built in user instructions but also had a user-guide as a separate document.

It is important that candidates are exposed to a number of game authoring software packages before commencing the SPB so they are able to select the most appropriate to create their game based on their proposal. It was a disappointing

aspect to see that all the candidates from some centres created the same type of game in the same authoring package, with the result that all the games looked very similar. This is not an acceptable approach. Candidates should be working independently and selecting the genre, style and type of game they want to create based on their proposal after reading the SPB thoroughly.

It is also important that candidates have the right level of skill to create the game. Some candidates could not produce fully functional games because they had not developed the appropriate level of game authoring skills prior to starting the project.

The need for prototyping and testing cannot be overemphasised. Obtaining feedback through the development process is vital in order to get a game that works from beginning to end as intended. Some candidates did not fully test their games to ensure that they worked as intended. The process of testing and making modifications/changes/enhancements to games was also often inadequately recorded. In some instances, the testing evidence had only four or five tests identified with everything indicated as working 'OK'. It is important that students not only record the summative testing at the end of the game but also the formative testing – that is, how they corrected errors themselves as they built the game. It may be helpful to include 'before and after' screenshots to show what they did to solve a problem.

It was clear that in some instances the early levels of games were tested well but the final level(s) were not as rigorously tested, as in some examples the final level was almost impossible to complete, even by someone in the target age group.

There were also instances where the transfer off a network seems to have created bugs within the game. Candidates should always test their game on a standalone machine off the network to ensure that it works as they would wish it to.

### **Strand (c) – User experience**

Not only does the game have to work correctly it has to provide the player with a positive experience. There are many aspects which can make a game play well and be enjoyable for the player. A good game was sufficiently long enough with a number of levels which got progressively harder. The controls were easy to use and intuitive and if you failed you wanted to go back and try again. Some games seen were excellent in that they provided the player with a good user experience and you wanted to try and get to the end of the game no matter how long it took. They detailed your progress throughout the game with a score, lives, health or a combination of these. Some had high score tables at the end where you could endeavour to beat your own score or that of a friend.

The following aspects were noted during this moderation series:

- A number of games were very short indeed and consisted of only one very brief level.
- Some games created were very simplistic in terms of layout and playability. They were often over very quickly and the game play was very repetitive.
- Awkward control selection which made the games difficult to play.

- Some games showed no originality either in concept or assets used within the game. The candidates merely used the assets to be found within the software and create nothing of their own.
- In some cases the game could not be fully played because of major errors or bugs in the game. Therefore it was difficult to judge the user experience in these cases.
- Some games had very little differentiation between the different levels of the game.
- In some games the ending came and the player was unaware that they had either won or lost.

In many instances there was a complete lack of explicit usability testing evident.

### **Strand (d) – Game review**

Candidates in this strand were expected to produce a review of their game which includes:

- comments on strengths and areas for improvement
- suitability for target audience
- feedback from your game testers and game reviewer
- your responses to feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Candidates could generally provide good but simplistic evaluative comments about the strengths of the game, often in bulleted format, but sometimes failed to provide a balance between the strengths and weaknesses of the game. However, the feedback from test users and also suggestions for improvement was weak and in some cases non-existent. Candidates should endeavour to gain feedback on their completed game and ask questions about how their game could be improved. A number of candidates did not present a review as part of the eportfolio.

### **Strand (e) – Presenting work**

Most candidates successfully created a working index page which provided access to all of the evidence. File and folder names were appropriate in most cases. Only in a small minority of instances did links not work from the index page. Some centres on occasions harshly marked candidates in this strand. The SPB simply asks for a working index page which clearly links to all the evidence. Some centres expected candidates to produce a multi-page eportfolio with comments and in some cases multimedia linked to the game. Whilst this work is creditable and is nice to see, it is not required.

Other centres appeared to have offered candidates a template for this strand. This is an assessed strand and candidates should work on this independently. Some candidates also appeared to have been given templates which were completely inappropriate, for example old DiDA Level 2 templates.



## **DA105 – Coding for the Web**

### **Overall**

This was the second assessment opportunity for this unit and the entry was limited to a few centres.

This unit is a 30 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) unit. Centres must allow 10 hours for students to complete their Summative Project Brief (SPB).

There were two possible scenarios available in this window:

Snap It - where candidates had to use their coding skills to create a two page website to inform the local community about a photographic competition.

IGphones - where candidates had to use their coding skills to create a three page website to the requirements of a local mobile phone shop.

Work using both scenarios was seen in this window.

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

Most assessors made appropriate comments on the Assessor 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.

### **Strand (a) - Plan, write and edit HTML**

#### Wireframes

The candidates are required to produce a wireframe design for the pages; they should be encouraged to read the whole of the brief before starting so the design includes all of the required content.

The best work selected an appropriate page size for the website and indicated this on the wireframes. The size chosen should be considered carefully so as to ensure that the website is displayed to the best effect and without horizontal scrolling.

The level of detail seen on the wireframes varied, the best work indicated the nature and size of each page element, e.g. header (1024px x 75px), image slider (600px x 400px), text box (300px x 200px).

Candidates should state clearly at this stage the web browser that they intend to use to test their web pages.

#### Writing and editing HTML

The focus in this section is the writing and editing of HTML, evidence was usually found by examining the HTML code; evidence of candidates having edited the code included customised sections of code rather than default code generated by web editing software.

It is important that candidates demonstrate sufficient command over the HTML code in their pages to add internal and email links, create a table of information and manipulate the page structure to include page elements and assets such as headers, footers, text and images. The best work had evidence of editing these rather than default names.

Candidates are expected to record details of how they edit the HTML code in their test log, this was often overlooked making it difficult to see where the candidate had edited the HTML, in some cases this made it difficult to agree the assessor marks.

The best examples of work included screenshots to highlight the process and outcomes of the editing of the code.

### **Strand (b) - Write and edit CSS**

In this strand candidates are assessed on their ability to write and edit CSS.

Best practice is for the student to record the process of writing and editing CSS in their test log, using screen shots where appropriate to illustrate the changes made and the effect of them.

The best examples used a variety of CSS rules to style text, images, links, tables and other elements, it was also clear that the candidate was using the wireframe to ensure the desired outcome in terms of layout and style.

### **Strand (c) - Incorporate interactive elements through JavaScript**

Candidates were required to use JavaScript to include an image slider on the home page and the majority of candidates completed this successfully. Most candidates used horizontal movement of images with manual control. On the whole the images were well chosen and appropriate to the scenario.

The better candidates included in their test logs the testing of the script and the editing needed to include the correct images.

### **Strand (d) - Create page layouts**

The candidates should make it clear in their design which browser is to be used, as there was considerable variation found in how the pages were displayed in different browsers.

The best examples demonstrated good use of coding skills to create pages that clearly resembled the wireframes, this was supported by the test log entries testing the layout and viewing of the pages. There should also be an appropriate balance between the amount of text and images on each page and links should be clear to see.

## **Strand (e) - Test and review**

On the whole this section was completed and assessed accurately.

Candidates should aim to produce a detailed review of the website commenting on the strengths of the site and some areas for improvement. The best work included feedback from their end-of-project reviewer and made specific suggestions for improvement.

### **General Administration**

The sample should be sent to the moderator on a single CD which 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 forename. It would help if the Assessor Record Sheet naming convention is the same.  
[centre #]\_[candidate #]\_[first two letters of surname]\_[first letter of forename].

The centre assessor should use the Assessor Record Sheets as an opportunity to help the moderator find the evidence required to agree the marks given.

It is vital that the centre test all the candidate work on the CD, as in some cases links did not work from the CD because the candidate had use links to their network user area. This resulted in pages / sites not working as intended and therefore the marks awarded by the assessor could not be supported.

## **Grade Boundaries**

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

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html?Qualification-Family=Digital-Applications>