Examiners’ Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2017

Pearson Edexcel

Level 2 Certificate/Diploma in Digital Applications
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Certificate / Diploma in Digital Applications

DA201- Developing Web Products

3906 candidates were entered for the DA201 external examination this series, which is mandatory for both the Level 2 CiDA and DiDA qualifications. The DA201 examination is a 2.5-hour practical computer-based examination that requires students to design, build, test and evaluate a web product in response to a client brief.

Students need to use the information in the client brief to create a web product that demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose. The client for this examination paper was *Impromptoo*, a temporary pop-up music shop selling music and featuring a local DJ for each of the shop’s three trading days. The purpose of the site was to attract customers to the shop and the target audience was local people with an interest in buying, making and listening to music.

This examination requires students to use web-authoring software, and other software tools, to create a web product and those students who understand the web-design production process and have appropriate command over the web-authoring software and other software tools available to them, are in the best position to meet the specific requirements of the client brief.

**General Comments**

Students must save their web pages in .html format so that they can be viewed in a web browser. Unfortunately, some students submitted their work in inappropriate file formats such as unpublished websites, active server pages or template pages, which meant that their work could not be viewed in a web browser.

Students also need to be clear on how to create an appropriate folder structure within their user area so that their sites function correctly. Where students include inappropriate paths, links may not function or images may not appear as intended.

**Administration**

Centres are reminded of the importance of reviewing the Instructions for the Conduct of Examination document prior to the examination window and of sending the examination pro forma to ict schedules@pearson.com.

In most instances the CDs containing the students' work were appropriately labelled with centre and candidate numbers and were dispatched to examiners promptly after the close of the examination window. Some centres also included the pro forma for externally assessed units to specify the web browser that the students used to create and test their websites, which was supportive to the examination process.
However, centres are urged to check that the CDs contain all the work submitted by the students who sat the examination and that attendance registers are accurate, as several centres had to be contacted regarding missing work and incorrect completion of attendance registers.

**Activity One: Design, build and test the website**

**Overall Site Requirements**

The overall site requirements included three main pages (home page, music page and DJ page) and one child page (merchandise page) that should only be accessible through the home page. Some students produced a navigation bar with a drop down menu to access the child page, which did not fully meet the client’s requirements because it did not require the user to drill down to the link on the home page to access the merchandise page.

Most students produced web pages to the specified width of 1024 pixels, although centres are reminded that when preparing students for the examination they need to be capable of producing different site structures, page sizes and resolutions.

When working to a client brief, it is also possible that the client will stipulate in the overall site requirements the house style (colour scheme, font and layout) that students must use.

**Page Template**

The page template had to include a banner that extended the full width of the page (1024 pixels) and included a suitable image and the shop logo. Although most students were able to include a recognisable banner that spanned the width of their web pages, fewer students included a suitable image within the banner. Furthermore, some students were not awarded the mark for including the shop logo within the banner, as the original logo had been distorted or modified by the student. It is essential that students can use appropriate software tools, including image editing tools, to resize the given logo in proportion.

In order to meet the requirements for the page title, students had to place a recognisable page title that appropriately described the subject of the page at the top of the page content, to aid the user in navigating around the site.
One of the client’s requirements was to create a consistent design across the site and those students who were able to fix the size of the pages and the position of the banner and navigation bar across every page, were better able to establish consistency in terms of the layout of the pages.

The banner is also an opportunity to establish the design of the site and many of the highest achieving students used the banner to set the tone for the design of their site.

Images

Students were asked to include the home, music and DJ icons as part, or all, of the links within the navigation bar. To achieve this mark, students had to include all three icons and many students created effective rollovers using the icons. The mark was awarded where the icons formed part of a link, even if the link did not function as intended, and whether the name of the page was added to the icon or not. However, this mark was not awarded to students who swapped the icons around, i.e. used the music icon as the link to the DJ page, or who significantly altered the icons.

Most students added the name of the shop to the SHOPFRONT image and there were several examples of imaginative shop front displays. It is worth noting that students need to be able to undertake simple image editing techniques such as cropping, combining two images together and adding text to an image, as these are essential skills when preparing images for inclusion within web products.

When inserting images into web pages, students should be able to crop, edit, insert and resize images in proportion. Most students achieved the mark for inserting the FLYER image into the site. Where students did not obtain this mark, it was usually because the image was distorted and/or illegible. Students need to understand that to be fit for purpose, images must be legible.
Students’ ability to crop the LOCAL_DJs image and create a link to an image showing all the DJs varied considerably. Although it was successfully accomplished by some students, others dropped marks because they did not include the cropped image on the DJ page, created a cropped image that was so small and distorted that it was illegible, used a different image, created a rollover rather than a link to the full LOCAL_DJs image or created a link to another web page. Students should be reminded to read the client brief carefully in order to fully meet the client’s requirements.

It is important that students can convert images to different file formats and compress images to a specified maximum file size. The client specified that all the images used within the site had to be in .png format and less than 450KB. Students rarely picked up both marks and many students would benefit from further practice with compressing images and converting them from one file format to another. Centres are reminded that students will not always be asked to convert images to .png format and students need to be able to convert images to other file formats.

**Links**

Creating email and external links is an area that still requires further attention. Although some students added an appropriately functioning email link, many students either failed to include the *mailto* prefix or didn’t even attempt to include the link. Similarly, many students did not include the correct *http://* protocol to the external link and so the mark could not be awarded. Students should also be reminded to check that they include the correct email address and url for external hyperlinks or the mark will not be awarded, as the links would not function as intended.

The task to add a hotspot to the T-SHIRT image was only successfully accomplished by a minority of students. The mark was awarded to students who could include a hotspot over the t-shirt on the image and create a hyperlink to the merchandise page. The hotspot did not have to fit the t-shirt exactly, however, the mark was not awarded if the whole T-SHIRT image was hyperlinked, as the client requested a link from the t-shirt on the image. Centres are reminded that students need to be able to create interactive components including internal, external and email hyperlinks, hotspots, rollovers and navigation bars.
The vast majority of students were able to create a box, or panel, on the music page and set the background colour to #cc3333. Students who created the box with the correct background colour using image editing tools, and inserted it into the page as an image, were awarded the mark, although students who set the background colour of the web page to #cc3333 did not achieve the mark because the requirement was to create a separate box or panel on the page for the music player.

Most students found the requirement to add a 1px solid black border to the box and a header using the <h4> element very challenging. Experimenting with image styling techniques through the web-authoring software, such as rounded corners, transparency and borders, should support students to present images effectively. Similarly, using HTML headings through the <h1> to <h6> elements adds structure and consistency to web pages and, more generally, formatting text through headings and subheadings, alignment, line spacing, bullets, font style and colour is an area for further improvement for students.

The mark for positioning the name of each record next to the record cover image, as illustrated in the Question Paper, was successfully achieved by some students, as shown in the example below. This task required the ability to position the text precisely on the page and, it is clear that, most students would benefit from a deeper understanding of how to use coding to align text and images.

To be awarded the embedding the audio had to be embedded page. Students were the mark if they link to the audio files, opened in another did not meet the requirements. It was to see that many converted the audio from .wav files although only a minority of students successfully achieved the requirement that the audio should only play on click, rather than automatically play when the page is loaded in the browser.

To be fully prepared for the examination, students need to know how to convert multimedia assets, including video, audio and animation files, from one file format to
another, embed them onto their web pages and control how users view or listen to them.

**Structure and functionality**

Most students produced a four-page website with three main pages and a child page accessible only through the T-SHIRT image on the home page. It was less common to see a drop down menu from the main navigation bar to access the child page, although where this was included, the client’s requirements were not fully met because users were not required to drill down on the home page to access the merchandise page.

There are still many examples of sites that are not fully functional, for example sites with broken or missing links, and although marks are not awarded directly for testing, students should allow time in the examination to test that their website functions as intended and meets all the client’s requirements.

**User experience**

Students need to understand how to improve the accessibility of their sites by adding appropriate alt text to images, using a high contrast between text and background colours and ensuring that fonts are legible. Unfortunately, poorly contrasting colour combinations and unsuitable fonts and font sizes adversely affected the accessibility of many sites and the effective use of accessibility features is an area where most students would benefit from further understanding.

Students must also ensure that the user interface is easy to use and that no horizontal scrolling is required to access the content, as this is hugely detrimental to the user experience. The overall user experience was enhanced by those students who demonstrated an understanding of the audience and purpose of the site through the appropriate selection of engaging content and who successfully employ established design concepts such as the use of white space, balance, contrast and emphasis.

**Content selection, preparation and presentation**

Students must read the client brief carefully so that they understand the context for the site, its purpose and intended audience. Three unsuitable images were included within
the ASSETS folder so that students could be assessed on their ability to select images that were relevant to the audience and purpose established in the client brief. Several students did not identify the unsuitable images and used them within their site.

Students should also be aware that although they are provided with the images and text to be used within their site, both the images and text should be carefully selected and edited to enhance their suitability for both audience and purpose.

Although almost all students could insert text and images within their web pages, only a minority of students could select appropriate content, prepare it fittingly and present it effectively. Many students are still not optimising images and resizing them in proportion, which are essential skills for preparing images for inclusion in a website.

To meet the Level 3 assessment criteria, students must ensure that all content is effective. This was achieved by students who cropped images, added captions to images, edited the given text to improve its suitability, included presentational features such as headings and subheadings, underlined and emboldened text and who used coloured backgrounds and varied the font, font size and colour to create a suitable hierarchy.

The highest achieving candidates designed a website comprising effective combinations of assets across each page. In order to produce content that demonstrates a sound awareness of both a specified audience and purpose, students need a confident understanding of how to combine text and images within their chosen web-authoring software, which can only be achieved through practice and experience.

**Overall consistency**

Although students generally designed web pages with a consistent page size and resolution, banner and navigation bar, the most effective sites established an appropriate house style through the consistent use of a suitable colour scheme and font choice.

To meet the Level 3 assessment criteria, the layout and design of the pages needs to be effective and applied consistently throughout the site. Text formatting features, such as the use of headings and subheadings, emboldening, line spacing, bullets, font, font size, and alignment are not used widely enough by students, as effective and consistent use of text formatting can help to structure a page and create impact through emphasis.
The effective use of design concepts such as balance, contrast and visual hierarchy help students to create an effective page composition and structuring the page through the repeated use of page layout techniques such as white space, colour, columns, headings and subheadings to separate content are all techniques that were used to good effect by only a minority of students within this examination series.

It is important to note that pages do not need to be identical to be consistent, as subtle and deliberate changes in style or tone; for example, adapting the layout or design of the child page, which was the merchandise page in this client brief, can still result in a consistently effective layout and design.

**Activity 2: Complete an evaluation of your website**

The evaluation remains an area for improvement for most students. Students need to be practiced in explaining their choice of design features and justifying how these decisions meet the needs of the intended audience and purpose through carefully selected examples. However, students’ evaluations did not generally explain how different design features, such as the colour scheme, font choice, page layout, visual hierarchy and image editing, were appropriate for the site’s audience and purpose and the justification of important design decisions was often restricted to a rationale for the chosen colour scheme.

Students must also suggest possible improvements to their site and explain how these enhancements would improve the outcome. However, students often described the client’s requirements that they had not met as future improvements, which were not valid within the context of the client brief. To fully meet the Level 3 assessment criteria, students need to provide realistic suggestions for improvement that clearly improve the site.
DA202: Creative Multimedia

Overall

The January 2017 series comprised a limited entry for both the 0914 SPB 'Spellbound' and the 0915 SPB 'Clueless II'. This was the final moderation window for the 0914 SPB 'Spellbound'. Most of the work submitted for moderation had been completed to an appropriate standard for this level.

Strand (a) – Design multimedia products

Most candidates produced designs that identified the assets needed for implementation and several included detailed comments about design decisions. 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 gave only a rough idea of likely user experience and how the products would function.

Assessment of this strand was sometimes generous with examples of high marks being awarded for evidence that was not presented to a suitable standard.

Strand (b) – Collect, edit and create digital assets

Most candidates included an assets table which correctly acknowledged sources used and provided information relating to the assets gathered for use in their products. The tables generally presented descriptive evidence of the development of images.

Several candidates provided direct evidence of selected stages in the development of the assets, covering multimedia assets in addition to images e.g. screen prints illustrating the re-sizing of video or editing of audio files. Assessment of this strand was sometimes generous with examples of full marks being awarded where direct evidence of selected stages in the development of the assets was missing.

In some instances, marks in this strand were not confirmed because no attempt had been made to prepare files to suit the recommended size restriction for the project and in other examples because of the poor standard of the assets used, particularly distorted images and low quality audio and video.

Strand (c) – Develop multimedia products

The following observations from the summer 2016 report, regarding the products for the 0915 SPB 'Clueless II' remain relevant.
• Title screen – Many effective title screens were seen, with most candidates producing a form of splash screen, using animated text, and featuring other animated assets, effects and music.

• Category screen – Most candidates produced a category selection screen, with hot spots over images, as required. It was helpful when the screens indicated which category had been developed. Some candidates developed several categories, at the expense of developing one category fully.

• Sample question – Most candidates produced a question screen with working links to the clues, wrong answer screen and congratulations finale, as required. Again, some candidates developed several questions with clues, at the expense of developing one set of clues for one question fully.

• Three clues – Clue 1 is to be a cryptic clue to the right answer. Several candidates would have benefited from some additional guidance regarding the cryptic hint to help them produce an audio file with worthwhile content. Clue 2 was generally well done, although some of the movies would have benefited from consistent formatting of the images used. Clue 3 produced a few imaginative and original videos, although videos of static captions with limited editing were also submitted.

• Wrong answer – A short, generic, animation is required that could be used for wrong answers to many questions. This is an opportunity to demonstrate a different animation technique, such as stop frame, from that used for the finale.

• Congratulations finale – Some very good finales were seen that made full use of the specified 20 seconds to present suitable animated assets with synchronised music.

Strand (d) – Present evidence in an eportfolio

Several effective eportfolios, that had been well designed to suit the stated purpose of presenting work for assessment and moderation, were seen. In these examples, there was differentiation in the emphasis given to the final products and the supporting evidence and detailed commentaries explaining the context for the work.

As in previous series redundant files, including unedited audio files and pre-published video and animations had been retained. These significantly increased the size of the candidates’ folders.

Strand (e) – Review the products

As in previous series most candidates made some relevant comments about the products and many recorded interim feedback received during the testing of prototypes.
Where full marks were agreed the candidates had provided a detailed evaluation of the products and made specific and valid suggestions for further improvement of the final products, based on ideas arising from their consideration of end user feedback.

Less successful reviews tended to comprise lengthy descriptions of work done with little evaluative content. Structuring the review to consider each product separately with specific suggestions for further improvement should help to focus this work.
DA203 – Artwork and Imaging

Overall

A total of 782 students were entered for the 0914 SPB (What’s the Attraction?) and 170 for the 0915 SPB (Second Nature).

In general, the work for both SPBs was generously assessed by centres and the following points are put forward to assist centres to deliver the unit and assess students’ work.

Most students used suitable software packages, which enabled them to produce some good work for this unit. However, there were others who used inappropriate software to create the products.

To gain marks for strands (b) and (c) students must have used drawing and bitmap tools to develop a variety of scalable and bitmap elements. 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.

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 student arrived at the final design for their products.

Students must have made detailed comments on their design decisions and justified them. Students should start off with designs which they then develop into the final products. There must be evidence of these designs with comments explaining how they developed into the final products. There was evidence of more students completing design documentation in more detail than previous series.
Students should also check that their completed products meet the requirements of the SPB and that they are suitable for audience and purpose. Where the final products differ from the initial designs there should be comments explaining why.

Some students used the requirements of the SPB as a checklist but did not take into consideration the quality of the products presented in terms of fitness for audience and purpose.

Some students presented a set of products that were of poor quality and lacked skill in the use of the graphic tools chosen.

**Strand (b) – Develop scaleable images and artwork**  
**Strand (c) – Develop bitmap images and artwork**

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.

For example, representations are designed to be achieved by combining and editing graphic elements to produce the required image rather than by taking a photograph of the finished product.

To achieve the higher mark bands for strands (b) and (c) students must have described their use of vector and bitmap tools in developing elements. Some students provided very good design logs in which they described their use of graphic tools in detail, but many students failed to do this and simply listed the software package and some of the tools used.

Students should record the main stages of development of their products and how graphic tools were used to achieve them. Annotated images are a useful way of doing this.

Where there were comments on the use of tools, these tended to be for vector tools only. There were more instances, in this series, where evidence was provided on the use of editing tools for the various products.

Students were provided with the opportunity to edit images to appear on the products but many chose to just insert images without any editing taking place. Where editing tools are not used, marks in strand c are restricted. Some candidates had edited images but had not made any reference to the tools used in the design log.

Although some students provided some comments on their use of design tools, the actual products were not of an appropriate quality.

**Strand (d) – Exhibit work in an eportfolio**
The recommended size for the eportfolio is 30MB as stated in the SPB, however it was not uncommon for centres to submit eportfolios that were significantly larger than this. 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.

Most students organised files in a suitable folder structure so that the assessor and moderator could easily access the eportfolio. In most cases it was easy to access the eportfolio from the folder structure.

Few centres submitted eportfolios that contained files that could not be accessed by the moderator using the Digital Applications moderators’ toolkit.

Eportfolios should include comments introducing their content. In most instances students included links to the evidence but there were few appropriate comments introducing the content. Some students provided comments that were more suited to the design log or comments that provided a narration of what was done to create the evidence.

**Strand (e) – Review the products**

To achieve marks for strand (e) students must make evaluative comments on their final products and include feedback from reviewers. Many students provided narrative reviews, which listed how the products were produced rather than commenting on how they thought their products met the requirements of the SPB.

Students should be provided with suitable feedback to enable them to produce appropriate responses. In some instances, feedback was limited or not relevant i.e. where products were weak the feedback stated they were good and no improvements were necessary where this was clearly not the case.

**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.

Marks recorded on the Assessor on the Centre Assessor Sheets must be checked to ensure the correct totals are included and these marks are then transferred online.
DA204 – Game Making

Overall

There were limited entries for this Unit for the January 2017 moderation series, with only a small number of candidates entered for the 0914 ‘Play and Learn' SPB and the 0915 ‘Future Worlds' SPB. Several 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 assessment 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.

Strand (a) – Design and development work

The key design documentation that students are expected to produce include storyboards, assets table and rules table. Comments on the Centre Assessor Sheets appeared, in some instances, to award marks for the presence of evidence rather than the quality of it. It was disappointing again to see that some centres had awarded high marks in this strand for what was almost entirely retrospective design work.

Many centres over-rewarded candidates for the extent to which they provided relevant information about the development process, there was often insufficient evidence or detail on the development of the game from initial designs through prototyping to the final game. Some candidates opted for a diary type entry system. However, the entries in the main bore little bearing on the developmental process, with comments such as; 'I created an assets table' or 'I got pictures from the Internet for my moodboard'.

Part of the requirements for this strand are that candidates produce a moodboard and an overview/proposal for their game. Most moodboards seen this series were again much better than has been seen in previous series, clearly showing the inspirations for the game the candidates would like to develop. These clearly demonstrated some research around their game idea and had annotations to illustrate how they would develop these ideas. However, there were some moodboards which merely had one or two images on a PowerPoint presentation representing an aspect of the game such as genre or style with little or no annotation showing the development of ideas. Some
candidates took photographs of their paper moodboards which were either too small or too blurred to see any detail on them.

In most instances a proposal/overview document was completed reasonably effectively but on some occasions these tended to be very limited. It was disappointing again to see that very few candidates showed evidence of feedback during this stage of the process. This is considered to be a very important step in the process of creating a game which is suitable for audience and purpose. This is of particular importance when the game either relied on extensively copyright material or the game was unsuitable for the target audience.

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. Some candidates included their storyboards as part of their development log. They then used feedback from peers to develop the game from the storyboard and demonstrated the development of their levels with annotations and continued peer feedback.

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 very effectively and created an extensive general rules table with specific rules associated with different levels of the game. They also made it clear in their evidence where these rules had changed in the final game because either the original rule hadn't work or different elements had been added to the game which had necessitated a change. Some candidates had created their rules table retrospectively as they had the activators identified as objects. Some candidates only provided screenshots of the rules within the game software.

In many instances assets from secondary sources seemed to have been used in their entirety, with only basic cropping and resizing having taken place. Generally, evidence of editing assets was also often poorly recorded.

**Strand (b) – Game functionality**

The games seen during this moderation window were again of generally of good quality. The very best games were almost exclusively made in either Gamemaker or Multimedia Fusion. However, some candidates had chosen to use specific programming languages to create their games. Whilst some good examples were seen there were a number of games that were either very simplistic or that did not work as intended when exported to
an .exe file. In some instances, centres were awarding marks in this strand for the complexity of the coding rather than the functionality of the game. Games often worked as intended and were fun to play. A small number of candidates, however, did not produce games which were suitable for the target audience or related in any way to the back story.

In this strand, instructions should go further than just the controls, they should, for example, include how to play the game, e.g. how many lives, who are the enemies, how to win, etc. Some of the best games had built in user instructions but also had a user-guide as a separate document. Some candidates produced excellent user instructions, both within the game and also as separate booklet, many of which looked very professional with the presentation matching the theme of the game.

However, the quality of the user instructions varied greatly and it was disappointing again to see that a small number of games had no user instructions at all. This was particularly apparent in some Scratch games.

Whilst there were some very good examples of testing evidence seen this series, generally the process of testing and making modifications/changes/enhancements to games was poorly recorded this series with some candidates providing little evidence of the process of creating their game and sorting out any glitches, bugs and problems they had encountered. In some instances the testing evidence had only four or five tests identified with everything indicated as working. Very little feedback had been gained to improve the quality of their games and ensure that it worked correctly. Also some candidates had no explicit evidence of testing. In some cases the games could not be fully played as there were serious errors or bugs which actually stopped the game play, such as the player character getting stuck in the maze or on a platform. 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.

Some games, particularly those created in Scratch, were far too simplistic for the standard of work required at Level 2. Some of the games encountered, were over very quickly. Some merely had a character moving around a maze collecting items but there was no scoring system attached to these.

**0914 ‘Play and Learn’ SPB**

It was again disappointing, once again, to see that some centres whose candidates attempted this SPB appeared to adopt a ‘class based approach’. The games were very similar in construction and style apart from the educational content. This is not an acceptable approach. Candidates should read the SPB and then individually come up with a game solution based on their interpretation of the SPB. Centres should again be reminded that they should use the 60 guided learning hours to teach game authoring skills and then allow 30 guided learning hours for candidates to complete the SPB.
individually under controlled conditions. This aspect will continue to be closely monitored.

Many of the games produced for this SPB were again poor both in design and execution. Some games were clearly far too difficult for the audience stated in the SPB or as stated in the overview if the audience had been narrowed in some way. Some educational games were very limited in their gaming, opting for more of a quiz based layout. Nevertheless, there were some very good games by individual candidates which were novel spins on old or ‘retro’ games with an educational focus.

0915 SPB ‘Future Worlds’

The games produced for this SPB were on the whole better produced and developed. There appeared to be an equal spread of games between the different scenarios. Some candidates, however, merely changed the whole of the scenario selected to support their game ideas. Whilst minor alterations to the scenario are acceptable the candidates should always seek teacher approval at the overview stage before carrying on to ensure this does not happen.

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. Whilst in others there seemed to be little differentiation in difficulty between different levels or there were errors which spoilt the game play, such as characters getting stuck.

Some games seen were very good 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 endeavor 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 where the game was over very quickly.
- The game provided very little challenge for the player, even as part of the target audience.
- The game was far too difficult for the target audience - this was particularly apparent with paper 03.
- Awkward control selection often made the games difficult to play.
- The game was very repetitive in terms of challenge and also the graphics and layout of the levels.
- Lack of difficulty progression throughout the levels.
• Some games created in Scratch were very simplistic in terms of layout and playability, also the game play tended to be very sluggish.
• Some games created in Scratch had assets which had clearly been created by the candidate but they were inconsistent in size which not only made the game look very odd but also on occasions made the game difficult to play.
• 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. Either they were very difficult from the outset and the player soon lost interest or the game was very easy throughout the levels and therefore the player would be unlikely to want to play the game again.

Explicit usability testing (playability, interactivity) was weak in most candidates’ portfolios and completely absent in a significant number. Ideally, candidates need some of the game testers to be part of the target audience. Feedback from game testers needs to be documented and any changes made as a result. Candidates should also acknowledge when a change was suggested but ignored, and give the reason. The moderator should be able to see explicit usability testing documentation.

**Strand (d) – Promo for the game**

For this strand, candidates are required to create an onscreen Promo, such as a flash intro or movie trailer/advert to promote their game, attract interest and encourage people to want to play.

Some excellent promos were seen this series effectively not only using assets from their games to create their promotional product but also adding effective content. The best promos had good screen captures from their game, appropriate titles and captions to promote their game and also a soundtrack to enhance the mood or genre of the game. In the very best examples not only did the transitions between scenes work well but also the addition of well chosen - or created - supplementary content added to the notion of persuading people to play the game.

A number of candidates also used copyright music in their promos, which should be discouraged.

**Strand (e) – Game review**

Candidates in this strand were expected to produce a review which was suitable for publication in an on-screen computer games magazine. There were some very detailed reviews seen this series with candidates making comprehensive evaluative statements about the strengths and weaknesses of the game and also thorough feedback from others written in a game review style.
Most candidates could generally provide some evaluative comments about the strengths of the game, but sometimes failed to provide a balance between the strengths and weaknesses of the game. Some candidates merely had a few short bullet points for both strengths and weaknesses, a review written in a magazine style would be expected at Level 2.

Some candidates produced a review which did have some evaluative comments on the game and also feedback from others but the review did not look like a review which was suitable for on-screen publication. Some candidates produced a detailed review, which in essence was a narrative of the process of creating the game. This is not required.
DA205 – Coding for the web

DA205 is mandatory for the DiDA qualification. This unit is about front-end web development and focuses on coding methods and techniques in HTML, CSS and JavaScript. It builds upon the skills and understanding developed in DA201: Developing Web Products.

The examination is written as a client brief and assesses students’ ability to create a web page from a given wireframe. Consequently, students should be familiar with using a wireframe to build a web page. The client for this examination was Reuse Information Technology Equipment (RITE), who required a website to raise awareness of its work.

It was noteworthy that the most successful students were confident in their use of HTML, cascading style sheets (CSS) and JavaScript to create a web page with a range of interactive elements using a given wireframe.

General Comments

Students need to be familiar with the skills listed in the specification. The examination can cover any of the content of the specification. It appeared that, on a centre basis, some students were unfamiliar with some sections of content and were, therefore, not able to develop their web pages to reflect the requirements of the wireframe.

Although the choice of software is a decision for the centre, students should be provided with web authoring software that will enable them to cover all of the unit content outlined in the specification.

Students also need to be clear on how to create an appropriate folder structure within their user area so that the web pages functioned correctly. There were several instances of inappropriate paths, which meant that either links did not function or images did not appear as intended. This often appeared to be as a result of students moving files and/or folders after the construction of the required web page.

Administration

Centres are reminded of the importance of reviewing the Instructions for the Conduct of Examination document prior to the examination window and of sending the examination pro forma to ictschedules@pearson.com.

Centres are also reminded that the attendance register should be included with the students’ work.
The Task

Students were required to use HTML to build the overall structure of their web page. However, the design and layout of the site should be controlled through the use of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS).

Positioning elements on the page is an essential aspect of the examination and to be fully prepared, students need to be able to adopt appropriate positioning techniques in order to position elements as they appear on the wireframe.

Students were required to use JavaScript to create the dynamic, interactive elements of the page. Students needed to be able to incorporate JavaScript into their pages to add functionality. In this examination they were asked to add the date and time to the page header and to create an image slider. They were also required to write JavaScript to validate the input to a form.

Header

Most students were able to create a header section the required width and height and insert the HEADER image as a background for the top of the header section. However, students were less successful at positioning the LOGO and the image sprites for Twitter and Facebook.

Few students were able to create functional links from the navigation bar to the other parts of the page. Centres are reminded that students need to be able to create internal, external, email links and links to another part of the same (or a different) page.

Image Slider

Where students were thoroughly prepared for the examination they found little or no difficulty in creating a functional image slider. However, most students struggled to edit the given HTML code, with some students simply including one of the slider images on the web page.

Side bar

Many candidates were able to create a side bar and some were able to position it correctly on the web page.
Some candidates were able to apply the given linear gradient as shown in this example. However, many candidates simply used one of the two given colours to create a solid brown bar.

Most candidates attempted to position the logos correctly although many found difficulty in ensuring that the top logo (What We Do) was centred the required 75 pixels from the top of the side bar.

**What We DO – iframe**

Few candidates were able to create an iframe and present the content of the given HTML document. When candidates were able to create the iframe they often failed to remove the default border (as shown below).

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**Searching the internet has become an essential everyday activity. Email has changed the way we all communicate.**

**Equal access to information should not be a privilege for those who can afford it.**

**Computers are a common tool which enable greater educational opportunities to be delivered, and new skills to be learned. They should be available to all.**

**Our scheme retrieves something that is not wanted any more. Repairs it and then arranges for it to be reused by someone who really needs it.**

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**How it works**

Students were more confident at inserting images into the how it works section in the stated order rather than positioning the images with the exact margins as specified on the wireframe. Many students were able to add the given text with a few able to position it correctly.

In order to achieve the marks for the consistency of the headings, students needed to set the height for the headings container to 25px with a background colour styled to #12871D and the font styled to FFFFFF.

Only a minority of students achieved these marks and styling fonts is another area where students would benefit from further practice and proficiency. Many students used a background colour of #000000 rather than the colour given in the question paper.

Few students gained full marks for this section; the example below has not placed the headings correctly on the web page but has used the correct colours for the text sections.
Why we do it

- SUPPORT THE USE OF IT IN EDUCATION
- REDUCE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE
- PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT
- GUARANTEE REMOVAL OF ALL DATA
- REPAIR AND REUSE WHEN POSSIBLE
- RE-CYCLE RESPONSIBLY WHEN NECESSARY

Many candidates were able to create the text box to the correct dimensions and with the correct background colour.

Fewer candidates were able to set the radius for the corners of the rounded text box.

A minority of candidates were able to set the correct border colour.

Similarly, the creation of the unordered list appeared to cause difficulties for many of the candidates.
A minority of candidates were able to place the given HTML form onto the web page. Of those that did, some were able to position the form in the correct place.

Few candidates were able to present the form as shown on the wireframe, with the Contact heading and the submit button placed on the background colour for the form.

**Writing and editing HTML**

Although some students were able to include the main structural elements: DOCTYPE, html, head and body, fewer included an appropriate <title> or <meta> elements.

Moreover, most students were able to make use of HTML elements to structure their web pages and add content such as the given text and images. However, some students who used tables to structure their page layout, did not make appropriate use of elements that control tables in order to match the wireframe.

As has already been mentioned, only a minority of students were able to create links to different sections of the page.

**Writing and editing CSS**

Most students created external style sheets that included some, or all, of the properties given in the client brief. However, only a minority of students were able to add to the given properties in order to produce a comprehensive style sheet that created a layout to match the wireframe.

More competent students created different styles for the text elements shown on the wireframe and applied them consistently throughout the page. They were able to style boxes to conform with the requirements of the client brief, position and style images and style links as required.

**Creating forms**

Those students who were able to include the given form in the Why We Do It section of the page, were generally also able to edit the code to display the input boxes as shown on the wireframe and include the correct form controls.
However, only a small minority of students were able to style the input boxes and centres are reminded that students need to be able to style forms to match any given wireframe.

To fully meet the Level 3 assessment criteria for this strand, students also need to write their own JavaScript to validate the input of data. This aspect of the examination was not well performed by students in this examination series.

**Writing JavaScript**

The task to add the date and time to the header using JavaScript was very badly performed by most of the students entered for this series. The script was relatively simple but few candidates attempted this task.

Students not only need to be able to write JavaScript to fulfil simple functions, such as displaying the time or date, they need to be able to adapt the script to accurately meet the client’s brief. Writing JavaScript is clearly an area for development for future examination series.

**Incorporating interactive elements through JavaScript**

Although most students attempted to incorporate some of the slider images within their web page, only a minority of students were able to fulfil the requirements of the client brief by combining HTML, CSS and JavaScript to produce fully functioning gallery. Students are expected to incorporate the provided interactive element within their page by inserting links to the JavaScript into the source code so that the interactive feature functions correctly in a web browser.