

Examiners' Report

January 2010

Principal Learning

Information Technology Level 1 Controlled Assessments

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Principal Examiners' Report

Principal Learning - Information Technology - Level 1

General Comments

This is the second moderation series where all units for the Levels 1 Principal Learning in IT have been offered for moderation and awarded.

Despite the small number of centres that submitted work this session, a high standard of work was demonstrated amongst many learners. Some centres did not attach the Candidate Record Sheets (CRS) which moderators use to dissect assessor marks. The CRS is a core requirement when submitting work for moderation. The CRS should be fully completed with signatures, dates and assessor marks. There should be a statement to indicate the level of guidance provided.

Learners should be encouraged to present the work by Learning Outcome with appropriate headings introducing it. Some assessors annotated the work to show where each of the Learning Outcomes had been met and made a note of the page numbers on the CRS. This is very helpful and assists in the moderation process.

Whilst centres are not expected to provide evidence for Marking Grid B it is suggested that some form of witness statement (personalised for each learner) is presented.

Centres should ensure the correct sample is included for moderation.

Level 1 Unit 2 - The Impact of Technology

Learning Outcome 1

Learners were required to provide a description of the technology used in two organisations, including reasons for its use. In addition to this, for marks to be awarded in the top mark band, they needed to provide notes on how the technology benefits the organisation such as improved efficiency, increased profits, improved communication and the ability to access new markets.

Most learners looked at two organisations, but some tended to describe the organisations themselves rather than the technologies used. Learners should give brief descriptions of the organisations, but then should concentrate on the technologies the organisation uses for such things as administration, control and monitoring, education and training, mobile working, marketing, sales and security.

Learning Outcome 2

Learners were required to provide examples of how individuals use technology to live, work, learn and socialise with comments on how it affects them. They should have also given an example of the impact of technology on society.

There was the opportunity here for learners to make the most of their own experiences of their uses of technology which would have allowed them to provide information on how it affects them. However many learners did not link any technology to themselves, just wrote about its impact on individuals in general. Most learners covered the impact of technology on society with reference to the digital divide and virtual communities.

A few centres provided tables with headings for learners to complete and some centres just provided headings. The learners whose centre just provided headings tended to do better than those whose centre provided headings in a table because the space in the table did not allow for much information to be included and thus restricted marks.

Level 1 Unit 3 - Working with People

Learning Outcome 1

Learners were required to produce comments about the three types of communication media in business contexts and their use. The types of communication that should have been covered were digital, print and spoken. Most learners covered each of the three types of communication media, some far too briefly, but few mentioned their use. Some learners just cut and pasted information from websites and did not include any comments of their own on the uses of different media types such as informing customers, getting the message across, attracting attention, entertainment, education and persuasion.

There was also a requirement for learners to comment on their choice of publication for the team task. It is recommended that learners include comments on why the decision was made to choose the final publications presented. Most learners produced a list of the publications they were going to produce, but few made any comments to say why they were going to use those publications and why others were rejected. Comments should focus on the choice of publication rather than the publication itself.

Learning Outcomes 2, 3 and 4

Learners were required to produce a team plan with comments made throughout the project on team discussions and decisions made. The team should have produced some business related communications that presented both textual and numerical information and each learner should have made some contribution to the team effort to communicate a message.

Some very basic team plans were submitted by most learners as a starting point, but usually the plans were not referred to again during the project. Most plans were included because the learners had been set a task to produce a plan, once done they were then ignored. Regardless of the complexity of the project there should be a suitable plan - a list of tasks with a start and end date for each and an estimated time for each of the tasks should be included as a minimum requirement. Learners then need to update the plan as they are working on the tasks to show whether the dates/times were adhered to, or whether there were changes. There could be a column added to allow for comments on team discussions and decisions made. Comments could include a record of meetings to discuss a task - what did each team member say, what was discussed and what was decided. In some instances it was difficult to see how the team work together and who was in each team.

To be awarded marks in mark band 3, learners also needed to comment on initial meetings where objectives were agreed and roles allocated. These could be included on the comments section - what did the team agree to do - lists of tasks, why they came to the decision and who was going to do what. Very few learners provided work to be awarded marks in this band.

All learners provided most of the business related communications that they were required to produce, some more successfully than others, but in many cases communications showing numerical information were missing. This restricted the marks the learner could be awarded.

Learning Outcome 3 and 5

Learners were required to make comments on the performance of the team including the effect of behaviour or actions on communication. They should have also provided comments on their own performance and contribution to teamwork which demonstrated self awareness.

Most learners made comments on their own and their team's performance but these were usually very brief and restricted to comments such as 'I think this went well' or '.... did not do any work'. Very few made any reference to the effects of behaviour or self awareness. Learners are not expected to keep a diary or a log but they could be encouraged to keep notes throughout the project to remind them of what happened during the project and how they performed so this would help them when completing this section of the work.

Level 1 Unit 4 - Network Systems

Learning Outcome 1

Learners were required to identify the components and provide a description of their function. All learners made some attempt at providing comments on some of the various key components and some provided connectivity diagrams to show the layout but in some instances it appeared that learners had used comments that were either downloaded directly from the internet or copied from a handout.

Centres should ensure learners cover the key components as listed in the 'What you need to cover' section of the specification.

Level 1 Unit 5 - Database Systems

General Comments

In some instances assignments were over complicated for this level. Learners could be given a database file which would allow them to edit and delete records, perform queries and produce reports based on those searches. They could then create a database structure for a different database, create a data entry form and then enter a few records.

Learning Outcome 1

Learners were required to create a simple database structure, create a data entry form, and enter, edit and delete records. Most learners did well on this section and provided evidence in the form of screenshots to cover all of the requirements.

Centres should encourage learners to print the initial list of records before any amending has taken place so that the Moderator can see what amendments have been made. It is essential that the design of the database structure the learners have created is evidenced.

Some centres had annotated the printouts to state what amendments had been carried out which was very useful when moderating the work.

One area of concern for this Learning Outcome was the amount of text learners were being asked to enter at this level. To be awarded marks in the higher Mark Bands, entering records etc must be done accurately. The more they have to key in the more chance there is of errors.

Most learners produced data entry forms that had been customised and were well presented.

Learning Outcome 2

Learners were required to retrieve information from the database and present the results clearly. Most learners performed queries and presented the results of these queries in the form of reports that were well presented with appropriate titles. However, care should be taken to ensure all information is visible and there is no truncated data.

It is, however, recommended that learners show the design view of the queries as well as the results so the Moderators can see what criteria were used.

Level 1 Unit 6 - Multimedia

General comments

Centres are advised to submit the multimedia products in electronic format on CD and to ensure that each learner has their own folder where the evidence is easy to locate.

Learning Outcome 1

Learners were required to make comments about two different uses of multimedia in business such as (1) promotion and advertising (2) education and training or (3) entertainment and leisure. This was covered by most learners although there was a varying degree of detail provided. However, some learners only covered one use and this tended to be promotion and advertising. In some instances learners performed a review of a website in terms of its functionality rather than its use for the business.

Learning Outcome 2

Learners were required to provide up-front designs and develop two multimedia products from the designs that met the specified requirements. Designs, in the main, were very basic and in some instances appeared to be produced after the product was made. They should be detailed enough to allow the product to be developed by someone else if necessary. The submitted designs should have been developed into the final products so that the requirements could have been matched, but in some instances the designs and the final products were not that similar.

The final products were presented appropriately with most centres submitting the work on CD. However, in some instances the evidence provided was not considered 'multimedia' but rather word processed documents or static posters.

Learning Outcome 3

Learners were required to make comments about the products with feedback from reviewers and to provide suggestions for improvement. Reviewer feedback was limited. Reviewers should provide helpful comments which would allow the learner to improve their products. Suggestions for improvement were provided with some more sensible than others. In some instances learners thought their work was so good they couldn't improve it in any way - with sensible reviewers making sensible comments there is usually room for some improvement even to the most professional product.

Learners are encouraged to make comments on each of their products with 'why' they produced them in the way they did - why did they decide to have the text appearing one word at a time with sound, why did they choose the images, why did they use music on the video as background etc?

Statistics

Level 1 Unit 2 - The Impact of Technology

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B
Raw boundary mark	30	25	18	11
Points score	4	3	2	1

Level 1 Unit 3 - Working with People

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B
Raw boundary mark	60	50	34	19
Points score	8	6	4	2

Level 1 Unit 4 - Network Systems

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B
Raw boundary mark	30	26	19	13
Points score	4	3	2	1

Level 1 Unit 5 - Database Systems

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B
Raw boundary mark	30	25	18	12
Points score	4	3	2	1

Level 1 Unit 6 - Multimedia

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B
Raw boundary mark	60	52	37	22
Points score	8	6	4	2

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme or marking grid.

Raw boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a learner to qualify for a given grade.

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