

Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

GCSE ICT (5IT02) Paper 01
Using Digital Tools

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Principal Moderators' Report – Unit 2 – Using Digital Tools – June 2011

Unit 2, Using Digital Tools, is a controlled assessment unit. Students broaden and enhance their ICT skills and capability. They work with a range of digital tools and techniques to produce effective ICT solutions in a range of contexts. They learn to reflect critically on their own and others' use of ICT and to adopt safe, secure and responsible practice.

June 2011 is the first moderation session for this unit. A significant number of students have tackled the controlled assessment well, producing a wide range of products and publications in response to the Controlled Assessment Brief (CAB). Whilst a few candidates did not apply the necessary skills in the context of research, investigation and modelling, the majority had produced good quality evidence of their ability to apply their ICT knowledge and skills of ICT, across all activities and at all levels. There is sound evidence of a good understanding of the specification and its delivery, both on the part of the teachers and the candidates themselves.

The focus of the May 2010 CAB, the only CAB available for this session, is upcycling and candidates were tasked to complete four activities in relation to this. Activity 1 involved research and two digital products; Activity 2 was focused on modelling and recommendations; Activity 3 involved design and creation of two main digital products; and, in Activity 4, candidates evaluated their products and performance.

Where Centres have done well

The most successful outcomes were in centres where the candidates were well prepared and had developed a range of transferable skills. Constructive feedback from teachers and test buddies generated improved outcomes. Candidates who responded positively to feedback accessed the higher mark bands, because their work demonstrated a better understanding of the CAB its requirements. Centres made some good use of the Candidate Assessment Record and this aided the moderation process.

Where Centres could improve

Administration was a problem for some centres. All centres are advised to read the 'Centre guidance for the submission of moderation samples' document available on the website.

A few centres struggled to apply the mark bands within each topic and Activity, which led to some generous assessment. Some centres have underestimated the demands of the qualification. Where links within publications were broken, it was not clear whether this was the result of a poorly created CD for the moderator, or whether it had always been thus.

Centres need to be aware that there is no need to submit a candidate's whole folder of evidence. The guidance provided states that only the

evidence listed on the checklist is required. Centres must be more aware of the contents of the Moderator's Toolkit, which lists the acceptable software for evidence. Some candidates lost marks because they failed to convert some documents (e.g. those created in MS Publisher) into an accepted format.

Activity 1

The Event Profile is not assessed, but provides a mechanism for organising the thoughts and decisions of the student and helpful information for the assessor. There is space available for teacher feedback and where this was used by the teacher, it made a difference to the candidates' decisions.

Candidates were successful in finding out about upcycling and recycling. However, candidates must record their sources in the sources table. In order to access the higher marks, candidates must show discrimination in their choice of sources. This was not often achieved since candidates chose to list only those sources they ultimately used in their products and not those they decided not to. In a few cases this was rectified by useful comments in the Activity 1 Review.

Candidates were tasked to create an original logo for the event, reflecting the upcycling theme. Many based logos on the traditional recycling symbol using images they had sourced from the internet. However, the best logos were those created from scratch and which contained a number of elements combined to fully represent upcycling and what it means.

Candidates had to search online to find possible stallholders for the event and save these details for an email list. Many candidates created a database with validation. This task was generally well done with some clearly formatted and useful lists, achieved by exporting the list or report into word processing software and saving it in a suitable format. Some candidates commented on the difficulty of finding suitable stallholders in their locality, having to make assumptions to overcome this by extending the 'local' area. Candidates are not required to submit the database.

The majority of candidates created a good invitation, but in some cases not all the criteria listed were met. A significant number of candidates lost sight of the fact that this was intended for stallholders and created a general purpose invitation. Others were directed towards the stallholder(s) but lacked a persuasive tone.

Invitations were often formatted as pdf, png, doc and rtf. When created as a png, it was particularly successful when embedded in the email, showing that candidates had thought about the issues surrounding 'spam' and 'junk' mail where attachments from unknown senders could be ignored.

Most candidates answered all the Activity 1 review questions, providing some very detailed and useful reviews for assessors and moderators. Good reviews outlined the candidates' decisions, feedback, responses to the feedback and comments on the final outcomes, occasionally including screenshots of key details as an enhancement. The review is a key document and should be used to record any feedback received and responses to it.

Activity 2

Modelling challenged most candidates, with many not understanding the concept of profit and loss for an event and how changing the variables could impact this. Some candidates showed sound practical spreadsheet skills, but not using formulae and functions efficiently impacted on the usefulness of the model. Some candidates chose the simpler model template provided, and went on to develop this into a more complex model that allowed them to test a number of 'what-if' scenarios. A few candidates created their own model from scratch and often this was a successful approach. Centres are reminded that the two provided model templates are simply possible start points and should not be taken as prescriptive.

Candidates should have investigated a number of venues with different capacities. Many chose only one venue and did not relate its capacity to the event's final profit or loss. There was a lack of understanding that the number of visitors could impact the number of demos, the number of kits required as the 'give-away' and the level of income from the chosen 'recycling' point. Candidates should have investigated a range of sources and recorded these within the spreadsheet so that they could show evidence of selection or discrimination in their decision making. Some of the costs were not realistic. Some models were enhanced by spinners, paste links, lookup and other features.

The key outcome of the model was the recommendations for the local council which could be used to support a request for sponsorship. Candidates, at times, did not understand how the model outcomes should be integrated with the recommendations; thus many recommendations were not fit for purpose. Many presentations contained some data from the model, e.g. charts, tables, but not in a format that could have been easily understood by the audience. Many slides had far too much text and used graphics that were too small. Some were overcrowded and not businesslike. Some quoted very unrealistic profit/loss figures and model outcomes were not used as justification for their recommendations. Very few candidates produced suitable speaker notes. It appears that candidates have little experience of speaker notes and how they are used. The recommendations often missed the point about sponsorship.

Activity 2's final publication was a web page for other students, which would raise interest and persuade them to get involved. Candidates had not recognised that this was for students of their own age-range and to persuade them to come to the event. Many were very general and would not have appealed or persuaded the student's peers to come along. Where candidates were selective in the information they included they were able to produce a useful webpage. Finally, as part of Activity 2, candidates reviewed their publications and performance. Most candidates answered all the questions, enhanced their evidence with relevant screenshots, and provided good quality reviews, outlining their decisions, feedback, responses to feedback and comments on the final outcomes.

Activity 3

This Activity is all about the design and development of digital products - the movie of how to upcycle their chosen item and an interactive discovery board for the planned event.

Many movie timelines did not contain details of timings, transitions, effects and assets and there were examples of reverse engineering where the design had clearly been created after development of the movie. Some movies did not include the required primary still images. Good movies included music and a voiceover, showing clearly the materials needed, how they were used and what the upcycled product would look like. The finished movies must be tested to make sure they play as intended and exported from the authoring software in a suitable format eg as a wmv.

The Discovery Board required a flowchart and detailed storyboards. A significant number either did not include a flowchart, or it was very simple and showed the flow in one direction only. In some cases these were produced in a software format not accessible using the Moderator's toolkit. Some sound and video files did not play as intended and some links were broken which meant that the moderator could not use the final publication. The CD for the moderator must be tested to ensure all publications work as the candidate intended. In this first series, benefit of the doubt has been given where links did not work as long as the asset could be identified within the evidence.

Most candidates answered all the review questions about this activity with some writing detailed comments.

Activity 4

Candidates were asked to evaluate their finished products and their own performance using the Activity Review documents. Where candidates had made good use of the reviews in the first three Activities, they were able to produce a detailed and informative evaluation.

Preparing the Evidence

Centres should submit only the final products and publications as listed on the evidence checklist. These should be organised into the Activity folders as directed in the CAB. Links from the checklist should be checked to make sure that all works as intended. Evidence must be checked to ensure it is all accessible using the Moderator's Toolkit.

Once the evidence is copied onto the moderation CD, it must be thoroughly checked again. All the evidence for the required sample should be on one CD. Centres should label the candidate work clearly and cross reference the CAR using the same naming convention: Centre Number_Candidate Number_First 2 letters Lastname_First Initial. Further guidance can be found on the 'Centre guidance for the submission of moderation samples' document on the website.

The Candidate Assessment Record (CAR) should be completed and provided electronically as part of the submission. Comments should be directed to the moderator and should explain where the internal assessor has awarded marks and provide details of any professional judgement applied. The CAR should not be scanned or provided as .jpg since they are often difficult to read and this frequently impedes the moderation process.

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