

Principal Moderator's Report January 2013

GCSE ICT 5IT02 01

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Introduction

Unit 2, *Using Digital Tools*, is a practical unit. Candidates 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.

January 2013 is the fourth moderation session for this unit, and will be the last series to take place in January. In this series, centres could choose from Upcycle Now or Get Up, Get Moving. The vast majority of centres submitted work for Upcycle Now.

Centres are reminded that January 2013 is the final available session in which to submit work for Upcycle Now. Centres submitting work in June 2013 should use Get Up, Get Moving, or the new CAB, Community Spirit.

In both CABs candidates are asked to complete four activities:

- Activity 1 involves research and using the results of that research to create a profile and some digital products.
- Activity 2 focuses on modelling and the use of some of the meaningful information generated by that modelling to create further products.
- Activity 3 asks candidates to design and create two products; they must be prepared to explain and justify their design decisions.
- Activity 4 requires candidates to evaluate their products and their own performance.

Where centres have done well

The most successful outcomes were seen where candidates had clearly been focused on both producing good-quality work and also meeting the requirements of the CAB precisely. Good-quality feedback from teachers and test buddies was once again a feature of the highest-scoring portfolios. Those candidates who responded to feedback and referred to the modifications made to their work in review benefited in terms of the marks awarded.

Where the Candidate Assessment Records (CARs) were completed in detail this aided the moderation process considerably and provided moderators with an insight into the rationale behind the marks awarded. It was clear that these centres had thought carefully about their assessment of the work and were committed to supporting their candidates by providing such a level of detail. It is much easier to trust in the professional judgment of assessors when this level of documentation is present.

Where centres could improve

It is vital that centres can be confident that controlled assessment procedures have been followed by their candidates and that they can have faith in the integrity of the work produced. Candidates should not store any of their controlled assessment work online where it can be accessed by other candidates or modified outside the time allotted by the centre for working on the CAB. Aside from the fact that this contravenes the controlled assessment guidelines, it may also lead to a moderator not being able to see some of or the entire digital product in question if they do not happen to be connected to the internet when moderating.

A minority of centres are still submitting discs that are disorganised and include either irrelevant files, multiple copies of activity files or what appears to be the vast majority of the candidates' home directories from their network. When this happens moderators can be at a loss as to which file represents the final version of the work that the centre has assessed, and this can lead to marks being adjusted. Multiple versions of files were a particular issue in this series even when discs were otherwise well organised.

Some work was once again seen in formats not covered by the Moderator's Toolkit¹. Centres are reminded again that moderators cannot read work submitted in these formats, the most common being Microsoft Publisher. The easiest and most sensible way to avoid this is to produce a PDF version of the Publisher file and submit that as the final product.

Some candidates did not appear to be receiving sufficient feedback on their work for them to make considered improvements. Centres should ensure that each candidate has access to a test buddy and teacher feedback of a good quality throughout the CAB.

Centre assessment was broadly more accurate in this series. Centres should reflect on the following points, which apply to specific activities.

¹http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse10/ict/unit_2/Pages/Moderators_Toolkit.aspx

Activity 1

In order to achieve marks in Mark Band 3, discrimination in selection of sources must be evident either in the sources table or in the review, and candidates at this level should be considering the issue of copyright. There were more instances of candidates using URLs of Google searches or simply stating 'Google' as the source in this series, and this should be avoided where possible.

The standard of logos continues to improve, and these were again better when created from scratch rather than by combining several pieces of clipart or wordart. Where logos were poorly done, they became more of a collage or montage of several found images than something that could be used in a variety of different products and situations. Logos should always aim to represent the general idea of the CAB.

Activity 2

It is still clear from this activity that where candidates grasp the idea early on that they are creating a model that will enable them to ask 'What If?' questions about the event or situation that they are modelling, they do much better and score higher marks.

The following guidance from the previous report still applies:

'Centres should reflect carefully on the notion that in order to score marks in Mark Band 3 candidates need to create a "complex spreadsheet model". A complex spreadsheet model is one that will include some complex functions or make use of some complex features of the software, but also one that will generate sufficient meaningful and reliable information to fully inform the decision-making process.

In Get Up, Get Moving candidates might consider the realism of planning a week of exercise in which every activity is rigorous and challenging and instead ask "What if we introduce some gentler activities in between more challenging days in order to give this person a break? Will their BMI still fall sufficiently?"

A Mark Band 3 candidate will be able to do the above, and crucially their model *will be sufficiently complex to enable them to do so without additional changes to the model itself*. They should have tested the model to ensure that it is capable of producing the required information, and have included some information on any modifications made in their review.'

Activity 3

There were still some cases of retrospective design in this section; that is, design that consists either of screenshots of the finished product or design clearly completed after the fact – evident from the tense used by the candidates when describing aspects of the design.

Where candidates clearly justified their design decisions in the first part of this activity they scored the highest marks. Lack of clear justification was the main barrier to entry into Mark Band 3.

In the report for the previous series it was noted that generalisations such as 'eye-catching' or 'memorable' can often tend to indicate weaker justifications and these kinds of phrase need additional explanation. Terms such as 'professional' and 'stands out' can be added to this list. These kinds of term should also be kept out of reviews and evaluations as much as possible in favour of specific comments that convey the candidate's meaning.

Centres should continue to be aware that in Activity 3 there are two products; one is considered the major product and carries more weight than the other. In the two CABs eligible in this series, the discovery board and website were the major products, with the video and podcast being the minor products. Centres need to bear this in mind because it was evident in some cases that candidates had spent more time on the minor products than on the rest of the activity, to the detriment of the quality of the major products.

Some discovery boards still implied that the event was taking place at some point in the future despite this being highlighted as an issue in the previous report. Centres need to ensure that candidates are paying close attention to the CAB requirements going forward.

Activity 4

In general, evaluations were very well organised and candidates made good use of subheadings to structure their work.

Evaluations that developed comments and suggested effective improvements scored higher marks than those that were more narrative in nature. As stated above, candidates should avoid generalisations such as 'professional' and be more specific about the nature of the suggested improvements rather than stating, for example, 'more colour' or 'more images'.

The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar was once again generally good.

Preparing the evidence

Centres are reminded that the sample should consist of the work of the candidates requested **plus the work of the highest- and lowest-scoring candidates**. Several centres did not provide the highest- and lowest-scoring work in the first instance in this series, which slowed down the moderation process and created unnecessary extra work for moderators and no doubt members of staff in centres, too.

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. Some candidates submitted a single folder containing all their evidence or indeed multiple copies of the outcomes of some or all activities and this should be avoided in future series; the final product should be clearly identified by filename and reference in the index page. Evidence must be checked to ensure it is accessible using the Moderator's Toolkit.

Once the evidence is copied on to the moderation CD, it must be thoroughly checked again. All the evidence for the required sample should be on one CD or DVD if possible. CDs and/or DVDs should be appropriately packaged so as to survive the journey to the moderator intact. There were fewer instances of discs being sent with no case in a plain paper envelope in this series.

Each candidate folder should be named according to the following naming convention:

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

For example, John Smith with candidate number 9876 at centre 12345 would have a controlled assessment project in a folder titled: '12345_9876_SM_J'.

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. Some CARs arrived with little or no explanation of the marks awarded, which should never be the case.

The Assessor Witness Statement (AWS), which is the final page of the CAR, should be scanned or provided as a hard copy to authenticate the work submitted.

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