Examiner's Report

January 2010

GCE Applied ICT 6954 Paper 01

System Design and Installation

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Contents

Overall Comments

Important information

This specification has been updated and ALL candidates will be assessed on the updated version from SUMMER 2010. This version which has a blue cover and has been sent out to centres, many centres have attended the free inset sessions.

Moderated Units
Assessment Issues
Candidates need to supply explicit evidence to support their achievement of the criteria in the various marking grids. It is easier to confirm marks if the evidence is easy to find and supplied in an explicit form.

Assessors must use the e-sheets as an opportunity to explain why they have awarded marks, there are two advantages to this for the centre. If the moderator can see why and where marks are awarded it is easier to agree with the centre marks, secondly if the centre marks cannot be agreed then the moderator can give better guidance to help future assessment.

A number of centres still do not meet deadlines for submitting work to the moderators; the deadlines are published in advance and must be kept unless special permission has been obtained in advance from Edexcel. Permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Centres who miss the deadline risk having the results delayed or the candidates recorded as absent.

Each unit must be on a separate CD, even if sent to the same moderator. Each unit will forwarded to different principal moderators for monitoring and auditing purposes.

Unit 4: System Design and Installation (6954)

General comments

The comments from previous Principal Moderators Reports are still and unfortunately in some instances valid.

Again there are still centres submitting eportfolio evidence in incorrect formats, i.e. Word files and eportfolios with links not working which indicated a lack of summative testing. As stated previously it is not the moderator's role to have to search through eportfolios and folders to find the relevant evidence. This however is only a small but a significant percentage of the eportfolios submitted, however the majority were submitted in a format, which allowed the moderator to easily find the evidence.

Assessors are making better use of the e-sheet to explain where evidence is located and how marks were awarded, and if the candidate worked independently this latter point is a requirement of the higher mark bands.

Lack of proof reading was still very evident throughout a high number of submitted portfolios with alarmingly many examples of evidence containing uncorrected errors. With the introduction of Quality of Written Communication to strand b it is important that candidates are recommended to proof read their work thoroughly.

Strand A - Needs Analysis

Some candidates are not submitting evidence that they have carried out and produced outcomes from at least two different investigations as part of their needs analysis this is a requirement in order to access the top of mark band 1 and move into mark band 2. Candidates are still submitting non-completed questionnaires, referring to interviews and meetings with their clients and not furnishing any evidence that these events had actually taken place. Candidates had little problem in finding two existing systems but again a significant percentage could not describe how these systems matched their client's requirements. There was still a distinct lack of evidence from the majority of candidates when it came to being able to evaluate fully the benefits and perceived drawbacks of the chosen systems in order to give their client an informed conclusion. The production of a proper needs analysis for a client with complex needs is central to this strand and centres are again reminded to refer their candidates to section 4.1 of the unit specification.

Strand B - System Specification

The main requirement of this strand is, unfortunately, still being misinterpreted in that the chosen system needs to be recommended to the client through a detailed and informative systems specification (section 4.7 of the unit specification). The completed report should be written as a non-technical explanation justifying as to why all the components, both hardware and software have been chosen and for the higher mark bands candidates' should offer there client alternatives to those components chosen.
This latter point was either omitted completely or very briefly mentioned in a large number of candidates' evidence for this strand.
Again as in previous moderation series candidates selected furniture, which they claimed to have ergonomic qualities but failed to explain why they would be suitable for their client.

Quality of Written Communication [QWC] is to be applied to this strand after the content mark has been determined by the assessor. The QWC is assessed and the mark is then adjusted, **within the band**, to give a final mark.
The following 'rules' apply.
The content mark cannot be **increased** on the basis of QWC.
If the content mark awarded is at the **bottom of a band**, the student's mark cannot be **reduced further**.
QWC should not be assessed elsewhere in the unit.

Strand C- System Build

As mentioned in previous Principal Moderators reports the system being built does not need to relate to the system recommended in strand (b) but there should be some indication as to the requirements and anticipated use of the system.
The evidence for the configuration activities still did not reflect the candidates' level of work. It is important that centres advise candidates to address several of the activities listed in 4.9 of the unit specification. Many candidates still did not address working safely.

Strand D – Testing

Testing covering all the major aspects of the built and configured system is more important than producing evidence of every single test which results in many pages of similar tests being undertaken.
It was again pleasing to see evidence of some good practice with candidates giving detailed accounts of how they tested the final system and also some end user testing. Photographs and screen dumps of error messages were included.
Candidates should be encouraged to produce annotated evidence of a variety of tests that have been undertaken if they wish to achieve a mark in grade bands two or three.

Strand E - Evaluation

The evaluation in this unit is about the performance of the built, tested and configured system and whether or not it met the needs of their client not about the performance and structure of the candidate's eportfolio. It was again evident that many candidates found it difficult to accurately evaluate the work undertaken in this unit and comment reflectively on their own performance. Assessing their skill level at the outset and reviewing the skills obtained through undertaking the unit can help candidates evaluate both their skill level and their performance.
Feedback from others was often omitted and when present was found to be vague and lacking evidence of who provided the feedback and why.

Grade Boundary January 2010

6954	Total	A	B	C	D	E
Raw Mark	60	46	40	34	29	24
UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40