Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2010

Applied GCE

Information and Communication Technology (6954)

Paper 01 – System Design and Installation

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General Comments

This was the first time work was assessed on the updated version of the specification.

In general, assessors are making better use of the e-sheet to explain where evidence is located and how marks were awarded. 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, and 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.

Comments that the candidate worked independently is a requirement of the higher mark bands. However, it was evident, that a minority of assessors were not stating how or why a particular mark for a strand had been given, and moderators were finding that the comments box was either not completed or contained comments such 'good level of work, or 'did not work hard enough'. It was also found that some assessors just copy and paste comments from e-sheet to e-sheet and all candidates end up with identical comments even though the marks were different.

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

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.

QWC
This was assessed for the first time under the updated specification and the majority of centres commented on QWC on the e-sheet and used the criteria correctly. However, some misunderstanding was evident in a few cases.

The rules for QWC are as follows:

- The content of the work is marked, identifying the band and the mark that the work is worth

- The QWC is assessed and the mark is then adjusted, within the band, to give a final mark

- The content mark cannot be increased on the basis of QWC

- If the content mark awarded is at the bottom of a band, the candidate's mark cannot be reduced further

- QWC should not be assessed elsewhere in the unit

Centre Administration

Candidates need to supply explicit evidence to support their achievement of the criteria in the various marking grids.

A number of centres still do not meet deadlines for submitting work to the moderators. The deadlines are published in advance and must adhered to 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.

Strand A – Needs Analysis

Candidates appeared to have little problem in finding two existing systems but a significant number 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. It must be pointed out that the two alternative systems must be two pc systems.

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. A completed questionnaire is acceptable as a single method of investigation but when the same questions are used as the sole evidence for an interview, it is not accepted that this is a second investigation of the client's needs. Unfortunately, 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.

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.

QWC was applied to this strand for the first time, after the content mark has been determined by the assessor. Assessors had taken this change on board and generally, the marks awarded reflected this.

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.

It is important that candidates show that they have built and produced a functional pc system, presenting evidence that they have installed both internal hardware components and software. They must also evidence that the system has been configured to meet their client's needs. The evidence for the configuration activities still did not reflect the candidates' level of work and a significant number of candidates' were still submitting evidence more suited to unit 6. 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

As stated in previous reports, testing that covers 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 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 mark bands 2 or 3.

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. The evaluation is not about the performance and structure of the candidate's eportfolio. It was 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.

Unit Results

Grade	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Boundary Mark	60	46	40	34	29	24	19
Max Uniform Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	0-39

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-39.

Note
Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject.

Qualification Results

Advanced Subsidary (Single Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Maximum Uniform Mark = 300	240	210	180	150	120

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-119.

Advanced GCE (Single Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Maximum Uniform Mark = 600	480	420	360	300	240

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-239.

Advanced Subsidary (Double Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Maximum Uniform Mark = 600	480	450	420	390	360	330	300	270	240

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade EE will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-239.

Advanced GCE with Advanced Subsidary (Additional)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Maximum Uniform Mark = 900	720	690	630	600	540	510	450	420	360

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade EE will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-359.

Advanced GCE (Double Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Maximum Uniform Mark = 1200	960	900	840	780	720	660	600	540	480

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade EE will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-479