Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2011

Applied GCE

Information and Communication Technology (6952)

Paper 01 – The Digital Economy

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General Comments

The entry for this unit was much smaller than the summer. There were a good number of resubmissions this January and some of the work submitted did not contain sufficient new material to justify the marks awarded.

Moderated marks were across the whole range with a good number at the high end. Many candidates are producing very good evidence across all strands although there are still weaknesses observed for strand d in many eportfolios.

There were a number of centres who did not appear to be familiar with the revised specification, issue 2 May 2009 which is now in use.

Centres are asked to read this report in conjunction with the more detailed report of Summer 2010. This applies to all 5 strands for this unit. It was disappointing to note that some centres had not addressed weaknesses identified in previous moderator reports to the centre nor reacted to guidance given in the Principal Moderator's reports to centres.

Centre Administration

Most centres submitted the CDs by the deadline given and some just after. Centres should be reminded that they should adhere to the published deadlines to ensure that the marks may be returned to them without delay.

Most centres named the eportfolios with the correct naming conventions but many did not do so for the naming of the esheets. Most centres provided candidate authentication in the form of individual sheets scanned on to the CD or provided hard copy format of these or a signed printout of the submitted marks. Some centres had to be contacted to supply candidate authentication sheets. The correct conventions can be found on the "Moderation of ePortfolios" document, which can be located on the "Guidance to Centres" section of the Applied GCE ICT section of the Edexcel website. Please ensure all documents are included in the correct format with your submission as they are an essential part of the moderation process.

Some of the eportfolios had links that did not work and folders had to be examined to see if the evidence was present. It is important that CDs are tested prior to submission. It is also important that CDs are clearly labelled as stated in the above document. Some CDs submitted contained no identification.

There were a small minority of centres who had not presented the evidence in the correct file format and some had to be contacted to resubmit the CDs correctly labelled containing eportfolios correctly presented with evidence in the correct format in order for Moderation to be undertaken.

Strand A

Overall this strand was addressed correctly and the marks awarded by centres were usually within national standards. However, some candidates were given marks in mark band 2 where not enough features had been covered and often not described in enough detail to access this mark band. Not all candidates are including evaluative comments relating to the design of the transactional website but concentrating too much on the products being sold. Many candidates are still often recommending improvements relating to the products rather than the design features of the website. Many Assessors made no reference to Quality of Written Communication which is part of this strand. The content should be placed in the correct mark band and then QWC should be considered. Marks may be adjusted downwards but cannot increased, nor can the mark be adjusted below that mark band. There are many instances of the word COSTOMER appearing.

Strand B

Much of the evidence fell in mark bands 1 and 2 and were awarded marks accordingly. Few candidates produced diagrams that supported the requirements for mark band 3, ie flows in and out of the organisation and other departments within the organisation that might use the data obtained.
There were instances of very similar work produced by whole cohorts which demonstrated a very structured approach.

Strand C

This strand was assessed within national standards in the main. The better candidates did look at the 3 areas concerned, ie threats, preventative measures and legislation, from the organisation's point of view and many related the evidence to the transactional website evaluated for strand a which is good practice. The weaker candidates wrote general notes for this strand often from their own point of view which is not the correct approach.

Strand D

There was a great improvement in this strand in the summer but this was not the case for this particular window. The comments made the Examiner's report for Summer 2010 are still very relevant and should be read in conjunction with this report.

There were many centres where candidates had produced output with no evidence showing how this was achieved. The Revised Specification states there should be evidence showing how the database was manipulated and gives details as to what is required. Few candidates demonstrated the use of search criteria in producing output and many just used count and sum. There were also many examples of only one table being used and yet high marks in mark band 2 awarded. Although search criteria can be used on one table for mark band 2, but more than one table for mark band 3, it is expected that candidates also demonstrate the use of the relational aspects of their database, eg selecting appropriate fields from across the tables to produce meaningful output.

There were a significant number of candidates producing all output in datasheet view which is not sufficient to address all the marks in mark band 1. Output should be presented in a meaningful way, ie reports and/or a graphical format.

As stated in previous reports: "It was disappointing to see the lack of independence to this strand demonstrated by many cohorts with evidence being virtually the same across all candidates. Such an approach does not support the higher mark bands.

Some centres appear to have supplied 3 tables to the candidates. This unit requires one large dataset file to be supplied to the candidates in csv format. The dataset needs to be large enough to contain trends. Each candidate is required to carry out the practical work independently.

Strand E

Although many candidates are now attempting to evaluate the performance of the database created and their own performance across the unit, it is disappointing to see that still a significant number of candidates are not providing the correct evidence for this strand. Some candidates are still just listing what they had done particularly referring to how they had used Access and problems relating to the use of this applications program.

Marks were often awarded in mark band 2 although the candidates had not referred to feedback received in their evaluative comments.

Many candidates are evaluating their "ebook" and some their "eportfolios" which is not relevant.

Candidates should pay more attention to the wording of this strand for each unit and not assume all unit evaluations concentrate on the same areas.

Grade Boundaries

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