Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2010

Applied GCE

Information and Communication Technology (6958)

Paper 01 – Managing ICT Projects

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General Comments

The entry for this unit was small this January. Moderated marks were across the whole range but there were few at the higher end.

Many candidates still are not appearing to appreciate that the evidence in all 5 strands is very interlinked and, as a consequence, do not address some of the aspects of this unit very well. The revised specification contains a lot more guidance on the delivery of this unit. See the Teaching and learning strategies on pages 147-149.

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.

There was evidence that some Centres are not giving enough time for the project to be undertaken over a period of at least 10 weeks.

Strand A was assessed within national standards in the main. The evidence for stand b addressed the strand more accurately. The evidence for strand c was still being very generously assessed by many centres. It appears that not all centres fully appreciate the requirements of strand d.

Centre Administration

Many centres did not submit the CDs by the deadline. Again it would appear that not all centres had referred to the document: "Moderation of ePortfolios" which can be located on the "Guidance to Centres" section of the Applied GCE ICT section of the Edexcel website.

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.

There were instances where centres had failed to check the CD before submitting for moderation with the result that some required eportfolios were not there. Some Centres failed to include the highest and lowest scoring candidates but most did substitute a candidate when a candidate selected by the system was withdrawn.

There were a few 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

Most candidates did produce a Progress Report and Definition of Scope relating to this unit rather than trying to combine with either units 10 or 11.   Overall this strand was assessed within national standards.   However, similar weaknesses to previous windows are still being observed.   Not all candidates are relating the risks to the implementation of the **project** but relating them to the product and few are **categorising the risks**. This is required to access the higher marks band in strand b.

Although more candidates are referring to the Impact on Personnel and Practices, the evidence often does not demonstrate understanding of this requirement. Candidates should be aware that a new system can have a major impact on employees' jobs, working patterns, job descriptions, contracts of employment etc. Some candidates are still just repeating the content of the Proposal in the Definition of Scope which does not demonstrate an understanding of the difference between these documents.   Some candidates are not explicitly listing the stakeholders, which is required, nor giving a roadmap, review dates, completion date which are all required and form the basis of the plans produced for strand b.

Many candidates neglected to define stakeholders properly and should refer to 8.2 of the unit specification.   The difference between a Client and Senior Manager was not understood by a sizeable number of candidates and some appeared not to use a Senior Manager at all. This has a big impact on marks available for strand c.

Strand B

It was good to see that practically all candidates used project management software which is a requirement for this unit.   There were still instances of candidates moving the handover date forward in each plan which is not correct and does not show the product being implemented using project management methods. Most candidates included slippage/contingency time in the plans to take risks into account. However, many did not include this in a sensible manner and there were instances of this appearing after the agreed handover date!   Again this strand was evidenced well when candidates produced a log/diary explaining what had occurred and provided a link to the current version of the plan and often also relevant communication with the stakeholders including minutes of meetings. Few candidates demonstrated understanding of how the plan should be used to produce progress reports for meetings.

Some candidates only included one plan but were awarded marks in the higher mark bands. To access all the marks in mark band 1, there should be updates of the plan.   Some candidates are just including cropped screen shots which turn out to be all from the only plan included in the eportfolio. Few candidates explained the changes to the plan well in this window.

There were a few instances of candidates expecting project management files to be read.   Project management software applications are not part of the accepted file formats and cannot be moderated.   Consequently, all such files should be saved as html or converted to pdf or screen shots inserted into a document in the correct format.

Strand C
There were still many instances of this strand being generously assessed with marks awarded in higher mark bands but insufficient supporting evidence. A good number of candidates only used one other stakeholder, ie the client and made no reference to any others. Such evidence restricts candidates to mark band 1. Other candidates simply listed several stakeholders in the minutes of meetings but did not provide any evidence of how they contributed to the project. Some just said "Staff of XX, Client, Senior Manager". The stakeholders need to be clearly listed and defined. The differences in the roles of the Senior Manager and Client appeared not to have been appreciated by many candidates.

Few candidates produced evidence of Progress Reports being presented at Review Meetings despite this having been highlighted in previous reports and is clearly mentioned in the Assessment Guidance for mark band 1.

The minutes of meetings were often poorly presented with little content to show how the project was being progressed or how the stakeholders were contributing to the project.

Informal communication was often just a screen shot of an email sending out an agenda but with no comments relating to the project itself.

Many candidates only produced minutes of meetings and no other form of communication. There are 20 marks available for this strand and, to access these, there should be evidence of informal and formal communication across a range of stakeholders as well as progress reports presented at meetings explaining how the project is being progressed against the plan.
This strand was often generously assessed and marks awarded in MB2 and MB3 although not all aspects required for MB1 had been addressed.

Strand D
This strand was generously assessed by many centres and often the marks were related to the product and **not the project management of the product**. Quite a number of candidates neglected to include any explicit evidence to demonstrate the product had been delivered on the relevant handover date.
The plans, diaries/logs, progress reports, minutes of meetings plus evidence of the actual handover all help evidence this strand. In addition the product should be included in the eportfolio. Some products were very limited and did not reflect A2 candidates.

Strand E
Many candidates are still trying to produce an evaluation to address this unit and either units 10 or 11 without managing to address either unit evaluation well. It is strongly advised that candidates produce a totally separate evaluation for each unit and read the requirements of the relevant strand to ensure the evaluations address the right unit correctly. Those candidates that did produce totally separate evaluations tended to access more marks for this strand. Although most candidates held a final meeting, few of these were proper End of Review Meetings with a range of stakeholders and most failed to obtain and record feedback from the stakeholders which limited the achievement to MB1. Even when feedback was obtained, it was not always relevant to the requirements of this strand with, more often, comments on the actual product rather than the effectiveness of the

management of the project. Candidates who did not hold a final meeting were unable to address this strand.

Many centres made no reference to Quality of Written Communication in the feedback for this strand on esheets.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx