Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

Applied GCE ICT

6963 01 – Web Management

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General Comments

There was a relatively small amount of centres submitting during this window, however there was a clear distinction seen between the centres meeting national standards and those that did not.

For the centres assessing to national standards, the evidence continued to demonstrate a high understanding of the topic and of the requirements of the marking grid. There was a further reduction in eCommerce sites, several of the hosting reports aimed at clearly defined client's needs, standard visit strategies being used and assessed with site statistics and a good selection of high quality feedback forms were supplied as evidence.

There was an overall increase in the use of privacy policies, terms and conditions and data protection statements clearly demonstrating the compliance with legal constraints, and the majority of candidates attempted to utilize accessibility tools, especially WAVE.

It is always a pleasure to see the unit improve due to the hard word of students and the diligence and guidance of tutors across the sector. Several of the centres produced extremely professional and imaginative sites presented in an ePortfolio that was easy to access. This was in line with previous moderation sessions in the June window.

However, a clear message sent out in the June 2010 report appears to have gone unheeded by several centres and needs to be repeated and re-emphasized. This is the continued use of unsuitable structured assignments.

They often do not present full opportunity for the candidates to create evidence to access all mark bands in all strands. They often produce evidence that is not related to the specification and is far too similar across the cohort. However, the most disturbing result of using these misguided and unchecked assignments is that they often reduce the overall grades of the cohort year in year out during moderation.

The Principal Examiner continues to stress the importance of reviewing the assignment tasks to eradicate this problem in future submissions.

Strand A – Centres assessing to national standards presented focused evidence easily accessed using clear links for each of the strand requirements. Testing was supported by screen shots of action taken to solve problems and the client was sufficiently considered in the choice of host. One point to note when selecting and justifying the host - it is not necessary to provide evidence of the facilities provided by several hosts, just the features provided by the chosen host justified against clear clients needs. Unsuitable assessments often produced extensive evidence of uploading files and a dictionary of terms for web hosting, both of which are not required. There was also too little on why hosting would benefit the client.

Strand B – There is a general improvement in the strategies used and the assessment of their effectiveness. There were several occasions however, where non standard and invalid strategies were still being called for, mainly in the structured assignments. Several examples include graphical site maps, hit counters, Google Analytics, word of mouth, email confirmations and links to other sites without any exchange/reciprocal links on relevant sites. These do not help promote the site or increase the audience of first time users.

Strand B still suffered as a result of centres using old assignments that had not been tailored to fit the reviesd specification. In the revised specification, titles, keywords and description tags only count as one strategy. Examples are given in section 13.2 of the revised specification, that offer a good opportunity to assess the effectiveness of unsuccessful strategies. The majority of high scoring ePortfolios for this strand effectively considered this when producing evidence.

Strand C – Generally well evidenced and assessed to national standards. Further development of free external data capture utilities has to be the way forward in this strand. However, very simple forms, i.e. that only capture the users name and email address, will not extend beyond mark band two.

Strand D – The major problem seen in this strand was, once again, the frequent testing during maintenance on features that couldn't possibly have changed i.e. links within a site and regular spelling and grammar checks on pages that have not been updated. The more effective ePortfolios tested a whole range of changes made to the site during the maintenance period. Sites were generally provided in the ePortfolio or as a live link, however, technical documentation was often weak. There should be enough information to maintain the site long after it has been published.

Evidence of maintenance still contained changes made to the site to upgrade it from Unit 6955. This is not suitable evidence. The site must be complete and upgraded with all promotion strategies and feedback forms before publishing.

Strand E – This strand was generally assessed and evidenced effectively using believable hit reports. Self assessment was not always extensive but the performance of the site is being evaluated clearly using a variety of methods.

Grade Boundaries

Centres are reminded that the GCE in Applied ICT is an Awarded qualification. As such, grade boundaries are subject to review each series for both written paper and coursework units.

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

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