Principal Moderator Feedback

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Applied GCE 6951

Unit 1 – The Information Age

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General comments

In this series there appeared to be an increase in the number of centres either exceeding the file size limit for this unit or using incorrect file formats. Centres are reminded that they should refer to the latest guidance on the Edexcel website and ensure that work submitted is in line with requirements. There were still several examples of work submitted in inappropriate file formats, such as PowerPoint presentations which had not been converted to html format, or long, document-style PDF files with few links for e-book presentations. This type of approach does not produce an e-book in line with the specification.

Once again a number of e-books were submitted in exe format; these are not acceptable and will be rejected in future assessment windows. The specification states the e-book will be available to people using the world wide web so they must be accessible using a web browser.

The e-book should be self contained and allow the user to navigate from section to section and from page to page. The best examples are written using web authoring software and open in a browser environment

Candidates who are clear about the purpose of the e-book from the outset tend to produce better content that is fit for purpose and addresses the audience in an appropriate manner. These candidates often start with in introductory page outlining the purpose of the e-book, mentioning the audience in 100 years time.

Most assessors made appropriate comments on the e-record sheets which were helpful, and showed how the marks were awarded. This assists the moderator in their consideration of the marks awarded by the centre.

Strand (a) On-line services:

The full range of marks was awarded for this section with some candidates scoring full marks. Candidates scoring full marks produced work in required depth of coverage of each of the services. Giving good examples and very detailed descriptions of services supported by good examples.

Weaker candidates still tend to simply evaluate websites for this Strand, rather than the services themselves.

QWC levels generally matched the mark band standard in which the evidence was placed.
The majority of centres commented on QWC on the e-sheet and used the criteria correctly. However some misunderstanding was still evident.

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 student's mark cannot be reduced further.

QWC should not be assessed elsewhere in the unit.

Strand (b) Life in the information age:

In most cases, five different aspects were present.

The better candidates are able to see the difference between this Strand and the previous one, and their work covers how aspects of people's lives have been changed by the use of information technology. Most candidates find it easy to describe how they are using the technology in their own lifestyle, however only the very best candidates are able to use good examples of how the lives of others are affected.

Candidates at the lower end of the mark range still describe the technology again or review the technology with little or no reference to the impact on life.

It is also essential that in this section, candidates use research from a range of sources and not just the internet as is often the case. To gain marks above MB1 candidates must use sources of information other than the internet. One of the main sources of evidence available to the moderator is the candidate's bibliography. Frequently this consisted of a list of URLs and nothing more.

Strand (c) Digital Divide:

The better candidates appreciated the need to research the extent of the divide and the measures being taken to bridge the gap. Many candidates had focussed on specific projects for bridging the divide without considering their impact. Candidates often listed, or gave a brief comment on factors such as wealth and environment, but did not evaluate the impact or the extent. Government measures to bridge the gap were rarely mentioned.

Work at the lower end of the mark range often demonstrated limited research. It also provided only a general discussion of the existence of a divide with very little specific detail. The measures taken to bridge the gap were often only briefly considered and restricted in the depth of analysis.

Strand (d) The e-book:

Most candidates had used appropriate software, although there appeared to be an increase in centres using software that was not appropriate for an e-book.

The specification requires an e-book that can be read in a browser. The best approach is to use web authoring software, or other software that can create pages in html.

The better candidates addressed the awareness of audience and purpose. However there are still candidates writing as if it was an ordinary assignment to be given in to the teacher. Many e-books used external links with no thought that they may not be available in 100 years time. Better candidate work used extracts from websites that were contained within the candidate's e-book so no external access was required.

Centres are using a range of techniques to make the e-book user-friendly, and a range of techniques were used to either avoid scrolling or to minimise the effect of it. The most important thing is that the user is always able to navigate around the e-book and that vital links are not lost when the page scrolls. The use of frames is one way of achieving this.

Standard ways of working were not always observed in that filenames were not meaningful and external assessors had difficulty in finding the start of the e-book.

Strand (e) Components and structure:

Candidates enjoy the construction aspects of this unit and many good examples of well constructed e-books were seen. Whilst some products demonstrated good structure and navigation there were still examples of poor colour schemes combined with very long scrolling pages with little consideration of layout. Some candidates included inappropriate multimedia, for example in the form of unnecessary animated gif files

Candidates must use an adequate range of appropriate components to be awarded marks at the top end of the range. It is not sufficient to simply include components in a tick box manner. To gain credit the components need to be relevant and appropriate for both audience and purpose.

Testing is demonstrated by the fact that a fully functioning e-book had been produced Separate evidence of testing, as stated in previous examiner reports, is not necessary.

Strand (f) Evaluation:

Most candidates managed to make brief evaluative comments about their e-book and their own performance. Candidates solicited and recorded feedback comments, often in the form of questionnaires. The inclusion of completed questionnaires alone does not provide evidence that candidates have acted on or analysed the feedback.

Standard Ways of Working

In most cases, the only evidence the external assessors had for this aspect was the bibliography and the file structures and names used by the candidates. In some cases it was difficult to locate the e-book or e-portfolios of candidates as these were often not well named.

Bibliographies are the main source of evidence to support the range of sources of information used by the candidate. Many candidates only quoted websites, the specification requires a wide range of different sources to be used for Strands (b) and (c).

General Administration

Most samples were correctly submitted with folders clearly labelled with centre numbers, candidate number and first 2 letters of surname and first of Christian name. It would help if the e-record sheet naming convention is the same

The centre assessor should use the e-record as an opportunity to help the moderator find the evidence required to agree the marks given. The comments by centres often contained only one-line comments and in some cases no comments at all were provided. Some centres placed all units on the same CD. This can cause problems for the moderation team as samples of units frequently need to be sent to different people during the moderation process.

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

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