GCE

Applied ICT

Advanced Subsidiary GCE (Double Award) **AS H315**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H115**

Report on the Units

June 2006

H115/H315/MS/R/06

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Advanced Subsidiary GCE ICT (Double Award)(H315)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE ICT (H115)

REPORTS ON THE UNITS

Chief Examiner's Report

This was the first session where all units were awarded and the qualification grades aggregated. Aggregation resulted in lower percentages gaining each grade than was the case for VCE ICT, where only the externally assessed units are awarded.

All Centres should by now be aware of the Joint Council ruling regarding Centre authentication of coursework. This applies to both the pre-release tasks in the examined units and the Centre assessed units. Whilst most Centres submitted Centre Authentication Forms (CCS160) for the Centre assessed units, a significant percentage failed to include them in the script packets for the externally assessed unit. This should be done as a matter of course. The Candidate Authentication Statements must be signed, but should be retained in the Centre and **not** submitted to the Examiner or Moderator.

The entry for the externally assessed unit – G041: How Organisations use ICT – has increased significantly from the first session in January, although it was clear that many of those who entered in January re-sat the examination this session. Performance generally was slightly better this session, with a few candidates managing to gain the majority of the marks available. However, the value of careful reading of the question and answering specifically what is asked cannot be over-emphasised.

Centres are reminded of the need to ensure that the correct pre-release tasks are used. Whilst the case study and Task 1 are the same for both sessions in an academic year, Tasks 2 and 3 change from January to June. The session for which it applies is clearly marked on the front of the candidate instructions booklet – G041/IC. Examiners were instructed to give no marks for the tasks if the wrong ones had been submitted.

A few candidates attempted to cross-reference answers or referred the Examiner to their notes for further detail. Only answers written on the question paper or on supplementary sheets will be marked. Candidates should be encouraged to ask for supplementary sheets if they run out of space, rather than answering elsewhere on the paper or in the margin, making the answers difficult to read. If supplementary sheets are used, candidates should be instructed to indicate that their answer is continued, rather than leave the Examiner to find the rest of their answer.

Generally the quantity and organisation of pre-release work was appropriate. However, some candidates failed to specifically identify their responses to Tasks 2 and 3. This made it difficult for Examiners to locate these tasks in order to mark them. Please ensure that each task is clearly labelled and that the work is submitted in task order. Centres are reminded that candidates should only submit work carried out in response to the tasks for use in the examination. General class notes based on the What You Need to Learn section of the unit must not be taken in to the examination. However, all work taken into the examination room **must** be attached to the examination paper and submitted to the Examiner. Those invigilating the examination need to be given clear instructions to do so.

Centres are reminded that the work submitted in response to the tasks must be each candidate's own unaided work. It is the Centre's responsibility to ensure that the work is carried out in conditions that allow the Teacher to confirm this is the case. Care is needed to ensure that candidates do not share electronic files and that teachers do not provide too much direction when helping candidates to understand what they have to do. Some diagrams will inevitably be similar if they are drawn correctly. However, if candidates produce these individually, there will be subtle differences in the length of lines, positioning of items etc. Whilst they must not mark the work, deadlines for handing in the work should be set so that there is time for the Teacher to check the work before signing the Authentication Statement.

Centres should also ensure that each candidate reads and understands the content of the Candidate Authentication Statement before signing it. Too many candidates either failed to acknowledge the sources of information they had used to complete task 3 in particular, or provided incomplete or inaccurate references. The ability to create a bibliography is a skill required by several units in this qualification and one that should be taught very early in the course. Candidates also need to learn the difference between using information and simply copying it.

Some Centres submitted pre-release work in plastic pockets or even folders. The papers are now hole-punched to allow the work to be attached using a treasury tag through the top left-hand corner. Please ensure that all pre-release work is attached in this way in future. Please also discourage candidates from tying treasury tags in knots or wrapping them several times through the punched holes. It is essential that the Examiner can separate the pre-release work from the examination paper easily to mark it.

There were entries for all seven of the Centre assessed units, although the bulk of the entries were for the single award units, G040: Using ICT to communicate and G043: ICT solutions for individuals and society. G044: Problem solving using ICT had the smallest entry. Performance in all units was mixed, with some high quality work seen for all units, but also some very poor work.

Some Centres were clearly caught out by the earlier deadline for submission of marks or were under the impression that one unit could be submitted later. This caused many problems for Moderators who had to try to obtain the marks and work in order to moderate it. Some work was received as late as July. The importance of submitting mark sheets by the published deadline cannot be over-emphasised. Failure to do so may result in delays in the publication of candidates' results.

There was a higher proportion of Centres that had scaling applied to their marks than might be expected in the first year of a new qualification. As there was the possibility of Centres being accredited, it was important that Moderators were confident that the correct standards were being applied, rather than making allowances for the fact that the qualification is new. However, some of these marks were increased rather than reduced.

Most Centres made a good attempt at using the new unit recording sheets (URS), with helpful page references and useful comments to explain the mark awarded for each task. It was very clear where Centre representatives had attended OCR training events. However, a representative sample of specific page numbers, rather than reference to every single page that contains evidence or to a wide range of pages, would assist Moderators.

Each candidate must have a URS attached to their work – a few Centres submitted these separately. It is also important that each URS is completed fully with the Centre number and name and the candidate number and name. Individual unit portfolios may be removed from the remainder for awarding and other purposes and it is difficult to identify where the work has come from if these details are not completed.

There were many instances where the total mark on the URS was incorrect or the total had not been entered. These errors and omissions should be avoided as they will mean that the Moderator has to contact the Centre to confirm the marks, delaying the moderation process.

As with pre-release tasks for G041, plastic pockets, folders and particularly ring-binders should not be used to send unit portfolios. Work should be hole-punched and secured with treasury tags.

G041 – How Organisations Use ICT

General Comments

There was a good range of marks on this paper with many candidates scoring well. This session a few candidates scored marks in the low 90s, which was pleasing. Generally, candidates seemed to perform better on this paper than in January, although there were still some who only gained a few marks.

Most candidates attempted all of the questions and had produced good quality pre-release material to help them in the exam. However, some candidates had not prepared Tasks 2 and 3, and some had included Tasks 2 and 3 from January, which gained no marks. On the other hand, some candidates did not produce full reports for Task 1 of the pre-release material – often no material was included – and relied heavily on tasks 2 and 3 for their marks, which tended to be low. There were also some instances where the sample pre-release material had been used. This disadvantaged candidates who, not only gained no marks in Tasks 2 and 3, but also had to answer questions on a case study they were unfamiliar with. Centres are reminded that, although the case study and Task 1 are the same for both sessions, Tasks 2 and 3 change from January to June. It is, therefore, vital that the correct candidate instructions are used.

Candidates generally had a good understanding of the work covered, but were unable to add details or break down processes. Candidates who had prepared well, performed well in the exam. Most pre-prepared work was word processed, though tasks 2 and 3 were not always easy to find. Whilst hand-written notes for Task 1 (T1) and hand-drawn diagrams for Task 2 (T2) are acceptable – indeed, candidates may benefit from hand-drawing the information flow diagram for task 2, or at least hand-labelling the information flows, as marks were lost due to candidates' inability to manipulate text boxes – Task 3 (T3) requires a word-processed report.

It would be helpful if Centres could clearly distinguish between T1, T2 and T3, and put the tasks in order. Candidates should be encouraged not to tie the treasury tag into a knot or wrap it through the hole several times – this leads to the examiner having to cut the tag to mark the paper. There were instances where the work submitted for the tasks was not fastened together / named etc. Although most Centres had attached the work with a treasury tag as requested, there were many who used plastic pockets or even plastic or envelope folders – even, in one instance, ring binders – to hold the pre-released tasks. Please do not do so. The work should be hole-punched in the top left hand corner and attached to the paper with a treasury tag through the hole provided.

Quite a few missed the point of the questions and appeared to have 'memorised' the mark scheme from the January paper. Some answers were inappropriate to the current exam but may have gained high marks in January. This was particularly evident with questions 4, 5 and 6. Also, some questions were poorly answered due to the students not reading / understanding the question. The need to read the question carefully and answer accordingly cannot be over-emphasised.

Centres are reminded that marks will only be awarded for answers written on the question paper. There were some instances where candidates had tried to cross-reference to Task 1 in their pre-release tasks or had made reference to it.

Centres are also reminded of the need to check the work carefully, but not mark it, before signing the Centre Authentication Form. There were fewer instances of identical information flow diagrams than have been seen in the past but too many did appear. Candidates should also be warned that it is very obvious when they simply copy and paste from a website for Task 3. In several cases it took the Examiner very little time to locate the original website.

The candidate authentication sheet indicates that all sources used should be identified. Many candidates had failed to do so. Some candidates included class/revision notes unrelated to the case study with their work. This is not allowed and should have been removed before the work was given back to candidates in the examination room.

Care is also needed to ensure that candidates are not given too much guidance when carrying out the tasks. Whilst it is acceptable for Teachers to ensure that candidates understand the content of the case study and the requirements of the tasks, they should not be given help that relates directly to carrying out each task. Too often, the diagrams created for Task 2 and the topics addressed in Task 3 were similar for all candidates within a Centre.

Comments on Individual Questions	
Q No.	
Task 2	It seems many candidates have learned how to answer this type of question as many candidates gained full marks, with the others usually losing marks for arrows going in the wrong direction or vague labels on both boxes and arrows. Candidates from many Centres had produced a diagram with labelled arrows, similar to the mark scheme. This is to be encouraged and candidates should be discouraged from identifying the information and methods in a separate table. Candidates should organise the senders and receivers of information so that they avoid the information flows crossing or changing direction. Many candidates scored well (over 10 marks), although there were still examples of inappropriate diagrams. Incorrect diagrams produced for this task included DFDs and simple flow charts that did not separate the senders and receivers from the information and methods. Marks were also lost when candidates described the complete processes rather than identifying the information. Arrows should be labelled with nouns for information and methods, e.g. instructions to pay – on-line banking, not complete sentences. Also, a separate arrow should be used for each information flow. Some candidates had indicated two lots of information and method on the same flow line – rendering these diagrams ambiguous. Some candidates omitted the lorry driver, did not differentiate the two banks or failed to indicate which copy of the purchase order was being transferred.
Task 3	Answers to this task included a lot of descriptions of mobile devices; few covered the impact on the *party organiser*. Where answers had been related to Peta's Party Plan, candidates referred generally to employees or specifically mentioned other job roles within the company. Impacts were often on the company, such as cost, rather than the party organiser. Where candidates had taken the time to understand the job of the party organiser, they went on to relate mobile devices to what the organisers did at venues and how they could arrange parties from home or while 'on the move'. These candidates were able to score well. The quality of written communication marks were generally awarded as 2. Many candidates had not proof-read their work. Centres are reminded that grammar and punctuation are being assessed, as well as spelling. Common errors included lack of commas, use of commas instead of full stops, use of 'there' instead of 'their' and 'could of' instead of 'could have'. Too many candidates failed to achieve any marks for AO4, as they had made no attempt to evaluate the methods used to produce the report.

1	Where candidates had read the question properly and identified that it related to the shop, most scored full marks. However, a large number of candidates gave a Head Office function such as Marketing or HR and, consequently, gained no marks.
2	This question was well answered by most candidates. Where marks were lost it was due to lack of detail in the answers.
3	This question was answered well with most able to identify two managers correctly.
4	Most candidates were able to identify three items of data input in part a, although some failed to understand that costs are held on the system and therefore are not input. Where candidates started from the customer in their descriptions for part b, most gained good marks. However, some were unclear of the process and others started their description when the information was received at Head Office, hence missing out the part of the process that would have gained marks. In part c, some candidates confused the EPOS system with the sales order processing system. Where candidates had identified the correct part of the case study they scored full marks. The quality of the answers to parts d and e were dependent on part c to some extent. Where part c had been answered correctly, candidates tended to go on to answer these questions correctly too. Where the answer to part c had involved the EPOS system, candidates tended to answer these questions from the same reference point.
5	The hardware and software section was very well answered, although candidates tended to go on to describe all systems in the shop, not just that for sales. They then went on to indicate word-processing and spreadsheet software, rather than identifying the stock database. Some lost marks for inputs by giving barcode, rather than product code, although there were a number of opportunities to gain marks for inputs. Outputs were often limited to a vague reference to a receipt. Identification of the processes involved was weak. Too many candidates referred generally to calculating.
6	This question was poorly answered. Many candidates failed to distinguish parts a and b and the word evaluate was not understood. In part a, candidates simply described the process, rather than identifying what was good or bad about it. Some who did evaluate also went on to suggest improvements in part a as well or, more usually, evaluated the system in part b having simply described it in part a. Where candidates scored well in part a, they listed strengths and weaknesses separately. Many candidates were able to suggest on-line booking in part b and gained 2 or 3 marks but they were not then able to go on to suggest what benefits this would bring or what problems would need to be overcome. Some candidates suggested improvements to the system that did not relate to ICT systems at all.

7	The vast majority of candidates were able to name the legislation correctly in part a. Where candidates lost marks in task b, it was because their answers lacked the precision required or because they referred to customers' data when the question was about potential party organisers. Part c was poorly answered, with few understanding the data subject's rights under the Act.
8	Many candidates gained some marks in part a, if only for mentioning viruses and/or hacking, although there were many misconceptions. Where candidates had used their notes from Task 1 they were able to use the correct wording and gain full marks. However, part b was poorly answered. Too many candidates think that the Computer Misuse Act stops or prevents hacking and viruses or that it requires organisations to have security systems set up.
9	There were some good answers to this question, especially where candidates clearly had part-time jobs and so received pay slips. In part a, marks were lost by suggesting data that would be looked up from the employee number, such as bank account number. Many gained a mark for the multiplication of hourly rate by hours worked, but few gained full marks in part c. If candidates had received a pay slip they could describe its contents, but some could not identify this output or what it contained. Bank was the most common answer in part d, although the purpose was sometimes poorly described. The same was true when candidates identified the Inland Revenue as the organisation.

Principal Moderator's Report

General Comments

Although some Centres had submitted work for some units in January, this was only a very small proportion of this session's entries. As in January, there was, perhaps, more scaling than one would hope. However, in a few cases this was because Centres had been too harsh in their assessment, rather than too lenient.

Many Centres coped well with the new style unit recording sheets, especially where they had attended a training course. There were helpful comments as to why a particular mark had been awarded and page numbers to direct the Moderator to the evidence. However, a significant number of Centres had not used the correct unit recording sheet, using instead the assessment evidence grid from the unit specification or a Centre devised recording sheet. In these cases, there was often little comment and no page referencing. This essentially means that the work has to be re-assessed, rather than moderated, and the Moderator may not be able to locate all the evidence claimed, resulting in scaling.

Representative page numbers on the unit recording sheet are more helpful than attempting to indicate every page that contributes to the evidence. It is also most helpful if Assessors annotate the work to indicate where particular aspects of a task have been achieved at a particular mark band.

Whilst it is acceptable to use a piece of work as evidence for more than one unit, the work must appear in each of the units so that each unit portfolio is complete in itself. It is not acceptable to cross-reference work from one unit in another.

There were a number of instances where the task marks had been added incorrectly, or no total was shown on the unit recording sheet. This lead to incorrect marks being recorded on the MS1 mark sheet and delayed the moderation process while these were corrected.

Centres are reminded that, in general, only the mark sheets should be sent to the Moderator by the deadline date. The Moderator will select and request the sample required, which should be despatched as quickly as possible. However, where only 10 or fewer candidates are submitting work, the process can be speeded up by sending all the work with the mark sheet.

Many problems were caused this session due to poor administration in Centres and failure to send mark sheets to Moderators by the deadline. The importance of meeting the prescribed deadline for mark submission cannot be over-emphasised. Where the Moderator receives the marks late, the whole process is delayed and may mean that candidate results are also delayed.

Centres are also reminded of the need to complete and include Centre Authentication forms (CCS160) with the work. The Joint Council has indicated that Centres who fail to authenticate a coursework unit will have all marks for the unit set to zero.

Although more Centres are using treasury tags or other suitable methods to secure the work sent, plastic pockets and plastic folders were too often still being used as, occasionally, were ring binders. These should be avoided.

Comments on Individual Units

G040 – Using ICT to communicate

The full range of marks from 0 to 50 was applied, accurately in most cases and less so in others. There was considerable variation in the quality of the work seen. Some was of a very high standard, while some was little better than would be expected at Intermediate GNVQ/GCSE level.

Although there are considerable similarities between this unit and unit 1 of the VCE, there are also differences, particularly in the range of documents expected. Standard business documents such as letters, invoices, memos and agendas do not give candidates sufficient opportunities to demonstrate their abilities to use the range of software, facilities and media required.

Where candidates have not created all six of the required communications, they can still be awarded marks in task b. However, the mark awarded is likely to be significantly lower than the quality of those communications created would suggest.

Some of the unit portfolios produced for this unit were very extensive. This can be counterproductive as it becomes difficult for the Moderator to locate the required evidence. Unless the comparative report for task a is being used as one of the six original communications, which is not recommended, it is not necessary to include planning or draft copies of this document. Draft copies of other documents should be carefully selected, labelled and annotated to show development. Two or three drafts should be sufficient. Also, whilst the collection and analysis of existing documents to inform the design of the candidates' documents is good teaching practice, these do not need to be included in the portfolio. However, the documents compared in task a must be included in the portfolio, so that the Moderator can judge the accuracy of the descriptions given.

Task a

The requirement for this task is that candidates describe and compare two types of document from each of three organisations, for example a letter and a brochure from each. As candidates have to identify good and bad points about writing style, it is important that documents have some content. Blank letterheads, business cards etc are not suitable documents for comparison. Writing style was too often confused with text style. Candidates need to consider the type of language used, i.e. whether it is formal or informal, informative, persuasive etc, not whether it is emboldened or in too small a font size.

Centres are reminded that the quality of the candidates' written communication is assessed through this task. In some cases, too little account was taken of poor spelling, punctuation and grammar when deciding what mark to award.

Task bi

There are several aspects to this task, planning, development of drafts, accuracy checking and listing of sources. Lack of any of these aspects should reduce the mark awarded significantly. It is expected that even at mark band 1 the documents have been checked so that few obvious errors remain. This was often overlooked. Planning needs to be included for all, or nearly all, six documents to achieve mark bands 2 or 3. It is not sufficient to merely include draft copies. These need to be annotated to show what the candidate intends to do to improve them. Again, these should be included for all documents. The listing of sources was often the poorest aspect of this task. At mark band 3 a detailed bibliography is required. This was rarely seen in candidates' work.

Task bii

Although it is not necessary to include extensive before and after printouts to show how information was located and adapted, annotation of the work to indicate which information had been located and how it had been adapted would do much to aid the moderation process. To reach mark band 3, the communications should be of near professional standard. Whilst some very high quality communications were seen, some were quite poor but still awarded marks in this mark band.

Task biii

Again, annotation would help to show the Moderator where the automated features required by mark band 3 have been used. Centres are reminded that the key terms in this task are 'appropriate use', 'suit the purpose' and 'improve impact'. As mentioned in the introductory paragraphs for this unit, the types of communication candidates are asked to produce will do much to aid or limit them in achieving marks in this task. More varied communications, such as multimedia presentations, web pages or newsletters, will give candidates greater opportunities to achieve higher mark bands. Assessors should consider the use of a detailed witness statement to evidence the appropriate use of sound and video.

Task biv

Candidates need to evaluate the communications they produce and their own roles and actions. The latter aspect was frequently missing. Mark band 3 requires candidates to carry out ongoing evaluation of their draft communications. Too often a mark in this mark band was awarded when the candidate had only evaluated the final versions of their communications.

Task bv

This task requires an explanation of the methods of communication listed at the top of page 5 in the What You Need to Learn section of the unit specification. To achieve mark band 2 or 3, candidates would be expected to describe at least six of the communication methods listed. Candidates are unlikely to be able to provide the level of detail required by mark band 3 in a slide presentation alone. The required detail could be provided in presenter notes to accompany the presentation. Centres are reminded that the term 'presentation' is used in its widest sense. Candidates might find it easier to provide the detail required by mark band 3 if they presented the information in a report or newsletter, rather than a slide presentation.

G042 – ICT solutions for individuals and society

This unit probably attracted more scaling than any other. This was largely due to a lack of suitable evidence to show what candidates had actually done. However, some Centres had 'got it right' and candidates had produced excellent evidence. Centres are reminded that all of the tasks, with the possible exception of task b, should relate to a single investigation. Guidance on the evidence required for this unit has been given out at OCR training events and is available in the documents section of the e-list. This can be accessed at http://community.ocr.org.uk/lists/listinfo/ict-gce-applied. The document 'Unit 3 – Further Guidance' can be found in the Public Documents and Resources section, so can be accessed if you have not yet subscribed to the e-list.

Task a

Although some good evidence was seen for this task, some was very poorly structured, making it difficult to determine what searches candidates had carried out and what information they had found. Screen shots were often too small for the Moderator to read the search criterion entered or the screen shot did not include the criterion. To reach mark band 2 the advanced search facilities must be used, while mark band 3 requires the use of logical operators in the standard search box. Candidates should be encouraged to use OR or NOT (-) as well as AND (+). A user guide to using search engines will not provide appropriate evidence. Mark band 2 requires a comparison of results as well as the use of advanced searches, while mark band 3 requires justification of the most appropriate search engine.

Task b

There was some misunderstanding of the requirements of this task. It requires discussion of the impact of the availability of electronic information, not the impact of ICT in general or the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet. Mark band 3 requires detailed explanations of the methods organisations now use to communicate with individuals and society and how this affects people who do not have or want access to electronic communication. As with task a in G040, insufficient account was taken of poor spelling, grammar and punctuation when awarding marks for this task.

Task c

This task requires evidence of the use of a large website to find required information. The information required needs to be identified and candidates then need to provide evidence of how they located it. A witness statement may be used, but this should indicate what methods were used or what searches were carried out and what information was found, as well as confirming that this was done independently. Candidates should also include screen shot evidence.

Task d

This task requires evidence of complex searches involving both relational (= > < etc) and logical (AND, OR, NOT) operators. For mark bands 2 and 3, both on-line and local databases must be evidenced. Evidence of searching on-line databases may be linked with task c if an internal search engine has been used, but not to the use of generic search engines in task a. Most on-line databases will provide an internal search engine. Where it is possible to select two or more criteria, this is equivalent to AND, and if several options are selected within one criterion, this is equivalent to OR. For the local database, it is not sufficient to use a table in a spreadsheet as it is not then possible to easily demonstrate the required complex searches or to present the results as a database report. Some care is needed in developing local databases for candidates to search. These need to contain sufficient data to make searches meaningful. Reports produced to achieve mark band 3 must be fit for purpose.

Task e

Although some good spreadsheet evidence was seen, much did not demonstrate sufficiently complex analysis. The document mentioned at the beginning of this section provides guidance on the types of functions and processing expected for mark bands 2 and 3. Candidates must evidence the functions and formulae they use by formula printouts or other suitable methods. They also need to show evidence of testing, not just a table stating that the results were ‘as expected’. The testing should show that formulae and functions return the expected result, not just that macro buttons work.

Task f

This task requires candidates to draw all the information they have found together to answer the investigation question. As such it should be a stand-alone document. To meet mark band 3, it should incorporate all six of the types of information listed in section 3.2.6 of the unit specification. As in G040, the term presentation should be taken in its widest sense. Where candidates have not addressed an individual investigation, it becomes difficult for them to produce the evidence required for this task. If candidates have not listed their sources it is difficult to award any marks for this task as it is impossible to ascertain how many they have used.

Task g

Evaluations for this unit were very weak. It is the methods used that should be evaluated, rather than the outcome. Again, for mark band 3, this evaluation should be ongoing rather than just at the end.

G043 – System specification and configuration

Although at first glance this unit seems very similar to the equivalent VCE unit, there are very significant differences in the evidence required. The main difference that seemed to have been overlooked by some Centres is that there is no requirement to assemble hardware. Whilst Centres may wish to continue to include this as part of their teaching, evidence is not required in the portfolio.

What is required is evidence that candidates have carried out software installation and configuration. In some cases it was not clear whether candidates had done so or not. Whilst a step-by-step guide may demonstrate understanding of the process involved, it does not provide evidence that the candidate has carried out that process. Photographic and/or screen print evidence backed up by a detailed signed and dated observation record would improve the evidence for these practical tasks.

Similarly, candidates need to include clear evidence of the design of templates, toolbars, menus and macros and annotated screen prints or printouts of those that they create. Any screen prints must be large enough for the content to be read.

The designs should form part of the system specification. This should be a stand-alone document that covers all of the items listed in task b, ie hardware, software and configuration. Whilst the specification should be based on the user requirements, these need to be identified and described before the specification is decided upon.

Task e is best evidenced by a report or handbook for the user on health and safety and security issues. It should cover the content of section 4.2.4 in the unit specification.

Task f was almost universally misunderstood. Centres should refer to section 4.2.3 of the unit specification.

Evaluation was weak for task g. Candidates must evaluate their specifications and the methods they had used.

G044 – Problem solving using ICT

This unit had the smallest entry but most candidates made a reasonable attempt at producing the evidence required. The majority of Centres used one of the scenarios issued by OCR or based their own scenario on one of them. Where candidates gained low marks it was often because they simply regurgitated theory, rather than applying it to the scenario provided. Although weaker candidates had clearly only used the information provided in the AS text book, more able candidates had carried out thorough research on types of information, types of software and quality procedures and had applied this to the scenario. There were good examples of system diagrams, although explanations of the system boundaries and environment lacked detail. Evaluation was also a weak area.

G045 – Software development – design

Despite the title of this unit, some candidates described alternative hardware, rather than software, solutions. There are two parts to the assessment evidence for this unit. Tasks a, b and c are theoretical, identifying and describing the tools and techniques available. Task d to g relate to the solution of a given problem. Where Centres had attempted to combine these two aspects, candidates rarely covered the requirements of tasks a to c sufficiently.

Tasks a, b and c

To achieve mark band 3 for these tasks, candidates need to research the tools and techniques available so that they can describe a wide range, going beyond those listed in the unit specification. Although there is overlap between the stages, candidates were often confused as to which tools are used for analysis, which are used for design and which are used for investigation.

Task d

The report for this task should include both feasibility and design. The latter was lacking in some cases. As indicated above, the alternative solutions should relate to software rather than hardware, although some consideration of hardware should be included. As with task a in G040, insufficient account was taken of poor spelling, grammar and punctuation when awarding marks for this task.

Task e

Most candidates attempted to produce DFDs using formal graphical representation with varying degrees of success. Both level 0 and level 1 DFDs are required. However, mark band 3 was often not achieved because the documentation lacked the detail required. All entities, processes, stores and data flows need to be described in detail to achieve mark band 3.

Task f

Again, although some good ERDs were seen, the documentation limited the mark awarded. A detailed data dictionary should accompany the ERD to reach mark band 3.

Task g

This task requires candidates to evaluate both the solution and their own performance. Whilst there was sometimes good evidence of one or the other aspect, there was rarely good evidence of both.

G046 – Communicating using computers

The work submitted for this unit was mostly appropriate and had been accurately assessed. Suitable organisations had been investigated for task a, although the definition of an intranet was somewhat broader than the unit intended. Also, the organisations' objectives were not always overtly stated. Whilst it is clearly convenient to base this task on the Centre's use of the Internet and intranet, candidates should be given the opportunity to investigate other organisations' use of these facilities.

Centres should refer to section 7.2.6 to identify what is meant by Internet technologies for tasks bi and di. Discussion of HTML is not sufficient. In task bii, marks were awarded somewhat leniently. Candidates need to do more than simply identify that a particular section of code produces a table or a hyperlink to reach mark band 3. In task c, candidates tended only to consider the costs of hosting the site online. Bandwidth was given little consideration in some cases and candidates failed to describe a range of connection methods, hardware and software. As in other units, insufficient account was taken of poor spelling, punctuation and grammar. In task di, candidates must identify the Internet technology they have used in their web page to achieve mark band 2. In task dii, candidates should not be penalised because they have not hosted their webpage online. This task is about evaluating what they did. Centres should endeavour to ensure that candidates have the opportunity to install three pieces of communications software so that they have the opportunity of achieving mark band 3 in task e. It is not possible to cross reference the descriptions of hardware, software etc for this task to those for task c as task c relates to hosting a website, while this task relates to simply accessing the Internet and sending and receiving emails.

G047 – Introduction to programming

This was a popular unit that was generally well attempted. A variety of languages were used including various versions of visual basic, Java, Pascal and even Logo. Suitable programs had been created by candidates, most of which gave access to all three mark bands in all three parts of task a. However, clearer evidence of the use of modularity and file handling is needed for mark band 3. Candidates must include annotated program listings as well as evidence of forms etc to gain marks in tasks ai and aii. Evidence of annotation is often clearer if the code is copied into a word processed document so that comments can be added in a different font style, colour or attribute to distinguish it from the code.

Suitable programs were also provided for task b, with many Centres using one of those provided in the sample assignments. However, in some cases the programs were too simple for candidates to demonstrate the understanding required for higher mark bands. Candidates **must** annotate the program listings to gain marks in any of the three sections of task b. They must use ICT tools to do so. This may be either the comment tool in the programming language or, as suggested above, comments entered using a word processing package.

Task c requires evaluation of the programs in relation to the user's needs, evaluation of the suitability of the programming languages used and evaluation of the candidate's own performance. Coverage of all three aspects was rare in most of the work seen.

Advanced GCE Applied ICT (H115/H315)
June 2006 Assessment Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
G040	Raw	50	43	38	33	28	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G041	Raw	100	74	66	58	50	43	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G042	Raw	50	43	37	32	27	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G043	Raw	50	43	38	33	28	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G044	Raw	50	41	36	31	26	21	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G045	Raw	50	42	36	31	26	21	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G046	Raw	50	42	37	32	27	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G047	Raw	50	43	38	33	28	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H115	300	240	210	180	150	120	0

	Max Mark	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE	U
H315	600	480	450	420	390	360	330	300	270	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H115	3.7	15.2	35.4	59.8	79.7	100.0	6792

	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE	U	Total Number of Candidates
H315	1.3	4.7	8.5	14.9	25.9	38.8	54.0	68.5	81.6	100	1018

7810 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;
www.ocr.org.uk/OCR/WebSite/docroot/understand/ums.jsp

Statistics are correct at the time of publication

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