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January 2012

GCE Engineering

Unit 6932_01

The Role of the Engineer

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Only a small number of centres submitted samples for moderation in the January 2012 series. Of those that did, the majority proved to have been assessed accurately and work covered the full mark ranges.

It was noticed that a small number of centres, either new centres or centres with new teachers/assessors, seemed to have guided their candidates to present their portfolio in a format which addressed the contents of the specification, instead of addressing the six outcomes in the assessment grids. A small number contained long introductions and some contained large inclusions, either in the middle or at the back, as appendices. Neither of these is necessary as it is only the candidates' own work which can attract marks.

Assessment Criterion 'a'

Activities undertaken by the engineer whom the candidate chooses to work with, or is allocated to work with, should be specific to that person, not the whole company. Also, the activities need to be relevant to the product or service which that engineer provides. Some candidates/centres tend to evidence this as 'a day in the life of my engineer' and include such items as 'arrive for work', 'have lunch', 'go home', etc, which is not the intention, and generates no evidence for the learning outcome. To progress across the mark bands, the evidence needs to contain clear descriptions and explanations of the activities, with justification, for why the activities are carried out. Most centres now do this very well.

Assessment Criterion 'b'

Candidates are required to identify, describe and explain, with justifications, a range of relevant technologies used by their chosen engineer in the execution of their work. Some still tend to describe everything that a factory produces, and some tend to refer to every engineer, machine operator, etc, in the factory – when only the same single engineer as per the previous learning outcome is intended.

Assessment Criterion 'c'

Relevant items of legislation and standards should be identified, described and explained for this outcome, again, with reference to the engineer's activities and the product/service provided. Two sections in Mark Band 3 are often missed out, these being a discussion about the possible consequences of non-compliance and how the engineer ensures compliance with the legislation and standards.

Assessment Criterion 'd'

Relevant health and safety standards which influence the activities, technologies, etc, as undertaken by the engineer and how the engineer ensures that appropriate standards are met. Many combine these with criterion 'c' and even mention some during the rest of their portfolio, and are awarded appropriate marks.

Assessment Criterion 'e'

This part of the unit also includes the quality of written communication, which includes spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. The candidate has to write an evaluation of the work undertaken and product/service provided by their chosen engineer, assessing whether it is fit for purpose, considering form and function, including personal judgements and personal testing. The final topic is difficult for some products and teachers must make sure this is possible for all candidates as they choose their engineer and product. In many cases appropriate testing has not been carried out and as such potential marks are reduced.

Assessment Criterion 'f'

After evaluating the product or service, in this section candidates have to suggest possible improvements, and for higher marks they need to be valid and all linked to points raised in criterion 'e'.

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