OCR
RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

GCE

ICT

Advanced GCE **A2 H517**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H117**

Examiners' Reports

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

Advanced GCE ICT (H517)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE ICT (H117)

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

Content	**Page**
Chief Examiner's Report	1
G061 Information, Systems and Applications	2
G062 Structured ICT tasks	5
G063 ICT Systems, Applications and Implications	10
G064 ICT Project	13

Chief Examiner's Report

For this session there were some very good responses in the examined units although there are still a large number of candidates who are not being adequately prepared – either through a lack of coverage of the specification or a lack of examination technique or the application of their knowledge to a context.

The essay questions in G061 and G063 are designed to allow the candidates to take their knowledge and understanding of ICT and apply reasoned arguments to the given topic. Many candidates are still listing facts rather than develop concise arguments. Centres need to spend time teaching and developing the techniques required to enable their candidates to achieve high marks on these types of questions.

The similarity between the examinations and the structured tasks is that the assessments should be completed without assistance to the candidate. This means that there should be a large focus on preparation – teaching the knowledge, the skills and particularly, an understanding of key words and how to interpret them. Without this, candidates will struggle.

There are many resources available to centres. OCR endorsed materials are listed on the OCR website.

G061 Information, Systems and Applications

General Comments

The question paper had a range of questions to enable candidates of all abilities to achieve good marks if they had prepared adequately for the paper. The preparation is not just learning the material but should include sessions on examination technique and looking at a variety of contexts to teach the candidates how to apply their knowledge and understanding. There were many examples of regurgitation of answers without looking at the context of the question.

Many candidates had a reasonable foundation of factual knowledge enabling them to answer these questions well but a significant number failed to express their answers in anything but the vaguest terms and used very little subject terminology. It is important to communicate to the students that the level of response required is greater than that of an average person with an interest. The correct use of technical terms is expected and the answer must make sense within the context of the scenario.

Comments of Individual Questions

1 **(a)** The identification of the methods was generally good but a large number of candidates went on to describe the methods and give examples of their use rather than give the advantages.

(b) There is still a gap between those centres that have prepared their candidates and covered examination technique and those that have not. In order to score more than one mark on a comparison it is necessary to make an actual comparison. It is not sufficient to give a description of a website and a description of a printed leaflet and let the examiner draw out the comparison. Those candidates that made actual comparisons scored highly.

2 **(a)** This was very poorly answered with candidates giving brand names of software or additional examples of applications software not already given in the question. Very few candidates gave the types of software.

(b) If the tasks were contextualized to the committee then the candidate scored highly. It is worth noting that it is necessary to give more than a single word as a response.

(c) There was a varied response to the three areas. Relevance appeared, by far, to be the best understood. In many cases candidates were not able to give a sufficient description of completeness or presentation without making use of the terms. The examples were often lacking depth or contextualization.

(d) Many candidates understood headers but their descriptions were not in sufficient depth to distinguish between writing on every page and placing the information once and having it repeated on every page. Sections and frames were, on the whole, unknown concepts to the candidates.

(e) **(i)** In general, this was well answered with a variety of terms used. There is still hard drive appearing on its own.

(e) **(ii)** Many candidates gave identifications of the characteristics of the device rather than a justification. A justification is a positive reason for its use.

3 **(a)** **(i)** A large number of candidates were unaware of referential integrity and were not able to describe or give suitable examples. This is an area of the specification that is not being very well delivered which is surprising since it forms a major element of G062.

(a) **(ii)** Attributes were slightly better known than referential integrity but there were still a significant number of candidates who left the answer blank.

(b) **(i)** These were learnt responses. Many candidates gave repeating data, for 1NF
& **(b)** **(ii)** whereas they should have given repeating fields or groups.

(c) Generally this was answered very well, the identification of the data type was good however marks were lost because of inadequate reasons.

(d) **(i)** As in previous papers there is a lack of clarity as to the difference between verification and validation.

(d) **(ii)** Moving away from a standard response, this question asked the students to contextualize their knowledge. There were two issues, one was the regurgitation of a validation method without looking at the context, the second was the description of the method not matching the identification.

(e) Many candidates did not adequately describe either of the two terms and the examples given demonstrated a lack of understanding.

(f) Lack of detail reduced the marks gained on this question by many candidates – font in itself is not enough, the element of the font needs to be given – size/style etc. There were very few candidates who identified and described three considerations, their responses often resembled guesses rather than a taught and revised response.

4 Generally the responses to this were good, however candidates are still listing six points rather than describing. There were also answers which moved into the advantages, disadvantages and use of the system rather than the characteristics.

5 **(a)** There is a difference between characteristics and advantages. It was unfortunate that many candidates felt that the answer to this question was to be found in the stem of part b.

(b) There is a lack of understanding as to the difference between a function and a formula – many times these terms are used interchangeably but there is a difference. Frequently if the candidate gave a correct description, the example demonstrated a lack of understanding.

6 **(a)** Many responses focused on the output to the query and not the underlying structure. Both static and dynamic queries can generate dynamic output. A large number gave answers related to parameter queries or to the differences between static and dynamic information.

(b) **(i)** In order to find the village hall the name of the village must have been given.

(b) **(ii)** In addition to the village name, there were many other terms that could have been used. This, and (i) were either both right or all incorrect.

7 **(a)** This question was not, as a large proportion of candidates seemed to think, about the advantages of mail merge. It was about the advantages of the use of the wizard. Those that gave answers based on the wizard scored highly.

(b) Many candidates scored over half marks on this question. The steps given were often given in a variety of ways and a number of non technical terminologies used.

8 **(a)** The comments from 1b also refer to this question. The content was generally good but there is still a misunderstanding about acetate – it is possible to print acetate. It is also possible to annotate a presentation from a computer.

(b) **(i)** Whilst there was a vague understanding of this technical term, many candidates did not have sufficient knowledge to gain both marks. An example here was the most common way of obtaining full marks.

(b) **(ii)** The advantages of non linear were often unclear with the difference between simply moving forwards or backwards through slides and jumping not made.

(c) This was generally very well answered with the majority of candidates gaining high marks,

9 **(a)** There were two aspects to this question, the rote learning of the provision and the application of the provision to an example. Many candidates confused the two and did not give an adequate provision. Without this, the example could not gain marks.

(b) The focus of the question was theft. A number of responses related to methods that would not allow the data to be read once it had been stolen – encryption for example. Biometrics and passwords are essentially the same thing – they are used to authenticate the user.

10 There were, unfortunately, a number of candidates who have still not understood the difference between health and safety. Those that gave safety responses generally scored highly.

11 Candidates were often found to have written point, impact consequence on the paper but seemed to have a lack of understanding of what it meant.

The comments made in the January report, as well as previous ones, still apply.

This question was not answered in a way that indicated any depth of study or understanding of the issues involved. Candidates were giving statements rather than a discussion. It is continuing to feel as though teachers and candidates are not looking at previous exams for this specification – this style of question and mark scheme is common. The candidate responses that were seen were more suited to a describe question than a discussion. This question requires the candidate, for high marks, to look at the topic under discussion from at least two different view points. Candidates frequently wrote in very definite terms from one point of view rather than looking at two. Their answers were superficial and did not reflect a depth of study appropriate to this level of qualification.

G062 Structured ICT tasks

General Comments

It was unfortunate that the mark scheme for this session contained errors, for which OCR apologises. We would also like to thank centres for sending us additional candidate work late on in the assessment process, to ensure no candidate was disadvantaged. Adjustments of one mark, and in a small number of cases two marks, were made to ensure candidates' work was credited appropriately. OCR is confident that the actions put in place ensured that candidates received the right outcomes.

The presentation and quality of much of the candidate work was very good. Most centres did provide candidate work that was clearly organised with a cover sheet containing the candidate's name and number and this was appreciated. A number of centres had printed work in colour, which was visually appealing but not necessary. Provided that the work is annotated, there is no need to incur the additional printing costs of using colour.

Some candidates did provide considerably more evidence than was necessary for the tasks. This was particularly evident in tasks 1, 2 and 3 where some candidates provided a step-by-step account of how the solution was constructed. There is no need to provide this type of evidence unless the task specifically asks for every stage of the development to be evidenced.

The tasks are differentiated carefully and it is not necessarily the case that the tasks get progressively more difficult. Within some tasks the final sub-tasks might be simpler than that which has gone before. In such cases candidates should be encouraged not to give up but to have a go at the task. For example, more candidates could have tackled task 6e that required relatively simple queries if they had manually calculated and entered results for the data required in 6d. This is worth bearing in mind for future years where candidates can be advised that performing manual calculations or manual data entry may not achieve the marks within one section of a task, but might allow them to access a more straightforward mark in a later section.

It was evident in some tasks where candidates were required to provide annotated evidence of 'how' a particular feature or routine was implemented that candidates had little real understanding. When a task asks for 'annotated evidence of how', the candidate must provide a higher order level of written comment that demonstrates that they have a clear understanding and that they can explain how their solution works. For example, in task 3e a number of candidates provided a generic web script but provided no annotation to explain how the code that they had used was integrated into their solution, and they had not demonstrated that they had an understanding of what they had done.

Where the marking point requires evidence for a number of items, all of the bullet point indicators must be met to gain the mark. If any are missing, the mark cannot be awarded.

The level of teacher annotation to indicate where and why the mark had been awarded differs from centre to centre. It is recommended good practice to follow the guidance on marking work, as indicated on the front cover of the mark scheme, which states 'If a candidate meets the requirements for a mark then tick the box next to that mark. You may use the numbers on the left hand side of the tick boxes to cross-reference evidence on the candidate's work.' Those centres that exhibited best practice made it considerably easier for the centre marks to be verified during moderation.

Comments of Individual Questions

1 (a) (i) The majority of candidates achieved full marks for producing a logo design that was suitable for a third party to implement. Candidates who lost marks did so because they did not provide a specification with sufficient detail to enable a third party to implement the design.

1 (a) (ii) Many candidates produced evidence of a scanned design. Where marks were lost it was for not producing evidence of the file format and file size.

1 (a) (iii) Most candidates achieved full marks but some candidates lost marks because they did not annotate their solution with an explanation of how the software was used to create a distribution list. Annotation required that candidates provided comments to explain the stages that they implemented.

1 (a) (iv) Most candidates achieved full marks, but some lost marks for either not clearly displaying the suitable message or for not using the named list generated in a(iii).

1 (b) In general, this was well done. Full marks were often awarded and candidates exhibited good annotated evidence to explain their solution.

2 (a) Newsletter quality ranged from basic to very professional. Where marks were lost it was due to candidates not taking appropriate care meeting the exact requirements specified. Within the tasks as a whole candidates need to appreciate that following a detailed specification is an important skill that ensures that the client's precise requirements are met and that the product produced is fit for purpose.

2 (b) Most candidates clearly displayed the evidence required. A small number of candidates showed the wrapping of text around an image rather than the linking of two separate text boxes as required.

2 (c) Most candidates provided suitable evidence to show how the order of frames could be adjusted.

2 (d) (i) A number of candidates did not display appropriate screenshot evidence of the actual merge fields that were inserted into the newsletter. Marks could not be awarded without this evidence. Centres should remind candidates to ensure that screenshot evidence is of a sufficient size to enable the evidence to be clearly seen.

2 (d) (ii) Most candidates successfully showed how the surname 'Penny' could be selected from the data source before the merge was completed. Candidates that lost marks did so because they did not filter the data source.

3 (a) Many candidates successfully achieved full marks for providing a suitable hand drawn diagram with links between pages clearly identified. Some candidates lost marks for not identifying if a link was one-way or two-way.

3 (b) Many candidates produced a consistent set of web pages. Candidates that did not score full marks did so because they had difficulty following the precise specification that was given.

3 (c) Candidates generally scored well for providing evidence of how they created hyperlinks. However, some candidates did lose marks for giving a specific file location for the ticket confirmation page as opposed to a relative link.

3 (d) Candidates need to be mindful to include the home or index page at the root level of a directory structure for a website. A number of candidates continue to put the home page in a subfolder which is not acceptable.

3 (e) Few candidates scored 1 mark and fewer still scored 2 or more marks for this task. There was often no annotated evidence provided to back up the solution with an explanation as to how it worked. It was perfectly acceptable for candidates to make use of generic scripts but when this is done it is essential that the candidate explains how such scripts are integrated within their own solutions to solve the problem. Where candidates did score marks this was often for a solution that echoed the data back to the confirmation page. Relatively few candidates managed to save and append the details to a file.

3 (f) Many candidates lost marks for a lack of precision. A test plan must contain sufficient information to allow a third party to carry out the testing. Tests often lacked the identification of the page within the site that they were to be applied to. Tests must be defined rigorously to ensure that a suitably qualified third party could implement the test without ambiguity.

3 (g) A number of candidates provided help sheets rather than a user guide, and consequently were limited to a maximum of 2 marks. Centres should ensure that their candidates know the difference between the requirements for a help sheet and a user guide. Some candidates were disadvantaged by their choice of software and consequently they found it difficult to explain how to apply CSS. Centres should be aware that the use of certain packages may lead to candidates being unable to provide appropriate evidence. If this is the case an alternative package should be used.

4 (a) (i) Most candidates achieved full marks. Those that did not often lost marks for not displaying row and column headings. Where a question specifically asks for the row and column headings to be printed no credit can be awarded without their inclusion. The inclusion of row and column headings is asked for so that it is possible to cross reference the results with formulae printouts to ascertain whether or not a solution does indeed work correctly.

4 (a) (ii) A number of centres continue to award marks incorrectly when candidates had produced evidence of the formulae used that was labelled rather than annotated. Annotation requires that a candidate writes an explanation of the formulae / function that they have implemented.

4 (b) (i) Many candidates achieved full marks for this task.

4 (b) (ii) Many candidates achieved full marks for this task.

4 (c) A good number of candidates achieved full marks for this task. Where candidates lost marks it was generally for omitting to annotate each separate formula within the worksheet.

4 (d) Many candidates are clearly familiar with conditional formatting and were able to obtain full marks. Some candidates failed to gain the mark where they implemented a formula that did not reference the value in the stock available cell and input the value 192 instead – which would not work for all cells in the range.

4 (e) (i) Most candidates who tackled this task achieved full marks.

4 (e) (ii) Where candidates had used the correct formulae in 4c and had achieved full marks for 4e(i) they went on to gain credit for this task when they printed the required results for Wednesday.

4 (f) (i) This question differentiated the candidates well because only those candidates who had created a fully working system with the correct formulae throughout were able to calculate the final totals correctly. Most candidates did label their graphs correctly, but a disappointing number did not do so.

4 (f) (ii) It was pleasing to see that many candidates did reference values on the sales worksheet. Many then went on to provide a sufficient level of annotation to explain the formulae that they had provided.

5 (a) Most candidates scored at least 1 mark for this task and were able to generate a suitable presentation. Fewer candidates annotated each of the required features and without annotation credit could not be given. Many candidates did not show where animation and timings had been applied.

5 (b) Some candidates produced an excellent standard of work. At AS Level it is expected that candidates will be able to provide supplementary user documentation that looks professional. This means that a consistent style and sub-headings are required.

5 (c) (i) A number of candidates produced some excellent evidence. Some candidates failed to provide annotated evidence of either an exact playing time of 1 minute 20 seconds or a file exported in a suitable format. It should be noted by centres that where a banded response mark scheme is present a candidate must achieve the marking points listed in the first band before marks can be awarded in the next band up. Marks were sometimes incorrectly awarded when candidates had not given any evidence to show that a suitable file format had been used.

5 (c) (ii) Not all candidates provided sufficient annotated evidence to prove that the sound file would loop. Many candidates merely provided evidence to show that the sound file had been included.

6 (a) Many candidates gained at least half marks for the data types and primary keys. Some candidates used text rather than date, or they failed to make the student name atomic.

6 (b) The majority of candidates were able to gain full marks for this task, by producing evidence of the implemented ERD.

6 (c) Many candidates attempted this part of the task but few thought through the layout and content on the form required in sufficient detail to ensure that everything required was present.

6 (d) (i) A good number of candidates had a go at this task and managed to produce a data entry form to display the loans history for Lost Treasures. Those candidates that had a correctly related set of tables and who understood how to create subforms often scored full marks.

6 (d) (ii) Where candidates scored the marks for this task they often created a combo box control on the form linked to a query that provided the list of books that were available for loan. Not all candidates who provided this evidence then went on to annotate in sufficient detail to show how the solution worked. It is important that candidates realised that when a task asks for 'annotated evidence how' that comments give sufficient detail for the marker to be clear that the candidate fully understands their solution.

6 (d) (iii) Those candidates that had achieved a solution to 6d(ii) generally went on to apply the same techniques to achieve a working solution for this part of the task.

6 (d) (iv) Few candidates achieved marks for this task and very few achieved more than 1 mark. The calculations required to calculate the fines proved challenging and as an A grade question this was to be expected. A number of candidates used a range of queries to calculate the fine for £0.20 per day plus £1.00 extra if a book was more than 14 days overdue. Some candidates went on to use further queries or code to take the holiday dates into account. It was noticeable that some candidates had copied and pasted generic code with little understanding of what they were doing since they did not manage to annotate and explain what they had done.

6 (e) (i) Relatively few candidates attempted this part of the task. This was a little surprising since even if students had not automated the calculation of due dates they could have manually calculated and added these results to the data set. They would then have been able to write a relatively simple query to produce the results required. Centres should be advised to encourage candidates not to give up at a certain point within a task but to press on and to see if they can solve the later stages within a task.

6 (e) (ii) Very few students achieved full marks for this part of the task. Again, it should be noted that if candidates had trouble automating the calculations in part d(iv) they could have manually calculated and added the results to the data set to then be able to generate the evidence required for this part of the task.

G063 ICT Systems, Applications and Implications

General Comments

The performance of the candidates seems quite similar to recent examinations; once again, candidates, on the whole, had either been very well prepared for the paper and were able to answer questions based around the technological aspects of the specification, or their attempts at many of the questions highlighted a distinct lack of knowledge.

Centres that prepare their candidates appropriately always cover the requisite technical vocabulary and in so doing, give their candidates ample opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. This gives the candidates a greater opportunity of gaining maximum marks in their answers. These centres are to be congratulated and encouraged to share good practice.

A significant number of candidates still overlook the total marks available for a particular question; they avoid considering the question's wording and pay little attention to the keywords which hold an indication of how to structure a response.

In addition to this, centres should demonstrate to candidates that an ample amount of space is given in which to write a response. Unless a candidate's handwriting is abnormally large, this should always prove sufficient. A response that gains the maximum amount of marks for a question usually demonstrates an economy of wording, avoids repetition of the question's stem and focuses on a factual and objective answer.

Centres should remind candidates that it is difficult to award marks when handwriting is illegible. Whilst it is common to word process subject assignments, it can not be stressed enough that this examination relies upon handwritten communication and the opportunity of practising such responses should not only be encouraged, but done routinely within centres to give candidates every possible chance of success. Many scripts had to be interpreted before examiners could even consider the content. Whilst every effort is made to credit correct answers, if an examiner cannot read the answer, it is unlikely that candidates will gain a mark that reflects their true understanding and their efforts made towards the examination. This situation is most frustrating for all concerned.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

1 Many candidates gained the majority of marks available here, as their knowledge from completing the coursework unit was drawn upon.

2 Equally, this question saw a command of the many roles within a project team and reflected candidates' own experiences of fulfilling most of them during the completion of their coursework.

3 **(a)** With only a few exceptions, this was a very well answered question which saw candidates demonstrating what they knew about single-user operating systems.

3 **(b)** Conversely, multi-tasking operating systems proved difficult, with many examples of use offered rather than any characteristics given.

4 Many candidates were well able to collect single marks for accurate considerations that ought to be covered during the design process and more pleasingly, many more were then able to construct a full description that meant this question was, on the whole, well answered.

5 From the responses seen, it was obvious that candidates knew what interactive television actually was. Unfortunately though, this manifested itself in descriptions of the features of satellite or cable television rather than descriptions of the limitations of interactive television itself.

6 This question was only answered well by a minority, as many candidates took the opportunity to describe the involvement of a client at particular stages of the systems life cycle rather than demonstrating a perspective that considered their overall involvement. This obviously limited the marks available to them.

7 **(a)** There can be no doubt that examiners now know that candidates understand exactly what adaptive and perfective maintenance are, such were the responses seen. However, as the question asked candidates to explain exactly when they would be needed, those responses gaining all marks were less frequently seen.

(b) Again, conversely so, this part question was answered well, with explanations of why the factors given should be taken into account when upgrading software within this type of establishment.

8 **(i) & (ii)** Examples were often proffered by candidates, but reasons as to why information should be exchanged in these ways were scant and limited any award of marks.

Section B

9 This question, on the whole, saw far too many definitions and too few comparisons. Candidates need to consider exactly what they are proposing to compare before constructing their response. Many gave answers which focussed on individual (and relevant) points about ADSL and satellite connections but floundered when it came to constructing an acceptable comparison.

Pleasingly, responses which culminated with 'and so does satellite' or 'so does ADSL' were rarely seen, yet worryingly the 'faster' and 'cheaper' type answers were prevalent when candidates struggled to consider relevant points that had anything to do with these technologies.

10 **(a)** The main point seen from candidates was the ability to locate vehicles. Developing this first point into a description seemed to be within most candidates' capabilities. Arriving at a second description of an advantage proved more challenging.

(b) **(i)** Too many responses explained how satellite navigation systems actually work rather than considering why the vehicles had been equipped with them.

(ii) Again, many descriptions of how satellite navigation systems work were given, but few candidates gave accurate and full descriptions of how such systems would give feedback to the drivers of the emergency vehicles.

11 Candidates were well able to offer good descriptions that fully related to medical emergencies.

12 **(a)** Whilst the role of a file server was well documented, descriptions of local area network topologies and the place of a file server within them were, surprisingly, also often seen.

(b) When candidates scored low marks on this particular question, it was usually where confusion with computer based training crept in.

13 **(a)** Some responses listed the stages in the process of requesting data between two sites and, occasionally, confusion with the workings of star topologies was evident. However, the vast majority of candidates offered an appropriately explained advantage of a central database with remote local indexes.

(b) Descriptions of what vertical partitioning actually is were common place. Few were able to say just how it could be used by the organisation.

14 **(a)** A very well answered question with responses offering two word answers for each component identified.

(b) Many explanations of what expert systems do and how they function were seen. Not many real advantages were properly explained which seemed to be a limitation of technique rather than a lack of knowledge about this particular learning outcome.

15 **(a**) Experience of creating diagrams of this nature seems to be limited to a handful of centres and this is something that should be addressed. The concept of Critical Path Analysis can be learnt from a book but actually drawing a diagram for a given situation requires a different approach.

(b) Many candidates were successfully able to give three implications of the software application not meeting requirements and were then able to expand these, quite eloquently, into descriptions worthy of the marks.

16 Candidates should be well instructed about the construction of 'discuss' questions. The methodology used by many showed that the mark scheme for this type of question had been studied in some depth. The points to discuss were chosen with some consideration; many had the ability to detail the impacts, for the members, of being able to communicate using mobile technology whilst assisting with international relief operations. Many candidates were able to detail a single consequence of such an impact, yet too many candidates are still, it would seem, unable to extend their answer beyond these impacts and consider the consequences from different view points. Descriptions of current technologies were commonly seen.

17 Candidates seemed well able to document hardware and software developments within the context of purchasing goods. Most suggestions were realistic, yet too many lacked insight and gave current technologies and methods as a response. The impact of the developments in both hardware and software may have been touched upon, but the consequences, either positive or negative, were not related as well as they should have been.

G064 ICT Project

General Comments

Candidates tackled a variety of projects with databases remaining the most popular. However, it was pleasing to see a number of good quality spreadsheet solutions and also a few very comprehensive websites. There were again a number (although fewer than previously) of candidates who attempted website projects which could have been very successful but didn't meet the criteria.

Centres tended to have taken previous advice on board and marked more accurately against the mark scheme, however there were still a lot of centres that had marked projects very generously.

Some centres used their own tailored version of the mark scheme, which was only of limited help to candidates. It is very important to utilise the OCR documents as guidance on interpreting the mark scheme properly in order to lead candidates in the right direction. It was also noticeable that many candidates made up a variety of subtitles for the sections of their project. It is much more helpful to both the moderator and the candidates themselves if the headings listed in the specification are used.

Many candidates are not considering the project as a whole but consider each section separately. In marking the project, the centres need to consider whether each section logically follow on from the previous ones. For example, many candidates produced lists of questions in section a(ii) which could not, by any stretch of the imagination, lead to the requirements listed in a(iii). There must be a logical process to the projects.

Repository Entries

It is now possible to enter coursework via the online OCR repository and some centres did so. It was noticeable that many centres had not realised there are now different entry codes for postal (G064/02) and repository (G064/01) entries. It is important, to the smooth running of moderation that centres use the correct entry code. In addition, using sensible naming conventions for files is also helpful to moderators. Ensuring the candidate number is part of the file name(s) is an essential as is ensuring the administrative paperwork (Centre Authentication Form and Mark Sheets) are included. There are no hard and fast rules for how centres should annotate work, but many centres just filled in a Mark Sheet with comments and page numbers as they would if entering for postal moderation; this is perfectly adequate. Some centres annotated the work by using the 'comment' feature in Word, which again is very helpful, although this could be very time consuming if a centre has a large number of candidates. If the Mark Sheet (saved with the candidate number in the file name) could be included with the work in the repository and not saved in the 'Admin' area, this speeds up the moderation process.

Comments on Individual Questions

(a) (i) The vast majority of candidates again gained full marks on this section and it was completed satisfactorily.

(a) (ii) This section was marked much more accurately overall, than in the previous sessions. However, it was still evident that many candidates produced a list of questions which could not possibly lead to the evidence presented later on.

(a) **(iii)** There were still many requirements specifications which lacked detail and were over-marked. The requirements must be measurable and detailed enough for the designer to make use of them in drawing up the designs. In this section, the main analyses were often over-marked too. Candidates were not good at drawing conclusions about the information they had assimilated in the investigation. This section needs to bridge the gap between the investigation and the designs and move the project forwards; reiterating the contents of the investigation is not sufficient.

(b) **(i)** Designs tended to be very basic on the whole. Candidates are well versed in producing data dictionaries for databases, but less sure about designs of forms, queries and reports. Many did not include designs for error messages – or if they were included, they were screenshots from the software development section. It is essential that designs are quite clearly design, not development. Prototyping is an acceptable form of design, but this must be clearly documented.

(b) **(ii)** The project plan only needs to encompass plans for the software development and test plan stages of the project. The dates should roughly tie in with those in the activity log/diary. This section was again poorly done on the whole. Candidates noted tasks such as 'create reports' which is far too big a section for one point on the Gantt chart. In addition, many candidates are still creating a project plan which encompasses the whole project from definition to evaluation. A project planning tool, as in real life, should plan the stages of creating the actual project – i.e. the Software Development and Test Plan stages only. Predecessor and successor tasks should be carefully considered.

(c) **(i)** Test plans were variable this session. Candidates tended to hone in one the statement in the mark scheme which states that test plans should aim to test all of the requirements. Whilst this is necessary, a test plan must in any case aim to test the entire solution to ensure it is robust. Whilst it is accepted that A Level students will not necessarily have the capability to test every single aspect of the system, it is expected that they will have a good go at thorough testing. Therefore, validation should be checked, along with pathways through the system, button testing and visual checks as a guide. Whilst more candidates had shown evidence of ongoing testing, there were still a high number of centres marking this section where there was no evidence. The marks for this section can't be gained from the end testing based on the test plan. The marks can only be given when the candidate clearly shows, within the software development section, that they have tested at least some of the individual stages of the solution during development.

(c) **(ii)** This section was still not done very well by most candidates. This section should allow candidates to consider how they would install the software, transfer data to the new system and train the staff. For 5 marks it is expected that candidates will consider the alternative changeover methods, installation processes including how data files will be created or transferred, the timescales and any limitations they may face. They should also be consulting with the client about training needs and carefully considering how these can be met.

(d) User guides were often very comprehensive and candidates on the whole knew how to present these effectively. There were a number of creatively presented guides – some had been very creative and made a professional job of them. Use of screenshots was excellent and candidates tended to use accurate contents pages, page numbering and/or indexes.

(e) The marking of the evaluations took much more notice of the mark scheme and candidates attempted much more robust analyses of their projects. Candidates made better use of client feedback in their evaluations. The weak point in many evaluations was the discussion of the possible extensions. These were often superficial and did not detail how or why the extensions would be beneficial.

(f) Whilst presentation tended to be good in many cases, it should be noted that without a diary or log of events, the project can be awarded no more than 1 mark in this section.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)
Telephone: 01223 553998
Facsimile: 01223 552627
Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Facsimile: 01223 552553