AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

Applied Information and Communication Technology
8751, 8753, 8756 & 8759

IT14 **Interactive Multimedia**

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - June series

Introduction

This was the first session with availability of all of the units for both the user and practitioner awards at A2 and the second session for AS. The general standard of work seen across the AS units showed a definite improvement over the last session. The general standard of work across the A2 units was very pleasing with much creative work seen and clear indications that candidates with a wide range of abilities are succeeding with this Specification. This of course is inevitably not true of all candidates. Many centres should be congratulated on their approach to these courses as they have embraced the meaning of Applied ICT. Some centres, however, do need to consider the approaches taken to some of the units so that they can help candidates to attain the best possible marks. Centres are encouraged to make full use of the advice, materials, such as the Teachers Guide, and training available to them and to attend the feedback meetings for the A2 units and standardisation meetings that will be held in Autumn 2007 for both AS and A2 units.

Unit 14: Interactive Multimedia (IT14)

General comments

As mentioned in the general introduction this was the first session when the full A2 Single and Double Award was available to candidates. Work was seen across nearly all Units that achieved the full range of marks.

It is important for centres to realise that there is a change in demand for candidates undertaking the A2 units, over that expected as AS level. The level of demand of the AS assessment is that expected of candidates half-way through a full A-Level course of study. The A2 units, set at a higher level than AS, are designed to assess knowledge, understanding and skills expected of candidates who have completed the second half of a full Advanced Level qualification.

There is also a difference in emphasis between the AS and A2 on Assessment Objectives. Emphasis in the A2 is on processes involved in producing a solution, rather than the solution itself. This means that double the marks are allocated to AO4 (28 marks) than at AS and 17 or 18 mark are allocated to AO3.

Because of the increased emphasis on processes, it is important for candidates to see the piece of work undertaken as a whole, not just as a series of sub-tasks. Where Centres had presented candidates with a given piece of work, or assignment, that was broken down into a series of mini-assignments the work presented was not coherent and often limited the marks that the candidates could obtain. It is also not in the spirit of the Specification for candidates to carry out work in this way, as it prevents them from experiencing the whole process of producing a solution for a client and makes the work produced very mechanistic.

28 marks are available for AO4 in each of the A2 units. Candidates are only able to achieve 1 mark for time management and planning unless they have included an estimate of the time they anticipate that they will require in order to complete each of the tasks they have planned to do. At AS level the candidates should have learnt the rudiments of time planning, and by A2 should be able to quantify the amount of time required for different parts of their work. It was particularly disappointing that candidates appeared unable to build on their experience at AS level in order to provide evaluation criteria that they could clearly identify as quantitative and qualitative. By the time candidates reach A2 level they should be able to create evaluation criteria that allow them to assess whether they have met the needs of the client. Test strategies and plans were weak throughout – especially on the units where there is no tangible product to test. Candidates need to consider how to test a non-working model and how to test a design.

General remarks about A2 portfolios

A well organised portfolio is easy to assess and moderate. Few portfolios had an accurate contents page; many had no headers or footers on the work included; many did not distinguish between different parts or sections of work. Consecutive page numbering from the beginning to the end of the portfolio is essential for accurate recording of assessment decisions.

The portfolios should contain only the evidence required for assessment against the marking grids, with witness statements included at the point where they are supporting the evidence. Many candidates included lots of unnecessary material – including copies of teacher-set assignments, sets of notes and class work, which did not gain any marks.

Unit 14: Interactive Multimedia (IT14)

This A2 Unit is roughly equivalent to Unit 12 in demand, though there is less emphasis in the assessment on meeting client needs. It introduces candidates to the techniques involved in designing and creating interactive multimedia and the demands that it makes on hardware.

Interactivity should be between the audience of the application and the application itself. It is not likely that the demands for this Unit will be met by a straightforward presentation package. It is expected that candidates will use software that will allow them to program the application in some way. This can be achieved by the use of software such as Mediator or an application programming language such as VBA or Delphi; or through the use of html to produce interactive web pages. Many candidates used software packages such as Mediator, Authorware, Flash, or Audacity to create interesting and useful interactive applications.

The product is an interactive multimedia application that incorporates various media elements with features that allow navigation through the choice of the audience and incorporates other multimedia features.

Assessment Objective 1 (18 marks)

This section of the assessment focuses on the candidate's ability to use multimedia creation software to create an application that amalgamates text, graphics, sound, video and other media elements; the incorporation of interactive features (both navigation and other user interaction); creating technical documentation for the installer/maintainer of the system; organisation of media elements.

Row 2 – most candidates gained one mark for evidence that the application included an interactive feature (often a menu system) that allowed two or more user-controlled paths through the application. For the second and third mark the candidate has to provide other types of user interaction and explain why they are included. Many candidates did include some interactivity with the audience, but few explained why this was done.

Row 3 – multimedia techniques were often confused with interactive features. Candidates should be showing that they can combine text, graphics, animation, video and sound to produce an effective application. These should enhance the interaction with the audience. For the fourth mark to be awarded there needs to be evidence that candidates had recorded and customised sound and video.

The portfolio requirement for Rows 4 and 5 appeared to cause much confusion. The user guide expected in Row 4 is a guide to the installer/maintainer of the system. It should clearly explain how to install the multimedia application on the target machine(s) and how to maintain the application, for example if it needs to be updated with new images or text. It may also usefully contain a brief guide to the application itself, but candidates who only included this were unable to achieve more than one mark. The technical documentation required for Row 5 is supplementary to that required for Row 4 and should give details of how the application was assembled for implementation. This evidence may also be referred to in the assessment for AO1, Row 1. It should be possible to see where all elements of media are used; how the interactivity is built in and how events are implemented.

Assessment Objective 2 (7 marks)

Assesses the candidate's ability to explain the need for an application, and client needs.

Row 2 – many candidates were able to achieve the first two marks on this row, but most did not explain why, for example, a multimedia application was the best way of presenting the information contained in their application. This would have ensured the third mark was awarded.

Assessment Objective 3 (17 marks)

Assesses whether the candidate can break the application into 'building blocks' and produce designs that will allow the application to be developed; suggest appropriate resources and the hardware and software necessary to run the application; and produce an implementation schedule that takes into account all the tasks that are necessary.

Row 2 – assesses whether the candidate has an understanding that multimedia applications place certain demands on computer hardware. Many candidates provided a generic description of a computer system that did not relate to the running of the application and so were unable to gain any marks. Others made an attempt by saying, for example, that speakers were required to hear the sound in the application, or that a web browser was required to view their web pages. Few took their explanations further to explain what would be the optimum hardware and software required to run the application and why it was required.

Row 3 – there was little attempt, on the whole, to suggest appropriate resources for the application and link them to the client needs. The resources required may be hardware and software needed to create the multimedia elements; those required to create the application; the media elements that will be assembled into the application.

Row 6 – although there was often some evidence in candidates' time plans that implied an outline implementation schedule was in place, few candidates provided a detailed plan that had been discussed with the client as to when certain milestones would be achieved. The schedule should describe the tasks that are required in order to complete the application and should include such details as showing designs to the client, creating elements of media and getting client agreement on these and so on. Few candidates achieved more than one mark on this row as a result.

Assessment Objective 4 (28 marks)

As will all A2 units AO4 has 28 marks allocated to it – double the number available in the AS units. Similar things are being assessed as at AS level, but in greater depth. Only 1 mark can be achieved on time planning if no estimates of time required are included.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA website.