AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

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

IT08 **Project Management**

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - June series

Unit 8: Project Management (IT08)

General comments on A2 Units

Generally, where projects undertaken have real clients candidates produced portfolios with appropriate evidence and thus gained higher marks. It was evident that where candidates worked on given scenarios they were less engaged with the work and the marks achieved tended to be lower than for those who worked with real clients.

In A04, some candidates produced portfolios which showed some confusion regarding the term 'problem'. These candidates identified problems that occurred during the production of the solution and provided problem solving accounts rather than providing a narrative description of how the tasks were carried out whilst working on the unit as a whole.

Action plans and monitoring of tasks showing the anticipated and actual duration of each task in hours were evident in many, though not all candidates' portfolios. In the A2 units this lack of detail in plans means that only one of the four marks available for time planning can be awarded.

In all units, the better candidates presented portfolios that told the 'story' of their unit of work, rather than setting out their portfolios in Marking Grid order, where the purpose of the work is often not seen until the reader is well into the portfolio. Portfolios presented in this way gained higher marks for quality of written communication.

Unit 8

This Unit introduces candidates to the skills, techniques and tools involved in managing a project (or part of it) and working as part of a project team.
A broad spectrum of projects had been carried out, from planning world record attempts, to setting up websites and organising trips. The emphasis of assessment is on the processes that occur whilst carrying out the project rather than the end product itself, which allows for some projects not coming to fruition until after the end of the unit of work. In these cases no end product was evident apart from the results of the planning phase. This was perfectly acceptable.

AO1 assesses the candidate's acquisition of new skills during the project and whether they were pro-active in their acquisition; their use of new software or software functions during the project; their use of project management tools and standard ways of working.

In some portfolios there was a lack of documentation to show that software tools had been used and/or that they were new to the candidate.

Most candidates sampled had a good grasp of what it means to work in a team, on a project, and had obviously done so. Some projects were unsuitable, because the project undertaken was not complex enough to allow all the team members to be responsible for a reasonable portion of the work.

Unfortunately there was evidence that, in some instances, candidates had been taught "to the mark grid" and were producing evidence of skills/knowledge gained or used in the project with no real understanding of their relevance.

This was also the case for some candidates who had given support to team members, but with too much emphasis on "teaching something" for the sake of achieving marks on the mark grid rather than passing on relevant and necessary skills to a fellow team member, who would then

use those skills in the project. Where candidates had achieved high marks they had usually given support to a team member on a relevant skill and included an authenticated record of the support given, complemented by signed feedback from the other team members and/or teacher. Some excellent, detailed, personalised feedback and witness statements were seen.

Many candidates had not used Project Management software (there is no requirement to do so), but better candidates had used a variety of project management tools. For example there were some interesting examples of the use of Facebook as a project management tool. Other tools used were distribution lists for emails, series' of related agendas and minutes and well monitored Gantt charts, though not all candidates had described or shown how they had used these tools effectively and consistently through the life of the project.

Most candidates showed that effective communication had taken place but only the better candidates showed that they had acted upon communication from other team members. A good source of evidence for this was provided by some candidates whose meeting minutes showed action points for team members that had been followed up at the next meeting.

Many candidates had produced good evidence of their own use of project management tools and their own personal involvement in problem solving, but sometimes they failed to show how they responded to unexpected events, solely concentrating on contingency planning for unexpected events. Not all candidates provided detailed evidence of how they planned to use software in their own part of the project and why this was appropriate to their allocated tasks.

In A03 a few of the better portfolios included good enough evidence for three marks on each of rows 5 and 6, where candidates should explain their existing skills and knowledge prior to commencing the project, and then describe how they have used these in carrying out their tasks and role in the project. Many candidates did not achieve high marks on these rows because they described their pre-existing skills and knowledge but not their use whilst working on the project.

In A04 better candidates gained higher marks for clearly showing how their projects and their part in the project were to be assessed. They did this by providing some measures of success and explaining why these were important. The better candidates also explained either who would assess their success or failure, or explained how these things would be measured. Few candidates gave clear accounts of the actions taken by other team members during the project, concentrating solely on their own actions.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades
Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.