



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied
June 2012**

**Applied Information and
Communication Technology**

IT08

**(Specification
8751/8753/8756/8757/8759)**

Unit 8: Project Management

Report on the Examination

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IT08 – Project Management

General Comments for ITPA/3

Generally when projects undertaken have real clients, candidates produced better portfolios. It was evident that many candidates had used real clients for their unit work in this series and were thus able to access higher marks.

Action plans and monitoring of tasks in the unit, showing estimated and actual durations in hours were evident in most candidate portfolios, though predicted deadlines of project tasks were missing in some portfolios where only start and end dates for tasks were given.

General Comments for IT08

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 parties, 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 although it was highlighted that the software or software functions were new to the candidate they had not described how they had used them in their own work to gain higher marks. This was often because the candidate did not have a clearly defined list of tasks to be undertaken in their role in the team and therefore did not understand what new software or software functions were relevant.

Most candidates sampled had a good grasp of what it means to work in a team on a project, and had obviously done so.

A few projects were unsuitable where, for example, a whole team had worked to produce only a simple spreadsheet solution or a PowerPoint presentation and in some cases teams were too large for candidates to understand their role and tasks within the team. Most candidates did show evidence of real, appropriate projects undertaken.

Many candidates had shown that they had developed a good mix of technical IT and soft skills relevant to team work during their projects. However there was often a lack of evidence to show the proactive acquisition of IT skills by some candidates.

Unfortunately there was also 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 to the individual candidate's role/tasks.

Similarly when giving support to team members there was often too much emphasis on "teaching something" 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, tailored feedback from the other team members and teacher.

Although some portfolios showed pre- and post-project skills audits as evidence of recording improvements in levels of new skills, many candidates failed to record their progress in acquiring skills at all and therefore could not access the higher marks.

Many candidates had used a variety of alternative project management tools, for example there were some good uses of distribution lists for emails, spreadsheets used to prepare and monitor project budgets, tracking of document changes made to documents held in areas with shared access, series' of related agendas and minutes and well monitored Gantt charts. However many candidates had failed to gain the higher marks because they had not described or shown how they had used these tools effectively, appropriately and consistently in their aspect of the project. A few projects sampled incorrectly identified methods of communication as project management tools and thus gained no credit.

When providing evidence of adherence to standard ways of working, some candidates did not provide even minimal evidence of backing up their work and using appropriate file names, even though many of those students had shown some evidence of using standard ways of working appropriate to group work. Adherence to both personal and group work standard ways of working should be evidenced.

In A02 most work sampled showed that effective communication had taken place but only the better candidates showed that they had acted upon communication from other team members. This was predominantly provided by candidates whose meeting minutes showed action points allocated to them, as a team member, that had been followed up at the next meeting.

Although most candidates described their role and tasks in the project in detail, some candidates, especially where teams were too large, had problems in describing exactly what they were going to deliver, and their role as a team member.

In A03 many candidates had produced good evidence of their own personal involvement in problem solving, but sometimes they failed to show how they had responded to unexpected events. Most candidates showed thorough contingency planning for unexpected events.

Not all candidates showed detailed evidence of the ICT they planned to use in their own part of the project (in the future tense) and some failed to then show evidence of how and where the ICT had actually been used.

In A03 a few better portfolios showed 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 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 did not then show how they had used these whilst working on the project (in the past tense).

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 objectives and evaluation criteria for the team in respect of the overall project, and themselves in respect of their own individual role/tasks in the project. These candidates then provided a plan of how they would assess their success or failure by explaining how these would be measured for example by test plans for projects, user/client questionnaires and peer feedback.

Some better candidates gave clear accounts of the actions taken by other team members during the project through diaries/logs kept during the project.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.