Principal Moderator Feedback

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Information and Communication Technology (6962)

Paper 01 Customising Applications

A PEARSON COMPANY

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General Comments

This was the first time work was assessed on the updated version of the specification.

Most centres submitted the sample required on one disk and included the esheets and candidate authentication sheets all labelled according to the correct naming conventions as detailed in the document "Moderation of ePortfolios: Guidance for Centres". Many candidates' eportfolios were in the correct file formats, within the stated file size of 25 MB and most contained a clear index file which started the eportfolio. Many assessors giving clear feedback in the esheets explaining the assessment decisions made and marks awarded.

On the whole this Unit is still being too generously assessed with, at times, Assessors appearing to change the criteria in the specification to suit the evidence their candidates have generated. By far the biggest strand where Assessors do not apply the assessment criteria properly is Strand . The unit is intended to be a 'half way house' between creating a system using the in built wizards and/or macros and the full blown programming unit ie Unit 14. It is expected that the candidates will move beyond using wizards/macros and write their own code. It is expected it will include selection and iteration and a sequential search. If a candidate has not written code themselves to cover selection and iteration then the product cannot be classed as A2 Level and it will have a detrimental affect on the number of marks that can be awarded in strands B to D. A working version of the solution must be included as this is now a requirement of this unit under the revised specification. Details of any passwords the moderators will need to view and test it should be clear – on the e-record sheets is preferable.

In this moderation window there was evidence that many more candidates had written their own code but there is still the issue of not including the necessary constructs. Iteration is by far the biggest construct that is missing entirely from evidence. Iteration has to be present and written by the candidates themselves right from mark band one upward. Mark band two requires different types of iteration eg (While...Do, Repeat...Until, For...Do) as does mark band three. You would expect at least two different types of iteration. Putting forward evidence of queries in Microsoft Access etc for this is not suitable evidence. The candidates have to write their own code.

Selection is quite commonly present but again, for mark band two and higher, there needs to be different types present eg if...then, if...then...else, elseif, Case. It is very, very uncommon to see Case used when, a lot of the time, it is much more efficient compared to the multiple if..then..elses that are put forward. Mark band two requires appropriate use of selection etc. It is sometimes hard to justify appropriate use when lots of if...then...elses are used.

Mark bands two and three also require the use of a sequential search with mark band three specifying it has to amend data. Some candidates had included excellent evidence of this choosing to combine it with iteration. In a lot of other cases it was missed out entirely.

Quite a few Assessors appear to be claiming use of the selection and iteration etc from an automatically generated switchboard in Microsoft Access - this is not acceptable and no marks can be associated to it.

At other times the candidates had included evidence that was not really suitable for this 'halfway house' approach ie a Microsoft Access backend with a Visual Basic front end. This is not what is required in this unit. Candidates are expected to customise either a spreadsheet or database application using the tools and facilities within that application and some of their own code. Systems such as the above are better suited to Unit 14 the full blown programming unit.

QWC
This was assessed for the first time under the updated specification, The majority of centres commented on QWC on the e-sheet and used the criteria correctly. However some misunderstanding was evident in a few cases.

The rules for QWC are as follows:

- The content of the work is marked, identifying the band and the mark that the work is worth.
- The QWC is assessed and the mark is then adjusted, within the band, to give a final mark.
- The content mark cannot be increased on the basis of QWC.
- If the content mark awarded is at the bottom of a band, the student's mark cannot be reduced further.
- QWC should not be assessed elsewhere in the unit.

Centre Administration
Candidates need to supply explicit evidence to support their achievement of the criteria in the various marking grids. It is easier to confirm marks if the evidence is easy to find and supplied in an explicit form. Assessors must use the e-sheets as an opportunity to explain why they have awarded marks, there are two advantages to this for the centre. If the moderator can see why and where marks are awarded it is easier to agree with the centre marks, secondly if the centre marks cannot be agreed then the moderator can give better guidance to help future assessment.

A number of centres still do not meet deadlines for submitting work to the moderators; the deadlines are published in advance and must adhered to unless special permission has been obtained in advance from Edexcel. Permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Centres who miss the deadline risk having the results delayed or the candidates recorded as absent. Each unit must be on a separate CD, even if sent to the same moderator.

Strand A
On the whole the evidence presented was suitable for the marks awarded though some candidates are still including screenshots of their final systems etc which is not required.

Strand B
The biggest problem area in this strand is the fact that prototyping is not given the importance it should have. It is a major factor in all mark bands. Where candidates were placed in mark bands two or three the evidence for prototyping tended to be

mark band one level without the Assessor taking it into account. Mark band two clearly states that the candidates must provide detailed comments evaluating each prototype in terms of how well it meets the specified requirements. Detailed evaluative comments were, on the whole, missing and where they were present very rarely did they discuss how well it met the requirements. Mark band three requires the same but they must also provide evidence of others being involved. Both aspects are expected to be very detailed for mark band three.

There are still other problems that have been highlighted before ie this strand is all about the design of the system and not the final system. A copy of the final code is not pseudocode. Screenshots of the final system are not design. Whilst it is fine to have screenshots they should not be from the final system. In some instances there was no design at all i.e. the candidates putting forward their technical guide for the final system as design – this is not appropriate. Design should be design not how the final system has been built.

Evidence of the functions requiring code to be written is getting better with some very nice, detailed flow charts etc included, however, at times Assessors are awarding marks where there are none or where the level of detail makes it impossible to see what the process is and how it is going to occur. It is very difficult to gain the higher mark bands if these diagrams are not detailed.

Strand C
As well as iteration etc standard ways of working are important in this strand too. The programming code should include good use of indentation and comments clearly explaining the purpose of the code and it should clearly show where candidates have written/modified code. On the whole few candidates commented code to what would be classed as an acceptable level in the real world. Others commented all the code in the system - there is no need for comments in code candidates have not written themselves ie code automatically generated one way or another as that code is not being judged when marks are awarded. The user and technical guide should also be taken into account here when awarding marks.

Strand D
On the whole Assessors are correctly placing candidates in the correct bands with the correct marks but, at times, it is hard to see the data the candidates are using ie boundary, normal and out of range data and illegal data. Candidates make it clear what they are using in their test plans. The majority of candidates were including hard evidence of their testing along with the test plans. Tick list test plans with no hard evidence cannot make it out of mark band one.

Strand E
Evaluations are still weak. At A2 there are a significant number of marks for evaluation and many candidates are missing these. For mark band one there must be evidence of the candidates commenting on the effectiveness of their OWN coding and reaching some conclusion about whether or not it was the best way to meet the requirements. Mark band two requires consideration of alternative solutions and the justification for the use of their OWN coding. Mark band three requires full justification for the use of their OWN coding. Very few evaluations included evidence of any of this. Very, very few Assessors had attempted to provide

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comments about the quality of written communication in this strand. The moderators need to know whether this has been assessed.

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Unit Results

Grade	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Boundary Mark	60	44	38	32	27	22	17
Max Uniform Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	0-39

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-39.

Note
Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject.

Qualification Results

Advanced Subsidary (Single Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Maximum Uniform Mark = 300	240	210	180	150	120

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-119.

Advanced GCE (Single Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Maximum Uniform Mark = 600	480	420	360	300	240

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-239.

Advanced Subsidary (Double Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Maximum Uniform Mark = 600	480	450	420	390	360	330	300	270	240

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade EE will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-239.

Advanced GCE with Advanced Subsidary (Additional)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Maximum Uniform Mark = 900	720	690	630	600	540	510	450	420	360

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade EE will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-359.

Advanced GCE (Double Award)

The minimum uniform marks required for each grade:

Qualification Grade	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Maximum Uniform Mark = 1200	960	900	840	780	720	660	600	540	480

Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a grade EE will receive a uniform mark in the range of 0-479