Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2012

Applied GCE 6954

Unit 4 – System Design and Installation

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General comments

There was increasing evidence that the requirements of all aspects of the unit were beginning to be appreciated by the centres and candidate work seen supported this. It was again disappointing to see that, some centre assessors are still giving either no, or almost meaningless, feedback. Comments like 'well done' or 'nice screenshots' do not aid either the candidate or the moderator. Assessors are advised to use the e-sheet to explain how they reached a grading decision and to indicate if the candidate worked independently which is a requirement of the higher mark bands.

It was again pleasing to see that a high percentage of the eportfolios submitted were in a format which allowed the moderator to easily find the evidence. Centres are reminded that it is not the moderator's role to have to search through eportfolios and folders to find the relevant evidence; summative testing of the completed eportfolio would eliminate many of the problems that occur in locating the relevant evidence. As stated in previous Principal Moderator's Reports, eportfolios should be in a format that can be read in a browser and the files should link together.

Lack of proof reading was still very evident throughout a high number of submitted portfolios with an alarming number of examples of evidence containing uncorrected errors. With the application of Quality of Written Communication to strand b, it is important that candidates are encouraged to proof read their work thoroughly.

Strand (a) - Needs Analysis

Candidates had little problem in finding two existing systems but again a significant percentage could not describe how these systems matched their client's requirements. There was still a distinct lack of evidence from the majority of candidates when it came to being able to evaluate fully the benefits and perceived drawbacks of the chosen systems, in order to give their client an informed conclusion. The production of a proper needs analysis for a client with complex needs is central to this strand and centres are again reminded to refer their candidates to section 4.1 of the unit specification. Some candidates are still not submitting evidence that they have carried out and produced outcomes from at least two different investigations as part of their needs analysis. This is a requirement in order to access the top of mark band 1 and move into mark band 2.

Strand (b) - System Specification

The main requirement of this strand is that the chosen system needs to be recommended to the client through a detailed and informative systems specification (section 4.7 of the unit specification). The completed report should be written as a non-technical explanation justifying as to why all the components, both hardware and software, have been chosen. For the higher mark bands, candidates should offer their client alternatives to those components chosen.
This latter point was either omitted completely or very briefly mentioned in a large number of candidates' evidence for this strand.
Again, as in previous moderation series, candidates selected furniture, which they claimed to have ergonomic qualities but failed to explain why they would be suitable for their client. Quality of Written Communication was judged in this strand, but the standard was in the main corresponding to the mark band awarded.

Strand (c) - System Build

As mentioned in previous Principal Moderator's reports, the system being built does not need to relate to the system recommended in strand (b), but there should be some indication as to the requirements and anticipated use of the system.
The evidence for the configuration activities still did not reflect the candidates' level of work. It is important that centres advise candidates to address several of the activities listed in 4.9 of the unit specification. Many candidates still did not address working safely.

Strand (d) – Testing

It was again pleasing to see evidence of some good practice with candidates giving detailed accounts of how they tested the final system and also some end user testing. Photographs and screen dumps of error messages were included.
Candidates should be encouraged to produce annotated evidence of a variety of tests that have been undertaken if they wish to achieve a mark in grade bands two or three.

Strand (e) – Evaluation

The evaluation in this unit is about the performance of the built, tested and configured system and whether or not it met the needs of their client not about the performance and structure of the candidate's eportfolio. Feedback from others was often omitted and when present was found to be vague and lacking evidence of who provided the feedback and why.
It was again evident that many candidates found it difficult to accurately evaluate the work undertaken in this unit and comment reflectively on their own performance.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx