Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Applied ICT (6963)
Paper 01 Web Management

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There was a relatively small amount of centres submitting during this window, however there was a clear distinction seen between the centres meeting national standards and those that did not.

For the centres assessing to national standards, the evidence continued to demonstrate a high understanding of the topic and of the requirements of the marking grid. Several of the hosting reports were aimed at clearly defined client's needs, standard visit strategies were being used and assessed with site statistics with a good selection of high quality feedback forms supplied as evidence.

Legal issues were discussed and implemented in the form of privacy policies, terms and conditions and data protection statements clearly demonstrating the compliance with legal constraints, and the majority of candidates attempted to utilize accessibility tools, especially WAVE and PowerMapper.

It is always a pleasure to see the unit improve due to the hard word of students and the diligence and guidance of tutors across the sector. Several of the centres produced extremely professional and imaginative sites presented in an ePortfolio that was easy to access. This was in line with previous moderation sessions in the June window.

However, several centres appear to have returned to the use of unsuitable structured assignments, and the bulk of advice regarding improvement given here, is aimed at those centres.

The approach of using a structured assignment, seen in this moderation window, do not present full opportunity for the candidates to create evidence to access all mark bands in all strands. They often produced evidence that is not related to the specification and is far too similar across the cohort. However, the most disturbing result of using these misguided and unchecked assignments is that they reduce the overall grades of students that appear to have applied extensive effort to their sites and their ePortfolio, and some that exude the impression that with better guidance they could easily achieve much higher grades.

The Principal Moderator continues to stress the importance of reviewing the assignment tasks to eradicate this problem in future submissions.

The vast majority of candidates using these structured assignments also produce sites with eCommerce additions, usually a prize offered or a shopping cart. There has been a clear message sent out to centres

regarding the illegality of such additions where a real client selling real products does not exist. This window saw the first implementation of a reduction in marks at moderation for this lack of consideration regarding legal constraints.

One final general point that needs to be raised in this window concerns the quality required at different mark bands. MB2 and MB3 require increasing depth of discussion and explanation than MB1. As an example, merely stating that they were "good at planning the web site" but "needed to update the site a bit more often" would not be sufficient for MB2 in the evaluation for Strand E. MB2 and MB3 needs in-depth written work.

Strand A – Centres assessing to national standards presented focused evidence easily accessed using clear links for each of the strand requirements. Testing was supported by screen shots of action taken to solve problems and the client was sufficiently considered in the choice of host. One point to note when selecting and justifying the host - it is not necessary to provide evidence of the facilities provided by several hosts, just the features provided by the chosen host justified against clear client needs.

Too many candidates still justified their choice against future expansion or irrelevant facilities offered. It was pleasing to see one or two centres inventing a tabular method of scoring and justifying the facilities offered against sets of clients' needs. This has to be admired.

Structured assessments often produced extensive evidence of uploading files and a dictionary of terms for web hosting, both of which are not required. It was also impossible to determine that testing was carried out online.

There was also too little on why hosting would benefit the client. If the client has a product you are promoting, they would benefit from an increased range of customers. Similarly for event promotions, the candidates need to look at the client's needs and explain why creating a web site would benefit them in terms of promotion, sales and marketing.

Strand B – The majority of evidence covered a wide range of strategies, evaluated for their effectiveness in a suitable manner. Several centres still counted Titles and META Tags as two different strategies, usually as part of a structured approach. These techniques have only been considered as one strategy since the 2010 specification was introduced.

Strand C – Generally well evidenced and assessed to national standards. Several candidates used PHP database storage and some created a simple but effective forum facility. However, very simple forms, i.e. that only capture the users name and email address, will not extend beyond mark band two.

Legal issues relating to the DPA were either excellent or disappointing. There were some very clear, concise Terms and Conditions produced and several forms contained acceptance tick boxes with clear statements. Again, the more structure evidence contained only a description of the DPA, along with several other non related laws, without any clear link to the arena of eMarketing or web design. This evidence will not access marks outside MB1.

Strand D – Sites were generally provided as a live link in the ePortfolio, however technical documentation was often weak. There should be enough information to maintain the site long after it has been published, including folder structures, passwords to control panels, important code snippets and site maps.

There was a lack of updates applied over the 8 week publication period in almost all the samples seen in the centres adopting the structured assignment approach. Evidence of maintenance still contained changes made to the site to upgrade it from Unit 6955. This is not suitable evidence. The site must be complete and upgraded with all promotion strategies and feedback forms before publishing. Stat counters were often introduced far too late to offer any real indication of the effectiveness on promotion strategies or site performance.

Frequent testing during maintenance on features that couldn't possibly have changed was also found i.e. links within a site and regular spelling and grammar checks on pages that have not been updated. The more effective ePortfolios tested a whole range of changes in content, images and information, made to the site during the maintenance period.

Strand E – This strand was generally assessed and evidenced effectively using believable hit reports. Self assessment was not always extensive but the performance of the site is being evaluated clearly using a variety of methods.