



General Certificate of Education

Information and Communication Technology 6520

Unit 6 Coursework: Use of Information Systems for Problem Solving

Report on the Examination

2008 examination – January series

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Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

Few centres took the opportunity to submit work in this session.

Analysis

The purpose of this section is to fully explain to a third party the precise operation of the current system, and the constraints upon it, so that the design effort could be initiated by a third party. It is expected that candidates make appropriate and sensible use of appropriate systems analysis tools and techniques. Some form of data analysis is essential, especially when a database design is to be considered, and without doubt a data dictionary or equivalent is expected to summarise that analysis.

Evaluation criteria are important to the assessment of this section and they impact significantly on other aspects of the project. The quantitative and qualitative criteria set here should be the focus of what the testing is trying to check and will ultimately demonstrate the viability and effectiveness of the solution. They are also used in the actual evaluation later in the project.

Design

Centres are reminded that to allocate high marks for this section a competent third party must be able to implement from the design work presented and that an effective and full testing plan must be present in this section of the documentation.

Good design work requires detailed form and report designs along with their underlying queries when using database solutions. It is also expected that candidates document clearly the processing methods that would be applied to their data e.g. the use of action queries such as update or append. Missing aspects will clearly reduce the mark that can be allocated and if macros are used they must be present in the design work as someone will have to build them in the implementation stage.

The focus for testing must be on whether the solution developed can achieve the main functions of the system. At times candidates focused on trivial aspects, often repeating themselves, at the expense of the main testing issues.

Candidates who planned at this stage how the user will be involved in the testing phase, possibly by creating scenarios for their end-user to follow through, seemed to be at an advantage when proof of testing was required later.

Implementation

Centres are asked to encourage candidates to include adequate technical documentation within this section to support the judgements they make and show the capabilities of the solution. This is not the story of how the solution was built but properly annotated evidence which those who might wish to modify the solution could use to do so.

When database management software is used, full and effective use of the appropriate software functions is expected i.e. those which manipulate the data in the system not just simple use of the storage (add / delete) and visual presentation aspects.

Testing

Providing clear evidence of end-user involvement in the testing phase remains an issue in this aspect of the module. It is expected that end-user acceptance testing will be planned for, carried out and fully documented. To attain the highest marks, that involvement must reflect the full participation of that user.

User Documentation

As with module ICT3 we continued to see good quality user documentation from candidates that demonstrate well the normal use of the system but candidates may need to consider more carefully the inclusion of more detailed problem sections as well as dealing more coherently with wider issues e.g. archiving.

Evaluation

The candidate should identify suitable evaluation criteria, both qualitative and quantitative, within the analysis section and is now expected to review those criteria against their solutions performance. A simple yes/no response is not appropriate here and candidates who are able to refer to their testing evidence as proof as part of their discussion always seem to be at an advantage.

Report

The final report should be clearly delineated, have page numbering and contents and indeed presentation standards have continued to improve.

Some candidates still produce very large reports which can be avoided if they pay greater attention to what is included in their report e.g. large quantities of unannotated printouts from Microsoft Access documenter do not show the candidate's understanding of the system they have developed and the presentation of items e.g. one screenshot per page could be increased to two screenshots per page and still be legible.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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