

L3 Lead Examiner Report 1901

January 2019

**L3 Qualification in Computing
Unit 3: Planning and
Management of Computing
Projects**

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January 2019

Publications Code 31770H_1901_ER

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What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade, at Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark is for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in external assessments

Each external assessment we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each assessment, because then it would not take accessibility into account.

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Unit 3: Planning and Management of Computing Projects

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3		
		P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	24	37	51

Introduction

This was the third examination series for Level 3 BTEC Computing Unit 3 (31770H). This unit is assessed through two parts, part A was the development of the PID and Gantt chart, which was 3 hours, and part B was the checkpoint and email, which was 2 hours.

This unit is a mandatory unit for all learners studying the extended certificate, foundation diploma, all diplomas and the extended diploma.

The examination for this unit will always contain four sections and each section will be link to a scenario that and used throughout the whole of that section. The scenario clearly stated at the beginning of each section.

Each section is broken down into activities, which will then test learners on different areas of the specification, and learners should expect to apply their knowledge to the scenario.

Learners given a scenario with additional information to support. They instructed to look at individual parts / sections of this during the examination in order to answer questions. The information brief may give learners:

1. Information about problems that they need to solve.
2. Interpret the scenario and apply solution using Project Management techniques and theory

All Activities of the examination paper provide differentiation at all attainment levels and the brief designed to escalate in difficulty so that a larger percentage of higher-grade marks depends on the skills, knowledge and understanding

- LE Report to be considered with paper and mark scheme
- Contextual introduction

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

The overall performance of learners was good, although compared to the previous season for this unit, the performance was slightly worst. However, it was evident that learners prepared for the rigour of this exam. The performance on the Activity 1 was excellent with many learners picking up marks for most sections. The number of blank responses was also significantly low again. Activity 2, Gantt chart showed massive improvements, centres are now starting to use Project Management software and this was evident for lot learners who gained marks in the top end of the criteria. Activity 3 and 4 were of high standard and demonstrated the learner's ability to apply theory to practical scenario. However, some part of Activity 3, project quality management was another area that learners struggled with; many learners failed to include processes and activities that determine the quality of the policies as well as objectives that meet the needs of the project.

There is still evidence that many learners are still not covering the full specification in depth. Activity 2, the costing, was particularly performed poorly; most learners were not able to use logic chains of reasoning apply Project Management techniques such as those that relate to functional points. Many learners were still using hours to calculate cost rather than converting the functional points to number of hours needed.

Individual Questions

Tests or Exams

The following section considers each question on the paper, providing examples of learner responses and a brief commentary of why the responses gained the marks they did. This section should be considered with the live external assessment and the corresponding mark scheme.

Individual Questions

The following section considers each question on the paper, providing examples of learner responses and a brief commentary of why the responses gained the marks they did.

Activity 1

For the Project Initiation Document (PID), learners need to clearly show what they have been taught by their centre, this should demonstrate awareness of how project managers operate. It is good to see link between strategy and project outcomes. Learners should have approached each task by correctly interpreting and transferring the correct information from the brief into the PID. This series a lot learners did complete this well. To reach top mark band, it is expected that the learners populate the last column with higher order of thinking, for example, in the assumptions and stakeholders section you would expect the leaners to have interpreted the scenario correctly and applied theory.

Objectives

SMART objective	Achieved?	Date and Comments
Analysis and design stage of the project should be completed by the 6 th November 2019.	Not yet achieved	6 th November, to be completed by the senior front-end and back-end developer.
Ensure that the first checkpoint prototype is available for the 12 th of November, two weeks after the analysis and design phase.	Not yet achieved	18 th November 2019, to be completed by the junior developers.
Ensure that the second checkpoint prototype is completed by the 29 th November 2019	Not yet achieved	29 th November 2019. These prototypes must be ready to show to the client.
Ensure that the third and final checkpoint is completed by 13 th December 2019	Not yet achieved	13 th December 2019. These prototypes must be ready to show to the client.
Ensure that the project sticks to its budget of £30,000 across the entirety of the project, this being until the 24 th January 2020.	Not yet achieved	24 th January 2020. It is vital that the budget is managed accordingly.
Ensure that the market research company's research is carried out by the 15 th of October 2019	Not yet achieved	15 th October 2019. The analysis and design stage cannot be carried out prior to this task.
Developing the website (16 function points – 2 junior developers) – completion date 15 th November 2019	Not yet achieved	15 th November. Carried out by Ross Turnbull and Sean Johnson. Any issues regarding this task should be reported to the respective senior developer.
Developing the app (10 general function points – 2 junior developers) completion date 14 th November 2019	Not yet achieved	14 th November 2019. This will be carried out by Adrian Tate and Paul White. Any issues regarding this task should be reported to the respective senior developer.
Developing the database (16 complex function points) – completion date 20 th November 2019	Not yet achieved	This is to be carried out by the back-end senior developer. Any issues with this task should be reported to the director of IT.
Graphics should be created for the user interface by 7 th November 2019	Not yet achieved	This is to be carried out by the graphics designer, and to be reviewed by the client.

The objectives have reflected the Project Lifecycle stages, Analysis, Design, Implementation, Testing and Evaluation/Review, and then adding relevant information from the scenario. These are specific and time constrained and relevant to the given scenario. The above candidate has considered all areas using logical chains of reasoning that show a full awareness of the given scenario. This answer fits into **Mark Band 4 (Marks 10-12)**

Objectives

SMART objective	Achieved?	Date and Comments
A target of £50000 profit within two years		
Sales revenue should increase by 10% year on year		
In the first year, services used via the website will generate enough money to break even		

All too often SMART objectives were not interpreted very well for this scenario. Candidates found it difficult to ascertain what would be a measurable, time constrained objective. A lot of learners either focused on budgets or rather than specifics of the scenario.

Risk Management Strategy

Risk	Probability	Impact	Severity	Contingency Plan
The market research may take longer than expected	Low	Medium	Medium	A fine will be incurred by the market research company if they do not abide by their stated delivery date.
Project manager may leave the team during the project's lifecycle	Low	High	Medium	A stand in project manager will be contracted to ensure that the project lifecycle continues smoothly.
A member of staff leaves the team during the project lifecycle	Low	Medium	Low	A stand in staff member will be contracted to ensure that the project lifecycle runs smoothly.
A member of staff is ill or otherwise unavailable during the project lifecycle	Medium	Low	Medium	The work can be covered by an additional member of staff until they return.
The project could run over budget.	Medium	High	Medium	Additional funding can be arranged with the Managing Director.
Due to delays, the prototypes may not be achievable by their expected deadlines	Medium	Medium	Medium	The deadlines for these prototypes can be delayed after the checkpoint by a week at maximum.

The learner has been able to understand that project management is complex and certain things need to be considered before the project starts. The risk factors need to be appropriate and contingency plans need to be thought of as more weight is on this area. There is consideration of the relevant risks and using logical chains of reasoning shows that the learner has full awareness of the given scenario. The learner has considered the probability of risk been low to medium as there is no indication that the organisation cannot complete the work. Impact is medium to high, as the corrective action has been considered. The severity of risk is also set from low to medium because any problems that arise and dealt in-house. **Mark Band (5-6)**

Objectives

SMART objective	Achieved?	Date and Comments
Developing the website		
Developing the database		
Developing the interface		
Installing server and related software		

The objectives are based upon clearly defined project goals, and then break those down further into the component tasks. The objectives help define the learner's success factors, which the learner needs evaluate in the activity 4. Getting this right first time will help later. It is important to ensure they are 'SMART' objectives all too often learners did not fully understand what the client wanted to achieve and thus struggled with the writing the objectives. Learners should put some timings even if it's reasonable estimation. Comments carry more weight when looking at the objectives and many cases learner clearly showed lack of understanding this is closely related to not identifying the objectives in the first place.

This is a crucial component of the project; the frequency and methods of communication are appropriate for the target audience, using logical chains of reasoning that show awareness of the given scenario. More emphasis and weight for the top end marks is for the purpose. This demonstrates that the candidate has thought about why the communication is necessary thinking about what to discuss during the communication. Learners should also consider more than one type of communication. In reality, they would be communicating using different methods, however make sure you don't add just for the sake of it. The learner would fit into **mark band (3-4)**

Communication Plan

Stakeholder(s)	Frequency	Type	Purpose
Front-end and back end developers	Every week	Team meeting	To ensure that development is going as planned with the junior developers and that no issues have arisen.
Front-end and back-end developers	Every week	Meeting with the Project Manager, client and the sponsor.	To relay the information of the team meeting to the project manager, client and sponsor and discuss if any additional plans will be necessary.
Market Researcher	Once	Meeting with the board of directors	This is to relay the newfound information of the market research that takes place prior to the design and analysis phase.
Catherine Johnson (Quality Manager)	When necessary	Email	This is to relay any issues found to the front-end and back end developers and the project manager.
Client	Every checkpoint	Meeting with both front end developer and project manager	This is to ensure that the checkpoint prototypes abide by the requirements of the client and to see if any changes must be made

Activity 2

ID	Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Predecessors	Resource Names
1		PINCOM Website and App	93 days	Thu 03/10/19	Fri 24/01/20		
2		Pre-Design Phase	10 days	Thu 03/10/19	Tue 15/10/19		
3	HH	Market Research	10 days	Thu 03/10/19	Tue 15/10/19		Market Researcher
4		Design Phase	20 days	Fri 11/10/19	Wed 06/11/19	2	
5		Analysis and Design Work	20 days	Fri 11/10/19	Wed 06/11/19		Lee Skyes (Senior Back-end Developer),Lucsia Johnson (Senior Front-end Developer)
6		Development Phase	12 days	Wed 06/11/19	Wed 20/11/19	4	
7		Developing the website	8 days	Wed 06/11/19	Fri 15/11/19		Ross Turnbull (Junior Developer),Sean Johnson (Junior Developer)
8		Developing the app	5 days	Wed 06/11/19	Thu 14/11/19		Adrian Tate (Junior Developer),Paul White (Junior Developer)
9		Developing the database	12 days	Wed 06/11/19	Wed 20/11/19		Lee Skyes (Senior Back-end Developer)
10		Building the web and app interface	9 days	Wed 06/11/19	Mon 18/11/19		Lucsia Johnson (Senior Front-end Developer)
11		Installing server and related software	2 days	Tue 12/11/19	Thu 14/11/19		Adrian Tate (Junior Developer),Paul White (Junior Developer)
12		Creating graphics for the user interface	1 day	Wed 06/11/19	Thu 07/11/19		Fiona Smith (Graphics Designer)
13		Testing and Prototype Dates	61 days	Tue 12/11/19	Fri 24/01/20		
14		Platform Testing for Prototype 1	5 days	Tue 12/11/19	Mon 18/11/19		Brian Pringle (Quality Tester),Laura Middleton (Quality Tester)
15		Showcase Date of Prototype 1	1 day	Mon 18/11/19	Tue 19/11/19	14	Ethan Duffield (Project Manager)
16		Platform Testing for Prototype 2	5 days	Mon 25/11/19	Fri 29/11/19		Brian Pringle (Quality Tester),Laura Middleton (Quality Tester)
17		Showcase Date of Prototype 2	1 day	Fri 29/11/19	Mon 02/12/19	16	Ethan Duffield (Project Manager)
18		Platform Testing for Prototype 3	5 days	Mon 09/12/19	Fri 13/12/19		Brian Pringle (Quality Tester),Laura Middleton (Quality Tester)
19		Showcase Date for Prototype 3	1 day	Fri 13/12/19	Mon 16/12/19	18	Ethan Duffield (Project Manager)
20	HH	Public Testing Period	19 days	Thu 02/01/20	Fri 24/01/20		
21		Fixing the expected major fault	2 days	Thu 02/01/20	Fri 03/01/20		Adrian Tate (Junior Developer)
22		Regression testing for the major fault	3 days	Fri 03/01/20	Wed 08/01/20	21	Brian Pringle (Quality Tester)
23		Fixing the expected three minor faults	3 days	Thu 02/01/20	Mon 06/01/20		Paul White (Junior Developer)
24		Regression testing for the three minor faults	9 days	Mon 06/01/20	Thu 16/01/20	23	Laura Middleton (Quality Tester)

Project: project

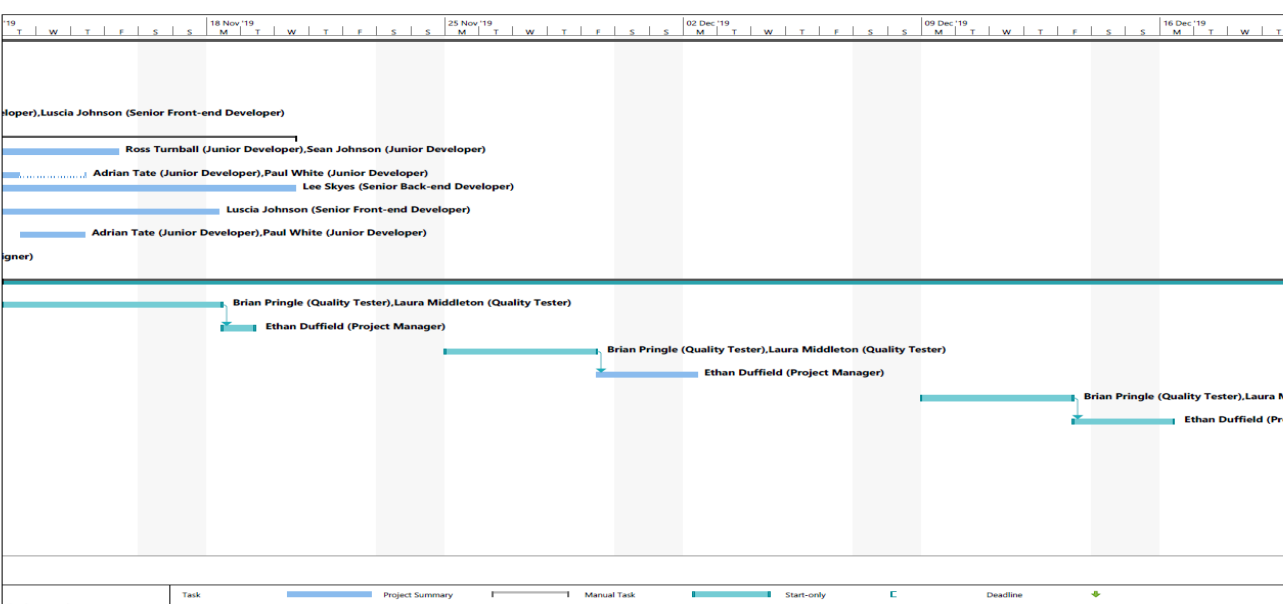
Task Split

Project Summary Inactive Task

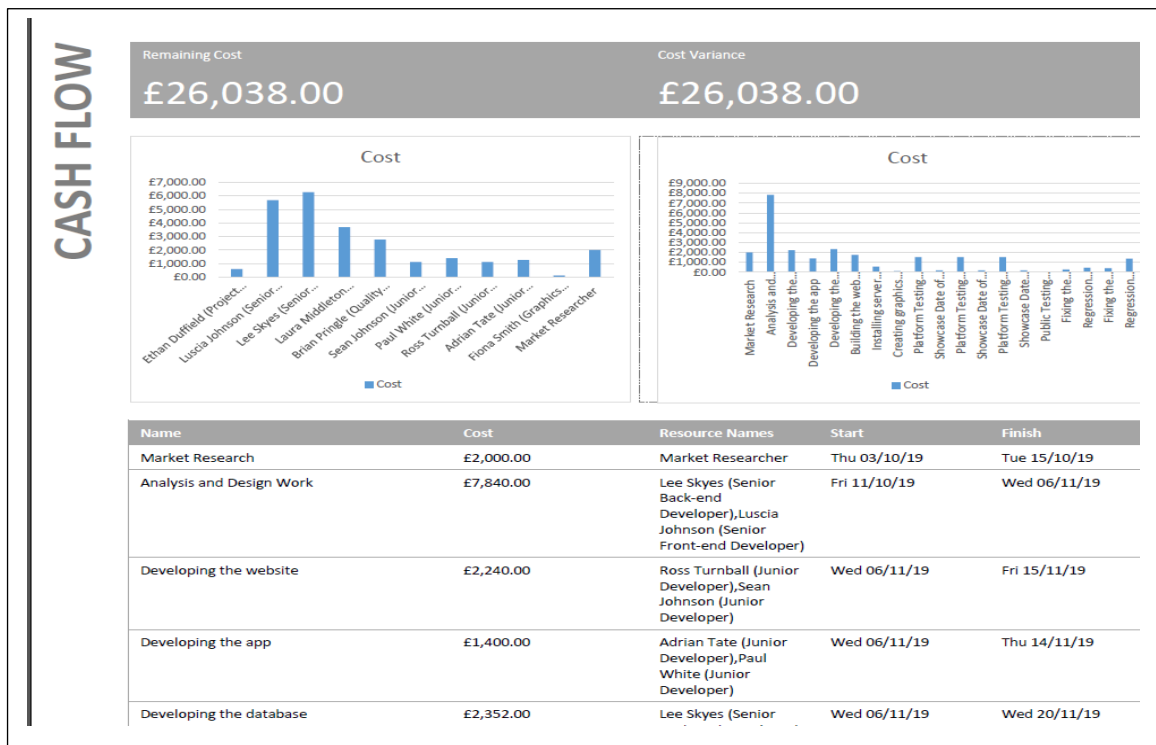
Manual Task Duration-only

Start-only Finish-only

Deadline Progress



The learner has clearly used a project development tool and has provided a Gantt chart with a list of tasks, which follow the project life cycle in order of the scenario and shows the final task and changeover. Also, the learner has given clear dates with time constraints demonstrated. The learner has added milestones and resources to each task, in this case the allocation of task to the correct worker. It should be noted that if resources are not on the Gantt chart then the learner’s response would not be placed into mark band 3, pleased to say in the February series this was correctly done by many centres. This learner’s response was placed in **Mark band 3 (7-8)**



The main points of this section, primarily, is the benefits of meeting quality requirements, which should include less rework, higher productivity, lower costs, therefore increased stakeholder satisfaction and increased productivity. The learner has shown some reasonable understanding, having included hardware resources and cost, the time needed for each employee with cost, they have shown evidence of how they attained the number of days required. However, it has come under budget; the learner has shown how they have calculated the costs from the functional points this was found on separate document resources. Response is placed in **Mark Band (5-6)**.

Activity 3

Quality management looks at the processes and activities that determining the policies, objectives and responsibilities so the project is successful. The learner has clearly done this focusing on standards as well as the project and sustaining it. They have demonstrated planning, performance and control quality key features that make up Quality management.

Quality Management

The overall quality of the project has been managed in the following ways:

The project manager held a firm grip over the planning done prior to the initialisation of the project. They ensured that the project ran smoothly and effectively in accordance with the Gantt chart and estimated costings.

Due to the lack of any formal standards being imposed upon the project, the Project Manager established that the ISO/IEC 25010:2011 standards should be adhered to for all development. This helped to ensure a clean and robust solution, which shows in the end result.

Additionally, the Project Manager enforced the usage of the World Wide Web Consortium's standards regarding any form of website development. This is to ensure that the end product is easily accessible by everyone, which has ultimately broadened the potential audience of this product.

As specified by the brief of this project, this project has never been done before. As a result of this, the project needed to be tested thoroughly and effectively. Much time has been placed into the rigorous testing required for this project as a result, and the standards implemented have helped to shape the project into a far cleaner result.

In the example above, the learner has written a lot but most of the answer does not really discuss any planning, performance or control, key features. The learner has focused more on the products rather than effectively monitoring and implemented what standards applied, how it will demonstrate compliance.

Quality Management

(List the activities undertaken this period)

Developed Website
Developed GUI
Developed the App
Developed Database
Installed Sever and Server

Lessons Learned

Throughout the project we came across a multitude of issues, these could have been caused due to the over-arching time constraints that we already had in place. For instance, the 5 day delay that was caused by the consumers for the public test not being readily available meant that the test itself had to be pushed back leading into the eventual push back of the testing as well, which in turn only left the testing team and developers with 1 day to spare in case of any more issues found. This could have been avoided if our time had been spent more appropriately and effectively on the more rigorous and demanding tasks, meaning we could have ended up with more time to spare and more time to elegate incase of issues like these.

We also seemingly overlooked the scope of work that the Fiona Smith had to do, because we had to employ a secondary Graphic Designer. Because of this we lost 5 days worth of work, whilst trying to manage this work meaning the origianl prototype was pushed back by a week. Fortunately this did not have cataclysmic effects on the rest of the project as the rest of the back end and front end development could continue not interrupted by this oversight. In order to counter this in the future we should not overlook the scope of work that may be needed, moreover we should employ a secondary employee of said type just to make sure that this does not happen again and cost us more time in delays.

Because of the pulic test delays this meant that the testing, and fault fixing was extended also. From this an additional 5 days had to be accounted for and added to the regression testing and fault fixing. The additional work meant that we were pushed even further over budget. To begin with our costs were £33,301 but due to these three different delays of constrasting length it meant that we had to add an additional £5404 meaning our totals were now £38,705 – at least £8,000 over budget.

Lessons learned are relevant and insightful, showing thorough understanding of the project management concepts that have been met. This section should evaluate progress and performance and should inform what changes they would make to future working practices. The learner has successfully done this by discussing communication issues with the team. Areas that can be discussed at this stage are any issues dealt with, any cost saving or additional costs, the impact, timings and the scope of the task. The candidate has also considered the future, what they can transfer to future projects. The learner has done this well and their answer fits in into **mark band 3 (6-8)**.

Activity 4

Email	
From	[REDACTED]
To	Abdul Hawsi – Managing Director of PINCOM
Subject	The Project So Far
<p>Dear Abdul,</p> <p>This email is to give an overview of how the project has gone so far along with detailing any issues that have arisen over this time frame. We have also included a description of completed tasks along with the requirements as a reference point in order to ensure that these are met. Below the project has been detailed and broken down into sub-catagories for easier understanding throughout.</p> <p>Initiation & Analysis: Tasks carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching of the project – 01/10/19 – 1 day • Market Research – 01/10/19 – 2 weeks • Analysis & Design Platform – 11/10/19 – 4 weeks <p>The initiation and analysis portion of the project went as intended, the project was initilised successfully on the 01/10/19 – the intended start date. We also ran into no issues with the Market Research company and I must vouch for this to be used again if needed in a future project, because of this they came through in the 2 week timeframe we had given meaning that the Senior Developers were able to begin the anaylsis and design phase within good time, meaning at this point the project is well within the timeframe that has been given.</p> <p>I also must commend the Senior Developers for completing the task(s) that they had been given here within the specified time frame as it began to shape the roadmap for this project which would ultimately be the factor in wether the project completed on time or if it did not.</p> <p>Development (Front-end): Tasks carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the website – 07/10/19 – 11 days • Developing the app – 05/11/19 – 10 days • Creating graphics for user interface – 21/10/19 – 5 days (Additional 5 due to delays – 10 days) • Building the web and app interface – 21/11/19 – 8 days 	

Throughout this stage each piece of software or website developed was subject to rigorous testing against the constituting standard. For instance, applications would have been built against the ISO/IEC:25010:2011 standard to ensure that they had the latest security in place and could not be tampered with by conventional means. The website developed was also built with the W3C standard in mind to ensure it was compliant and could be released when deployment came around.

Here is where the problems began to arise, the website & app development were both completed on time and within each specified time frames. The graphics for the user interface however were subject to a one week delay. This was due to us underestimating the velocity of the work

necessary and potentially not employing enough people to cover the expanse of the work. Because of this setback a secondary graphic designer had to be brought in to help make up the one week that we lost. Because of this we incurred an extra charge of £1260 for that week of delays.

The expanse of the one week delay also meant that the first prototype had to be pushed back as well by one week due to the graphics not being completed in a timely manner, this could have had a knock-on effect for the rest of the project but fortunately the rest of the time was able to counter this and make the one week loss back and thus not incur us any more charges that would be deemed unnecessary.

Unlike the delay on the first prototype we did not incur any more delays for the Front-end development after this, for that I must commend the entirety of the team who worked on the Front-end because even when tasked with dealing with a delay that had the potential to be catastrophic they still manage to pull the project back in-line and back on the roadmap laid out to begin with.

Development (Back-end):

Tasks carried out:

- **Developing the database – 07/11/19 – 11 days**
- **Installing server and related software – 12/11/19 – 2 days**
- **Platform testing – 02/01/20 – 10 days (Additional 5 due to delays – 15 days)**

Again to reiterate, throughout this stage each piece of software or developed was subject to rigorous testing against the constituting standard. For instance, applications would have been built against the ISO/IEC:25010:2011 standard to ensure that they had the latest security in place and could not be tampered with by conventional means.

Here the development of the database was completed by the senior developers on time and without errors for that I must commend them once more. I must also commend Adrian Tate for his part in the installation of the server and related software, being the only Junior Developer for the back-end he did have a lot of responsibility riding on the fact that this was completed on time. Due to this fact he persevered and completed the task in the timeframe given, thus keeping the project on task and within its time frame.

Although one issue that we ran into here which would then affect the overall length of the testing phase was the Platform Testing & Public Tests – these suffered setbacks due to the unpredictability and availability of those involved, because of this we had lost 5 days worth of testing and regression testing time. The setback could have been more detrimental if it was not for the work completed by Brian Pringle & Laura Middleton, our Quality Testers as the work that they had completed in amongst this delay was sufficient to push the platform into the testing phase and so we did not have to redo the Public Test at a different time with more availability as, truthfully we did not have this time to spare after this setback. Because of this setback we incurred another cost of £1540 to the Quality Testing team for the work they did in amongst the overall failure of the Public Test.

Again the Quality Testers must be commended for their integrity to complete this work even though the original plan was an over-arching failure. Even with the additional costs towards them from completing the test themselves it saved us from incurring more by attempting the public test again which could have seen the project fail to meet its deadline if this was the case/.

Testing:**Tasks carried out:**

- **Platform Testing - – 02/01/20 – 10 days (Additional 5 due to delays – 15 days)**
- **Minor Fault Fixing – 15/01/20 – 3 days**
- **Major Fault Fixing – 15/01/20 – 2 days**
- **Regression Testing – 06/01/20 – 12 days**

Each of the above Fault fixing and Regression testing was delayed due to the delays prior on the Platform & Public Tests.

Again, the testing was governed by the ISO/IEC 25010:2011 standard which has been followed throughout the production of this project, this was essential as it is the fabric of what should be followed when developing and testing a piece of software or database.

To build upon the delay mentioned in the Back-End Testing this had a knock on effect into the testing phase as it meant the testing could not start until at least 5 days later meaning these were already behind schedule before they even started. An additional 3 days worth of delays had to be factored in because of the results from the test(s) meaning more than one major fault had been found which led to the testing being pushed back further and the project being very close to the given deadline. The incurred charges for this delay were £1260 for the additional 3 days the Junior Developers had to work.

Although given the setbacks faced I must commend each member of the Junior Developer team as they still completed the work within the given time frame meaning we were still within our over-arching deadline that had been set for 24/01/20.

The final stage is the email or review of the project success. In this section, we are looking for three main areas; success criteria is: “there is an accurate summary of how quality criteria were met showing an awareness of the scenario throughout”. The third part is the summary of lessons learnt. For the success criteria, we are expecting the candidates to look back at part A of the exam and see if they have met their objectives, and if so how and if not why not. In this case, the learner has met this criterion by discussing the success criteria individually and providing examples of how each criterion was met. **Mark Band 3(3 marks)**. The second part is review of the project, and linking this to the project lifecycle was excellent the evaluation was balanced and relevant to the scenario. The information given in the scenario has been utilised effectively to provide details of deliverables success, such as the project coming in close to budget though it was over the learner has clearly shown reason as to why this happened. Process success such as the new system delivered by the team to match the designs, and performance success such as the testing that took place to ensure the new system of high quality. The quality of communication was excellent. **Mark band 4 (8-9 marks), Mark Band 4 (4 marks)**.

Summary

Based on performance in this examination series, learners are offered the following advice to help continue this improvement:

- Focus on using and applying techniques so that the functional points are correctly converted to the correct cost of the employee rather than assuming number of hours needed to work, also making sure that all cost are included such as any hardware.
- For objectives, try adding comments giving good reason for each objective. It would be useful to try using less generic objectives such as following the project lifecycle and more which are appropriate to the given scenario.
- In the quality management section, you should try understanding the different components that make up quality management, this will help with areas such as lessons learnt.
- For the lessons learnt part, you should not only think about the issues but if the project had to be done again in the future, how you might use your experience from the current project to do it differently in the future.
- Make sure that all the relevant information from the scenario is copied to the Project Initiation Document.

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