



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Business and Communication Systems                      413010**

**(Specification 4134)**

**Unit 10: Investigating ICT in Business**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **General**

This summer has seen the culmination of three years' preparation for this first Controlled Assessment. It has been a time full of apprehension and interest as the GCSE Business and Communication Systems community took on the challenge of guiding their candidates through the process. As a moderating team, we have been particularly impressed by the determination shown by teachers as they have strived to ensure that they and their candidates were fully prepared. Centre staff are to be congratulated on the success of these efforts.

## **Candidates' work**

The importance of the planning and preparation phase should not be underestimated and neither can the contribution made by the structured delivery of this time. Candidates are not on their own at this time; centre staff are encouraged to support this part of the process for their groups, but not to offer individual support.

The finished documents together with the records of the sources provided evidence that centres had encouraged their candidates to make full use of this valuable time. The best documents were produced by candidates who had been guided to undertake research that included a detailed analysis of professionally produced flyers, posters and other documents that then influenced their own designs. Some candidates made reference to the research they had carried out and to how that had been incorporated into their own documents. Without exposure to top quality desktop publishing (DTP) work, candidates' work is often limited by their own expectations and their work is much more basic in its style.

The task had been set in the context of a careers fair. This proved accessible to the candidates; they were able to assemble documents that contained relevant information. Most candidates presented relevant and detailed information and consequently achieved Level 4 marks in Assessment Objective 1. In order to support candidates, the date for the careers fair had been provided in the task. Some candidates did not include a time for the event in their publicity materials. Candidates also received credit for their use of software skills to communicate the information effectively.

Key to success in Assessment Objective 2 is the planning of the suite of documents. The application of a coherent house style provided secure evidence of planning for many candidates. However, whilst a small number of candidates continued that consistency across all four documents, most of those who attempted to bring a house style to their work restricted it just to the two flyers. It is important to note that a true house style comprises much more than just the consistent use of a logo and the colour and font used for the heading. Examples of successful house styles took the consistency through shapes, placement, layout and organisation structures used across the documents. The other key aspect of Assessment Objective 2 is the application of the careers fair context via the audiences for the different documents. Those candidates who targeted their documents at the young people and at the business audience respectively demonstrated their ability to apply the context to each document and were able to achieve the higher levels in Assessment Objective 2.

The judgements that candidates make are assessed in Assessment Objective 3. They are seen throughout the suite of documents, particularly in the advertisement and in the two flyers. The documents submitted were the result of a wide range of decisions from the basic level of which font(s) to choose to some sophisticated imagery employed to communicate the publicity messages. Many of those decisions were articulated in the candidates' annotations. However, even without those annotations, the judgements were evident and gained credit.

It was quite difficult on occasions to work out which document had been produced for which audience and even which were flyers and which the advertisement. Consequently it was particularly helpful when candidates made it clear which document was which.

The candidates from a very small number of centres presented additional documents that were not part of the task. Only those documents that were required by the task will be marked. Consequently, candidates who are made to submit extra documents are at a disadvantage.

### **Presentation of the candidates' work**

Centres presented their candidates' work in a range of different ways. Some of these were more helpful than others. Moderators found the large format work more difficult to manage unless it had been folded. Consequently those candidates who use the A3 method to present their annotations would be well advised to fold those pages so that the work can be packaged at A4 size and moderated more easily. Furthermore, we are keen to discourage the use of folders and plastic wallets; not only do they make it more difficult to moderate the work, but they also add to the cost of postage and can be difficult to keep as a tidy package. Stapled work too is difficult to handle; being able to separate the work so that the house style can be viewed across all documents at one time is helpful. A small number of centres used A2 sheets of sugar paper to display their candidates' work; while their wish to serve their candidates' cause is to be applauded; it was particularly cumbersome for the moderator. One moderator commented that the use of folded A3 covers secured with a treasury tag was a particularly helpful method.

The task required each candidate to produce four documents, a second annotated copy of each and a list of research sources. This was all that was required. Some centres sent all their candidates' research; others made their candidates submit draft versions of documents and some made their candidates produce a report about their documents. There really is no need to send anything that is not in the list of required documents.

### **Centre Administration**

Most centres completed the administration procedures accurately and the moderation team is grateful to those centres that made their task straightforward. However, centres are reminded of the importance of meeting the deadline of 7 May. Annotation on the candidates' work is essential for the moderator to be able to see where marks have been awarded.

### **Centre Assessment**

This is the first year that candidates have been presented for this unit. Not surprisingly centres were apprehensive about the assessment of their candidates' work. Many centres had been represented at standardisation meetings and it was clear that these meetings had made a positive contribution to the accuracy of the assessment.

Many centres had made use of the assessment grid that has been provided to support centres. This too made a positive impact on the quality of the assessment decisions. Centres that used the grid generally made accurate judgements. However some, having correctly identified the levels for the different strands of the Assessment Objective then awarded a mark in the lower band for the Assessment Objective rather than the upper band. It is likely that these centres had not been represented at standardisation meetings.

The moderation team saw many examples of truly excellent work. A number of candidates have deservedly been awarded full marks.

There were very few instances of centre assessment decisions differing hugely from the moderator's judgement. This tended to happen where candidates had not submitted all the required documents and had been penalised in all three Assessment Objectives. In the event that one or more of the four required documents is missing it is acceptable to make judgements from the full mark range in Assessment Objective 1 and in Assessment Objective 3; it is in Assessment Objective 2 where the candidate cannot access the upper mark levels on the grounds of planning and completeness. If the sources table was missing, it is still possible for the documents to demonstrate that a wide range of sources has informed the development of the work. While submitting the sources table is good research practice and serves to encourage the candidate to carry out wide-ranging research, the evidence from the documents can be sufficient to judge the thoroughness of that candidate's research. Similarly, if annotations are not submitted, the assessor is able to judge the quality of the candidate's judgements from finished documents. High quality documents will have been produced as a result of considered judgements that are the result of logical thought and evaluation.

Assessors are encouraged to share the reasons for their assessment decisions with the moderator. The range of methods of achieving this included the production of a commentary on each candidate's work similar to those prepared to accompany the standardisation scripts. Some assessors annotated the scripts to show where evidence for each Assessment Objective had been identified and at which level. Others made a very brief comment at the bottom of the assessment grid or in the space on the Candidate Record Form. The annotations that include both Assessment Objective and level are particularly supportive as a mechanism of demonstrating how the marks have been awarded. They are especially helpful in assisting the moderator to comment on any areas where the assessment decisions have not been accurate and to offer support in preparation for future years. Assessors who did not provide either annotations or comments are asked to aid the process by doing so in future years.

In summary, this has been a learning experience for us all and without doubt we shall all take on next year's Controlled Assessment with greater confidence.

### **Further Support**

Centres are encouraged to use the controlled assessment advisory service. Contact can be made via the Guildford Office to discuss the suitability of potential approaches to controlled assessment and other related matters. Teachers are encouraged to contact the AQA Subject Team in Guildford for details of their area's adviser. Also, the Teacher Network Group is a highly recommended way for teachers to network with each other and share good teaching practice. An [application form](#) can be found on our [website](#). The completed form should be returned to the [subject team](#) for inclusion in the group.

Finally, AQA will be offering Controlled Assessment Teacher Standardising again this autumn term, which will aid teachers in the marking of the Controlled Assessment task.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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

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