AQA

**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

Business and Communication Systems

413010

(Specification 4134)

Unit 10: Investigating ICT in Business

Report on the Examination

General

This years' Controlled Assessment was set in the context of a pop-up shop, a context that
was not necessarily familiar to students. It was clear that centres had used some of the time
available for research and preparation to ensure that their students understood the context
so that the task was accessible to all. Most students were able to apply their skills to the
communication tasks set by the assessment. There were some original and interesting
suggestions for the pop-up shops and centres are to be congratulated on their approach to
preparing their students for the task.

There was clear evidence that many centres had encouraged their students to analyse the
features of high quality documents used by actual businesses. This process helps to raise
the students' expectations of themselves and encourages them to emulate the best features
in their own documents. The process also helps to provide assessors with an awareness of
what constitutes high quality documents and can prevent school/college assessors from
being too generous.

Students' work

Logo: Students created original logos, most of which were clearly linked to the pop-up shop
by including text and/or images. This section of the task was designed to encourage
students to incorporate at least a logo as part of a consistent house style. The logo could
then be included in the other documents. However, many produced logos that lost clarity
when reduced in size to fit on the business card and the presentation slides.

Business Card: The business card provided an opportunity for students to organise and
present information in a restricted space. Almost all students provided printouts that were
the correct size and included relevant information. A key challenge was to apply the pop-up
shop context; most included the shop's postal address, but they often omitted information to
enable customers to contact the business once the shop had closed.

Tweet: The inclusion of the Tweet added an interesting dimension to the task. It presented
an opportunity for succinct communication with customers. Students knew the 140 character
limit but some did not include spaces in their character count and some confused characters
with words. The most effective Tweets used language fit for the chosen audience,
appropriate abbreviations and still managed to include the information that customers would
need while persuading them of the shop's USP. Some also managed to include a slogan.
Whilst it is easy to appreciate that centres wanted students to present their Tweets in an
authentic style, a simple word processed copy of the text was all that was expected.

Presentation: It was clear from the presentations submitted that students have varied
experience of the medium. Many slides were so full of text that the font size was very small
and consequently the information was cramped and not clear. Indicators of appropriate text
size could be that all text can easily be read from a distance and also that the text on the
printed hand-out can be read easily. Most students organised the slides into a sensible
order, with one idea per slide. The speaker notes were a key element; they should have
contained sufficient detailed information to enable a third party to deliver the presentation. In
many cases the slides carried the information, with the speaker notes reserved for a content
summary of the slide, the complete text copied from the slide or some brief instructions for
the speaker.

Whilst students understood the pop-up shop concept, its application required them to follow it
through so that each document would be suitable for its intended audience. The audience
for the presentation was to be the shopping centre manager. Most students included
different types of information including text, images, maps and charts. Some students
included a plan of the shopping centre to show where the shop would be located. However,
many students lost sight of the context by choosing to include a map to show the centre's

location despite the fact that the shopping centre manager would certainly know the exact location of his/her shopping centre.

Many students included evidence of primary research, often in the form of survey results and/or quotes from interviews. This good practice was often negated by results that could not be read; either there was so much data that the text was very small or the charts that had been produced were without headings and labels or these were again too small.

There is clear evidence that students have assembled a wide range of software skills and that they can choose appropriate skills for each task. However, many are less adept at ensuring the effective transfer of their work from screen to paper. Opportunities to take on the role of a 'critical friend' when practising these skills during the teaching time would perhaps heighten the students' awareness of the importance of ensuring that all text is clear on printed versions. It could also encourage proof-reading and promote accuracy.

The concept of house style was apparent in many submissions. However, its consistent application across all documents was less frequent. Most students chose to include the logo on the business card and usually on the presentation too. House style also featured in student annotations where most students focussed on the use of the logo and text formatting. Few students extended their house style beyond these elements. The best examples were clear across all documents and included consistent combinations of features such as background colours, shapes, borders, lines and slogans; the effect of which was to form a suite of documents that clearly 'belong' together. Access to the top marks in AO2 depends on a consistent corporate style combined with effective application of the context to produce a series of documents that are fit for purpose.

Centre Administration

The most effective method of securing students work is a single treasury tag. This enables moderators to access all documents easily and ensures that the pages are kept together. Plastic wallets make the work difficult to handle and centres are asked not to use them.

Again this year, some centres had instructed students to submit research evidence with their documents. Centres are reminded that students should only hand in documents listed in the Final Submission section. Moderators are not permitted to consider any other documents.

It is a pleasure to report that most centres completed the administration procedures accurately and the moderation team is grateful to those centres that made their task straightforward. There were a few centres with calculation errors on Candidate Record Forms and some centres omitted to ensure that all forms were signed.

Centre Assessment

This is the second year of the Controlled Assessment and with the benefit of experience from last year, standardising meetings, the Teacher On-Line Standardisation (TOLS) and Controlled Assessment Advisers, centres have gained a good understanding of the assessment criteria and are to be congratulated.

Assessor annotations support the process by providing an insight into the assessment decision-making; they also enable the moderator to provide more effective feedback. Consequently centres are reminded to annotate students' documents to show the Assessment Objective, level and a brief comment alongside evidence that leads to the judgement.

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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