Business

GCSE 2012

Business and Communication Systems

Guide to Controlled Assessment

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Version 1

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OCR

Contents

1   Introduction

1.1   What is Controlled Assessment?

High, medium or limited control levels are set for each of the Controlled Assessment processes: task setting, task taking and task marking. For each stage, the level of control will ensure reliability and authenticity, and make assessments more manageable for teachers and candidates.

Weighting of Controlled Assessments is defined by QCA subject criteria and, depending on the subject, will be 25% or 60% of the total assessment.

In response to reforms announced by the Government and in response to Ofqual mandated changes to GCSEs, unitised assessment of this qualification is being replaced by linear assessment.

This means that candidates commencing a two year course from September 2012 will take all of their GCSE units at the end of the course in June 2014.

1.2   What does 'control' actually mean?

QCA has produced a *Glossary of terms for Controlled Assessment regulations*. The levels of controls are defined as follows:

- Formal supervision (High level of control) – the candidate must be in direct sight of the supervisor at all times. Use of resources and interaction with other candidates is tightly prescribed.

- Informal supervision (Medium level of control) – questions/tasks are outlined, the use of resources is not tightly prescribed and assessable outcomes may be informed by group work. Supervision is confined to (i) ensuring that the contributions of individual candidates are recorded accurately, and (ii) ensuring that plagiarism does not take place. The supervisor may provide limited guidance to candidates.

- Limited supervision (Limited level of control) – requirements are clearly specified, but some work may be completed without direct supervision and will not contribute directly to assessable outcomes.

1.3 What is the purpose of this Guide?

This Guide provides detailed information for teachers about how to manage Controlled Assessment. Some of the information applies to all GCSE subjects and some information provides subject specific guidance. It is important to make the point that this Guide plays a secondary role to the Specification itself. The Specification is the document on which assessment is based and specifies what content and skills need to be covered in delivering the course. At all times, therefore, this teacher support should be read in conjunction with the Specification. If clarification on a particular point is sought then that clarification should be found in the Specification itself.

Teaching of this qualification will vary greatly from school to school and from teacher to teacher. With that in mind, this Guide is offered as guidance but may be subject to modifications by the individual teacher.

2 Summary of the Controlled Assessment unit

Unit A266: Developing business communication systems

This unit represents 25% of the total assessment and has a maximum of 60 marks.

Candidates choose one scenario from a choice of two and complete the set tasks and activities for that scenario. Candidates should spend up to ten hours on the research element of this assessment and up to five hours writing up their findings. It is recommended that each candidate's evidence is no more than 2000 words in length.

This unit is internally assessed, applying the principles of Controlled Assessment. Controls are set within the assessment in each of the stages of the assessment process:

Task setting: there is high level of control in relation to the setting of tasks. A new set of tasks will be available from OCR each year. The tasks have been designed to meet the full assessment requirements of this unit. It is important that candidates are equipped with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills before they begin the assessment. The business on which the candidate bases their tasks/activities should be chosen to suit the local resources available to them.

Task taking: this stage is divided into two different parts, each with a different level of control:

- research/data collection: limited level of control;

- writing up (analysis and evaluation): high level of control.

The centre should exercise control over the following areas: authenticity, feedback, time, collaboration and resources.

Task marking: there is a medium level of control. Centres will internally standardise and mark candidates' work, against the approved marking criteria. OCR will then moderate a sample of work from each centre.

More information about each stage of the process is provided in the following sections of this Guide.

3 Teacher guidance on how to plan Controlled Assessment

3.1 Controlled Assessment delivery flow chart

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                    │        OCR set tasks        │
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                                  │
                                  ▼
┌──────────────┐    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Teacher    │    │  Candidates Work in Progress │
│  Guidance/   │───▶│          Research            │
│  Feedback    │    │       Data collection        │
└──────────────┘    │          Planning            │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
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                                  ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │  Candidates Produce Outcome  │
                    │        for Assessment        │
                    │  Writing up of findings under │
                    │  the specified controlled     │
                    │         conditions            │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
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                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │        Evaluation/           │
                    │          Review              │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
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                                  ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │   Teacher Assessment and     │
                    │ Submission to OCR for        │
                    │ Moderation by specified      │
                    │        deadlines             │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
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Refer to the sample scheme of assessment for unit A266 which is available to download from OCR's website.

Ten hours should be spent on the research phase of the Controlled Assessment.

Five hours should be spent on the writing up phase of the Controlled Assessment.

The number of marks available for each activity should be taken into account when allocating the time for each activity.

Submission of marks:
June series: 15 May

3.2   Guidance on the release of Controlled Assessment tasks to candidates

3.2.1 Choice of Controlled Assessment task

OCR will assume a high level of control for task setting. A new set of tasks will be available from OCR each year for the Controlled Assessment unit. The candidate will carry out necessary research/data collection in order to respond to the series of tasks/activities. These tasks/activities have been designed to meet the full assessment requirements of the unit. It is important that before candidates begin the assessment, they are equipped with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills, as given in the unit specification for Unit A266.

The candidate must select an appropriate business to study from the sector stated by OCR. OCR will state the stakeholder which must be investigated in the context of the business communication systems of the business selected. The series of tasks/activities which the candidates must complete are supplied by OCR. Candidates can change the business to allow them to use the local resources available to their centre. It should be noted that the sectors in which the scenarios are set have been chosen to be as wide ranging as possible to suit all centre requirements.

The live Controlled Assessment material must **not** be used as practice Controlled Assessment material. Centres should use past Controlled Assessment tasks or devise their own practice material using the OCR specimen Controlled Assessment task as guidance.

Unit A266 is worth 25% of the total marks available for the GCSE; therefore, as an approximate guide, centres should allocate ¼ of the total learning time available for this qualification. This would equal 30 hours if 120 hours were available.

Of a nominal 30 hours, 20 should be allocated to enable learners to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills to complete the Controlled Assessment; five hours to prepare for the Controlled Assessment (e.g. by completing practice tasks/activities and undertaking research/data collection) and the remaining five hours to be spent on the Controlled Assessment itself. Candidates should spend approximately ¾ of that time completing Task 1 and ¼ of that time completing Task 2. In addition, time should be allocated to enable candidates to carry out appropriate research/data collection; curriculum time could be allocated to this as well as homework time.

The subject content of Unit A266 is designed to enable learners to complete the Controlled Assessment tasks/activities. The content includes both conceptual understanding, e.g. knowledge and understanding of stakeholders, as well as skills and processes, e.g. producing documents to support a proposal for a new business communication system. Candidates should be encouraged to develop and apply their learning in a variety of business contexts as this will enable them to be better prepared for the Controlled Assessment. In any one session, tasks are likely to range across the whole unit content, but applied to a specific context.

3.2.2 When and how to give Controlled Assessment tasks to candidates

Controlled Assessment tasks are available from Interchange. Centres must be aware that live Controlled Assessment material will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose. Should it be necessary to amend or revise the material then centres will be notified.

Controlled assessment tasks may be undertaken at any point between release of the task by OCR and the examination series for which the task must be submitted. Each controlled assessment task will be valid for submission in a single examination series only. **Centres must ensure that candidates undertake a task that is valid for submission in the year in which the candidate intends to submit it**.

The series in which each task can be submitted will be clearly marked on the front cover of each task. Tasks will not be valid for submission in any examination series other than that indicated.

Controlled Assessment tasks will be available from Interchange from 1 April of the year prior to an assessment series, i.e. 1 April 2013 for assessment in June 2014 series. These will be removed upon expiry. Guidance on how to access controlled assessment tasks from OCR Interchange is available on the OCR website: www.ocr.org.uk.

Centres should refer to the sample scheme of work which is available to download from OCR's website to assist planning and delivery of this unit and its assessment.

3.3 Guidance on research/data collection

OCR will assume a limited level of control for the research/data collection phase of this Controlled Assessment.

(a) **Authenticity control:** The candidate can complete the research/data collection individually or in a group without direct teacher supervision. The teacher must be able to authenticate the work of each candidate.

(b) **Feedback control:** Feedback to the candidate will be permissible but tightly defined. Within this Specification, OCR expects teachers to equip candidates with the knowledge, understanding and skills before they begin the tasks/activities. It should be remembered that candidates are required to reach their own judgements and conclusions without any guidance or assistance from others. When supervising tasks/activities, teachers are expected to:

- exercise continuing supervision of work in order to monitor progress and to prevent plagiarism;

- exercise continuing supervision of practical work to ensure essential compliance with Health and Safety requirements;

- ensure that the work is completed in accordance with the Specification requirements and can be assessed in accordance with the specified marking criteria and procedures.

(c) **Time Control:** OCR recommends that the research/data collection phase of this Controlled Assessment should be completed within ten hours. Some of the research/data collection, by its very nature, may be undertaken outside the centre. The use and application of the research material will be undertaken under direct teacher supervision.

(d) **Collaboration control:** Group work is permissible for the research/data collection phase of this unit.

(e) **Resource control:** Access to resources will be limited to those appropriate to the tasks/activities. Candidates will need to be provided with the most appropriate materials and equipment to allow them full access to the marking criteria but this must be closely monitored and supervised.

3.4 Guidance on the production of the outcome

3.4.1 Controls for the production of the outcome

Teachers must keep live Controlled Assessment tasks secure and confidential at all times while in their possession. For example, candidates may collect the results of any research/data collection or investigations undertaken in a research folder which must be handed in to the teacher before the writing up sessions begin. In such circumstances, it is the responsibility of the teacher to keep the research folders secure between the writing up sessions and that candidates do not have access to these folders outside of the allotted sessions.

OCR will assume a high level of control for the writing up of findings for the Controlled Assessment.

(a) **Authenticity control:** The writing up of findings must be completed individually and under direct supervision. The teacher must be able to authenticate the work.

(b) **Feedback control:** Feedback to the candidate will be permissible but tightly defined. Within this Specification, OCR expects teachers to equip candidates with the knowledge, understanding and skills before they begin the tasks/activities. It should be remembered that candidates are required to reach their own judgements and conclusions without any guidance or assistance from others.

When supervising tasks, teachers are expected to:

- exercise continuing supervision of work in order to monitor progress and to prevent plagiarism;

- exercise continuing supervision of practical work to ensure essential compliance with Health and Safety requirements;

- ensure that the work is completed in accordance with the Specification requirements and can be assessed in accordance with the specified marking criteria and procedures.

(c) **Time Control:** OCR recommends that the writing up phase should be completed within five hours and supervised and marked by the teacher. The use and application of the research material will be undertaken under direct teacher supervision. With all internally assessed work, the teacher must be satisfied that the work submitted for assessment is the candidate's own work and be able to authenticate it using the specified procedure in section 4.3.5 of the approved Specification.

(d) **Collaboration control:** Candidates will write up the outcome of any group work on an individual basis before forming their own conclusions. Each candidate must write up all their work individually.

(e) **Resource control:** During the writing up of findings, candidates should only have access to the notes which they have made during the research/data collection phase of task taking. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that these are only research notes and that they do not include a draft or final version of the task; the writing up of findings must be completed under supervised conditions.

Completing the tasks

The candidate will be provided with sufficient time to complete all of the tasks/activities (see sections 4.2.1 of the approved Specification). It is suggested that evidence is produced in a number of sessions, each focusing on a specific task/activity. Candidates should spend an appropriate length of time (up to ten hours) on the research/data collection phase for this assessment. There will be a direct correlation between the length of time spent on research and the availability of resources/information. Candidates should spend up to five hours responding to the chosen Controlled Assessment tasks/activities. OCR recommends that each candidate's Controlled Assessment evidence be presented in approximately 2000 words.

Each candidate must produce individual and authentic evidence for each of the tasks/activities. It is particularly important that those candidates who conducted research as part of a group still produce individual evidence.

The teacher may give appropriate support and guidance to the candidate during the research/data collection phase of this unit but not during the writing-up phase. This support and guidance should focus on checking that candidates understand what is expected of them. It is not acceptable for the teacher to provide model responses or to work through answers in detail.

The research will then help the candidate to produce evidence which is clearly targeted to meeting the assessment requirements of each of the tasks/activities.

The candidate must also be guided on the use of information to ensure that confidentiality and intellectual property rights are maintained at all times. It is essential that any material directly used from a source is appropriately referenced. The candidate will be required to include a bibliography which is submitted with the completed Controlled Assessment tasks at the point of internal assessment and external moderation.

3.4.2 Controlled Assessment task security

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that downloaded Controlled Assessment tasks and candidates' scripts are stored securely. Any breach in security must be reported to OCR as soon a possible by submitting a written report (a blank report form is available on Interchange) from the Head of Centre to OCR Quality and Standards Division detailing the circumstances, the candidates concerned and any action taken.

Candidates' scripts for all completed Controlled Assessment tasks must be stored securely and they should be available for moderation. It is suggested that they are destroyed after the last date for Enquiries about Results following the examination series in which entries for the units concerned are made.

Candidate absence at the time of assessment

If a candidate is absent from a centre when an assessment is carried out, the Controlled Assessment task/activity may be set at an alternative time provided that the centre is satisfied that security has been maintained by keeping all materials secure.

Unexpected circumstances

If there are unexpected circumstances (such as a fire alarm or other circumstances beyond the teachers' control) occurs while a Controlled Assessment task/activity is taking place, the task/activity may be resumed subsequently provided the teacher ensures that no candidate is likely to have been advantaged or disadvantaged by doing so.

3.4.3 Presentation of work

Candidates must observe certain procedures in the production of Controlled Assessments.

- charts, graphs, tables and images may be produced using appropriate ICT. These should be inserted into the candidate's evidence at the appropriate place.

- any copied material must be suitably acknowledged.

- quotations must be clearly marked and a reference provided wherever possible.

- work submitted for moderation must be identified with the:

    - Centre number

    - Centre name

    - Candidate number

    - Candidate name

    - Unit code and title

    - Scenario title.

Work submitted on paper for moderation or marking must be secured by treasury tags. Work submitted in digital format (CD or online) must be in a suitable file structure as detailed in Appendix A of the approved Specification.

4 Controlled Assessment candidate guidelines

4.1 Task setting

The tasks/activities for this subject are set by OCR and changed every year. Tasks/activities cannot be changed but you may be able to choose the business which you investigate.

4.2 Task taking

4.2.1 What can I do in relation to research, data collection and planning?

Once you have been given the scenario (or choice of scenario), you will have time to do the research/fieldwork, collect information and make notes which you will use later when you write up each task/activity. Your teacher will tell you how much time you will have (probably several weeks) and will give you advice on how and where you will gather data (for example on a field trip) and/or where you will find resources (for example the library or the Internet).

Things to think about/remember:

- think about how you will approach the task/activity (you can discuss this with your teacher)

- make a plan of how you will spend the time you have for research/data collection. This way, you can make sure that you have time to cover everything you want to do. This plan may be useful to refer back to you when you are writing up the task/activity

- make sure that you keep a record of where all the information you want to use comes from. This will allow you to include references and a bibliography when you write up each task/activity

- think about how you will use your research or the data that you have collected to respond to each task/activity. It maybe helpful to make a basic plan so that you can check you have all the information that you need

- remember, you will not have access to resources other than your notes when you write up each task/activity, so you need to make sure that you have all the information that you need in your notes.

During research/data collection, you can talk to your teacher about the task/activity and ask them for advice. You can also work with other candidates and share ideas about the task/activity with them. With out-of-classroom fieldwork, group data collection is allowed on health and safety

grounds. However you must be aware of all the data collection methods used as you will need to write about these later.

4.2.2 How much teacher support can I expect?

During your work for Controlled Assessment you must produce work/evidence independently but your teacher will be able to give you some advice, support, guidance and feedback but the amount will vary depending upon the type of task/activity you are doing.

You must make your own judgements and draw your own conclusions but your teacher will:

- offer advice about how best to approach a task/activity

- offer guidance on the way you work in groups so that you all have an opportunity to tackle your tasks/activities

- offer advice to help your research/data collection, possibly arranging visits to place of interest, if this is appropriate

- monitor your progress to make sure your work gets underway in a planned and timely manner

- ensure that your work meets the Specification requirements.

The support given by your teacher will be to make sure you understand what it is you have to do. Your teacher will not be allowed to provide model responses for you or work through your responses or outcomes in detail.

4.2.3 What can I expect in the supervised sessions?

This is where you will complete the tasks/activities by analysing and evaluating the data that you have collected and the research that you have done. Depending on the type of task/activity, this analysis/evaluation of findings may take a variety of forms (for example reports, letters, leaflets etc). You will have already discussed with your teacher which format is suitable for the task/activity which you are doing.

This part of the task/activity has to be completed under controlled supervised conditions. This means that all of this stage of the task/activity has to be completed within school time and supervised by your teacher or another invigilator.

Things to think about/remember:

- the analysis/evaluation of findings is the part of the task/activity that you will be assessed on

- make sure that you include all the relevant information from your notes

- remember that it must be your own work

- remember that if you quote from another source (for example a book or the Internet) you must acknowledge this properly

- during this analysis and evaluation your teacher will not be able to give you any further advice on the task/activity.

You will have access to all the notes that you made during the research/data collection period. You will not be allowed to take in a draft or final version of your analysis and evaluation however, as this part of the task/activity needs to be completed under controlled conditions.

It will probably take several hours to write up your findings, but you will not have to do this all in one go. At the end of each session your teacher will collect in your work and your notes. They will give these back at the start of the next session.

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│        OCR set tasks        │                    │                  │
└─────────────────────────────┘                    │                  │
               │                                    │                  │
               ▼                                    │                  │
┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐ │   Ten hours      │
│              │  │  Candidates Work in Progress  │ │  should be       │
│   Teacher    │  │          Research             │ │  spent on the    │
│  Guidance/   │─▶│       Data collection         │ │  research        │
│  Feedback    │  │          Planning             │ │  phase of the    │
│              │  │                               │ │  Controlled      │
└──────────────┘  └──────────────────────────────┘ │  Assessment.     │
                               │                    │                  │
                               ▼                    │  Five hours      │
                  ┌──────────────────────────────┐ │  should be       │
                  │ Candidates Produce Outcome    │ │  spent on the    │
                  │      for Assessment           │ │  writing up      │
                  │ Writing up of findings under  │ │  phase of the    │
                  │ the specified controlled      │ │  Controlled      │
                  │ conditions                    │ │  Assessment.     │
                  └──────────────────────────────┘ │                  │
                               │                    │                  │
                               ▼                    │                  │
                      ┌──────────────────┐          │                  │
                      │   Evaluation/     │          │                  │
                      │     Review        │          │                  │
                      └──────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
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                               ▼
       ┌────────────────────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
       │    Teacher Assessment and              │  │ Submission of    │
       │ Submission to OCR for Moderation by    │  │ marks:           │
       │      specified deadlines               │  │ June series: 15  │
       └────────────────────────────────────────┘  │ May              │
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5 Teacher guidance on task marking

5.1 Generic guidance on how to mark Controlled Assessment tasks

The marking criteria detail the skills, knowledge and understanding which the candidate is required to demonstrate.

The tasks/activities should be marked by the teacher according to the given marking criteria using a 'best fit' approach. For each task/activity, the assessor should select the descriptors, provided in the marking criteria, which most closely describe the quality of the work being marked.

Marking should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising failure or omissions. The award of marks **must be** directly related to the marking criteria.

Teachers use their professional judgement in selecting the descriptor which best describes the work of the candidate.

To select the most appropriate mark within this descriptor, teachers should use the following guidance:

- where the candidate's work *convincingly* meets the descriptor, the higher marks in the mark range should be awarded

- where the candidate's work *adequately* meets the descriptor, the most appropriate mark in the middle range should be awarded

- where the candidate's work *just* meets the descriptor, the lower marks in the mark range should be awarded.

The final mark for the candidate for this unit is out of a total of 60 and is found by totalling the marks for each of the tasks/activities.

5.2 Unpacking assessment objectives in Controlled Assessment tasks

Controlled Assessment tasks are designed to address the following assessment objectives:

Assessment objective 1: Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of concepts, issues and terminology

Candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of existing communication systems and practices and their impact on selected stakeholders.

For example, a candidate who is able to describe changes to an existing system which are generic and not applied to the context is demonstrating knowledge and understanding but limited application.

Assessment objective 2: Apply skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and in planning and carrying out investigations and tasks

The Controlled Assessment tasks explicitly require candidates to apply their understanding of existing and proposed communication systems and practices to specific contexts. For example, candidates could explain how an organisation's website works and what its purpose is, describing benefits for the business and its customers.

Assessment objective 3: Analyse and evaluate evidence, make reasoned judgements and present appropriate conclusions

In order to achieve this objective candidates are required to analyse issues by exploring how and why communication systems operate in their current forms and offer detailed explanations, supported by evidence, for their impact on stakeholders. They will make judgements about those systems and make recommendations for improvement that are supported by evidence and reasoning. Candidates will achieve this objective if, for example, they are able to explain how existing communication systems and processes impact on the organisation and other stakeholders and offer judgements as to the overall impact of the system.

5.3   Interpretation of the Controlled Assessment marking criteria

In general terms, a candidate who is able to produce some limited evidence for a task/activity is likely to achieve Mark Band 1. A candidate who produces a range of evidence but where there are significant gaps in coverage, knowledge or understanding, is likely to achieve Mark Band 2. A candidate who has addressed most, or all of the issues needed to fully complete the tasks/activities is likely to achieve Mark Band 3.

For example, in Mark Band 1 a candidate might identify some relevant knowledge required to address the task/activity but fails to adequately explain the issues. In Mark Band 2 a candidate might list a comprehensive range of issues and explore them all to the required standard but some explanations are incorrect or lacking application to the context. In Mark Band 3 a candidate is likely to identify an appropriate range of issues and analyse them all appropriately, in depth and within the required context.

5.4   Authentication of Controlled Assessment outcomes

Teachers/course tutors must be confident that the work they mark is the candidate's own. This does not mean that a candidate must be supervised throughout all of the research/data collection

phase but the teacher must exercise sufficient supervision, or introduce sufficient checks, to be in a position to judge the authenticity of the candidate's work.

The candidate must not plagiarise. Plagiarism is the submission of another's work as one's own and/or failure to acknowledge the source correctly. Plagiarism is considered to be malpractice and could lead to the candidate being disqualified. Plagiarism sometimes occurs innocently when the candidate is unaware of the need to reference or acknowledge their sources. It is therefore important that centres ensure that candidates understand that the work they submit must be their own and that they understand the meaning of plagiarism and what penalties may be applied. Candidates may refer to research, quotations or evidence but they must list their sources. The potential risks of failing to acknowledge such material should be emphasised to candidates. Each candidate must sign a declaration to this effect. Centres should reinforce this message to ensure candidates understand what is expected of them.

Please note: Centres must confirm to OCR that the evidence produced by the candidate is authentic. It is a requirement of the QCA Common Criteria for all Qualifications that proof of authentication is received.

5.5   Internal standardisation of Controlled Assessment

It is important that all internal assessors, working in the same subject area, work to common standards. Centres must ensure that the internal standardisation of marks across assessors and teaching groups takes place using an appropriate procedure.

This can be done in a number of ways. In the first year, reference material will provide a basis for centres' own standardisation. In subsequent years, this, or centres' own archive material, may be used. Centres are advised to hold preliminary meetings of staff involved to compare standards through cross-marking a small sample of work. After most marking has been completed, a further meeting at which work is exchanged and discussed will enable final adjustments to be made.

5.6   Moderation of Controlled Assessment

All work is marked by the teacher and internally standardised by the centre. Marks are then submitted to OCR, after which, moderation takes place in accordance with OCR procedures. The purpose of moderation is to ensure that the standard of the award of marks for work is the same for each centre and that each teacher has applied the standards appropriately across the range of candidates within the centre.

The sample of work which is presented to the Moderator for moderation must show how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria.

The deadline for Unit A266 submission of marks is 15 May in the year of having entries for this unit.

5.7   Minimum requirements for Controlled Assessment

There should be clear evidence that work has been attempted and some work produced.

If a candidate submits no work for an internally assessed component, then the candidate should be indicated as being absent from that component on the mark sheets submitted to OCR. If a candidate completes any work at all for an internally assessed component, then the work should be assessed according to the internal assessment objectives and marking instructions and the appropriate mark awarded, which may be zero.

5.8   Submission date for Controlled Assessment

Candidates marks must be despatched to the Moderator and to OCR. The deadline for Unit A266 submission of marks is 15 May in the year of having entries for this unit.

6   FAQs

When can Controlled Assessments be taken?

Controlled assessment tasks may still be undertaken at any point between release of the task by OCR and the examination series for which the task must be submitted. Each controlled assessment task will be valid for submission in a single examination series only. **Centres must ensure that candidates undertake a task that is valid for submission in the year in which the candidate intends to submit it**.

The series in which each task can be submitted will be clearly marked on the front cover of each task. Tasks will not be valid for submission in any examination series other than that indicated.

Tasks for the controlled assessment will be made available on OCR Interchange two years ahead of the examination series for which the tasks are to be submitted. These will be removed upon expiry. Guidance on how to access controlled assessment tasks from OCR Interchange is available on the OCR website: www.ocr.org.uk.

When can teachers and candidates access the material?

Controlled Assessment tasks will be available from Interchange on 1 April of the year prior to an assessment series, i.e. 1 April 2013 for assessment in June 2014 series.

A new task will be issued for each examination series and it is the responsibility of centres to make sure that candidates are submitting the correct task for the examination series in which they will be submitting the work. Tasks will be taken off Interchange on 15 May every year for this subject.

Can any preparation work be done out of the classroom?

Yes. Controls are set at the level of tasks setting, task taking and task marking. Preparation work comes into the task taking level, under Research and Data Collection, which have a limited level of control i.e. work can be carried out without direct supervision. More guidance on this can be found can be found in Section 4: Controlled Assessment of the specification.

Is there a minimum or maximum time that can be spent on the assessments?

Suggested time limits vary per subject: there are suggested time limits given in Section 4 of the specification.

Where can the controlled materials be accessed and by whom?

Controlled Assessment tasks and other documents are accessed via Interchange.

Centre access to the Interchange Controlled Assessment area will be available to the registered Centre User (normally the Examinations Officer). However, the Centre User can set access permissions to others within their centre, eg HODs, subject leaders or subject teachers.

How long is each assessment valid for, ie, can we use last year's assessment this year?

A different task is issued for each year and it is the responsibility of centres to make sure that candidates are submitting the correct task. Tasks will be taken off Interchange on 15 May every year for this subject.

Where can the Mark Scheme be accessed?

The Mark Scheme is accessed from Interchange. A specimen Mark Scheme is attached at the end of the Sample Assessment Material.

Do we have to take the Controlled Assessment under exam conditions/teacher supervision?

Yes, but only for task taking, i.e. the last part of Controlled Assessment when candidates are producing their final pieces of work – note that this can be over more than one supervised session. More guidance on this can be found can be found in Section 4 of the specification.

Are the Controlled Assessments the same as written examinations, can we re-sit?

From September 2012. candidates are only able to re-take a qualification in its entirety. It is no longer possible to re-sit individual units.

Are materials sent to centres based on estimated entries or can we download them from Interchange?

Tasks will only be available as downloads from Interchange: they will not be sent in hard copy to centres.

Do we mark our candidates' Controlled Assessments or does OCR?

Controlled Assessment tasks for **all** subjects are internally marked by centres and externally moderated by OCR.

Do I have to place any restrictions on candidates' use of the school's computer network and access to the Internet while carrying out Controlled Assessment?

Yes. The same restrictions would be placed on candidates when doing the practical exam (A267). Also there should be no access to anything other than their research notes. For greater security and ease of authentication, candidates could be logged on as a guest user.

Where OCR sets the context for the investigation, eg the retail sector, but does not specify the business to be investigated, can the teacher ask all candidates to investigate the same business? If not, can the teacher advise candidates which business they should choose to investigate?

Yes, teachers can get all candidates to study the same business. However, this may have implications for candidates' sense of 'ownership' of the work and may make it harder to assess authenticity. Centres should consider the merits of giving candidates either a 'guided choice' or negotiating a business with them.

Can I use my school as a context for the investigation?

Only if it meets the Controlled Assessment context (eg the context for a particular year could be a public sector organisation).

Can the documents produced by a candidate (eg a letter or report) be produced using standard templates?

Yes. However, centres and candidates are strongly advised that the marking criteria refer to the 'professional quality' of the document(s) as influencing the marks awarded. A poor choice of template could still result in a document which is of poor quality overall (e.g. a letter template whose layout is based on non-UK conventions and which contains 'placeholder' graphics which are inappropriate for the business and/or context of the task/activity). At higher grades, candidates are likely to either adapt existing templates or have sufficient confidence in their understanding of layouts and other conventions that they either create their own template or create a document without using one.

How will Controlled Assessment affect my workload?

Teachers will ideally equip candidates with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills before they begin the Controlled Assessment tasks. Candidates must be supervised when they are writing up the findings of their research/data collection. The candidates' controlled assignments must be marked by the teacher.

Will it affect how existing timetabling and curriculum planning is organised?

Time will have to be made available for when candidates write up their findings in a controlled environment and appropriate room space will need to be available in which they can do this.

Who will set the content of the Controlled Assessment and will I still need to mark it?

The Controlled Assessments are set by OCR and marked by the teacher.

How long do I need to keep each candidate's Controlled Assessment for?

Candidates' work must be retained for a few months after results have been published in the event that it is needed for use in the Post Results Services or Appeals/Malpractice.

When can Controlled Assessment start - in year 10 or 11?

It can be started in either year 10 or 11.

Controlled assessment tasks may be undertaken at any point between release of the task by OCR and the examination series for which the task must be submitted. **Centres must ensure that candidates undertake a task that is valid for submission in the year in which the candidate intends to submit it**.

When can candidates start researching for the Controlled Assessment and do they need to keep their notes?

OCR will issue a new Controlled Assessment tasks for each examination series. Candidates will not be able to do any research until the tasks have been issued. Candidates will have access to their notes when they are writing up their findings.

7   Guidance on downloading Controlled Assessment tasks from Interchange

Before you start

Controlled Assessment materials will be available to download from OCR Interchange. If you are not a current user of OCR Interchange, please contact OCR's Customer Contact Centre on 01223 553998 to request an Interchange user account.

Further details on how to access the materials is available on Interchange.

Step 1 – Log into Interchange

Click on the following link https://interchange.ocr.org.uk

Enter your log in details

Step 2 – Navigate to Controlled Assessment materials area

Click on 'Coursework and tests'

Click on 'Controlled Assessment materials'

** If you are unable to see either of these menu items then it is likely that you do not have the 'Tutor / teacher' role assigned to you.

Step 3 – Search for materials

You can search for materials by unit code. Enter the unit code and click on the 'search' button.

Or, you can search for materials by subject information by selecting from the 'drop down' options.

All available documents will be displayed below the search.

Step 4 – Open materials

Click on the document link, the document will open in your browser

Click on 'Save As' to save to a location of your choice.

Step 5 – Troubleshooting

If you search for an invalid unit code, the following error message will be displayed.

If you search for a valid unit code but there is no document currently available, the following message will be displayed.

If you search via the 'drop down' menus but there is no document currently available, the following message will be displayed.

8 Guidance for the production of electronic Controlled Assessment

The Controlled Assessment in Unit A266 comprises two sets of tasks/activities. For each candidate, each task/activity together forms a Controlled Assessment portfolio, stored electronically.

Structure for evidence

A Controlled Assessment portfolio is a collection of folders and files containing the candidate's evidence. Folders should be organised in a structured way in order that the evidence can be accessed easily by a teacher or OCR moderator. This structure is commonly known as a folder tree. It would be helpful if the location of particular evidence is made clear by naming each file and folder appropriately and by use of an index, called 'Home Page'.

There should be a top level folder detailing the candidate's centre number, candidate number, candidate surname and forename, together with the Unit code A266, so that the portfolio is clearly identified as the work of one candidate.

Each candidate's Controlled Assessment portfolio should be stored in a secure area on the centre network.

Data formats for evidence

In order to minimise software and hardware compatibility issues, it will be necessary to save candidates' work using an appropriate file format.

Candidates must use formats appropriate to the evidence which they are providing and appropriate to viewing for assessment and moderation. Open file formats or proprietary formats for which a downloadable reader or player is available are acceptable. Where this is not available, the file format is not acceptable.

Electronic Controlled Assessment is designed to give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do using current technology. Candidates do not gain marks for using more sophisticated formats or for using a range of formats. A candidate who chooses to use only Word documents will not be disadvantaged by that choice.

Evidence submitted is likely to be in the form of word-processed documents, PowerPoint presentations and digital photos.

To ensure compatibility, all files submitted must be in the formats listed on the next page. Where new formats become available which might be acceptable, OCR will provide further guidance. OCR advises against changing the file format which the document was originally created in. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the electronic portfolios submitted for moderation are accessible to the OCR moderator and fully represent the evidence available for each candidate.

Accepted File Formats
Structured markup formats
XML (*xml)
Microsoft Office suite
PowerPoint (.ppt)
Word (.doc)
Excel (.xls)
Visio (.vsd)
Project (.mpp)
Text formats
Comma Separated Values (.csv)
PDF (.pdf)
Rich text format (.rtf)
Text document (.txt)

Contact us

Keep up to date with the latest news by registering
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