GCSE

ICT B

Examiners' Reports

June 2011

CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Information and Communication Technology B (1995)

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course)

Information and Communication Technology B (1095)

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

2378 Coursework

General Comments

Please Note that January 2012 is the final time for entries and awarding for this specification. Anyone following this course that requires a grade MUST be entered in time for a January 2012 certification.

Candidates following this course were guided to submit coursework based on ICT and the Environment, although most Centres chose a previous topic.

Most Centres had built upon the 2nd paragraph of 7.1, Marking Criteria for Internally Assessed Work on page 40:'each successive statement builds upon the previous statement and candidates must have completed the lower statement before they can be awarded the next mark range.'

In general, the standard of marking and internal standardisation by Centres for Summer 2011 was of a high standard, although a few Centres still need to improve and should ask about OCRs free consultancy service.

A number of issues are still arising:

Annotation

Most Centres used the Front Cover Assessment Sheets giving the page numbers where evidence could be found. This helped with cross-referencing and aided the moderation process.

Some Centres gave extra annotation within the coursework portfolios, and this was greatly appreciated by the moderating team. Some annotation or indication where assessors are allocating marks benefits both the candidate and the moderator.

Although annotation is not essential, its use is greatly appreciated and aids the moderation teams and is an example of best practice.

Arithmetic errors

A small number of Centres had different marks on the MS1 form to the mark on the Cover Sheet of the candidates work.

Before posting the coursework sample to moderators, Centres are reminded to double check that the mark on the MS1 form or electronic equivalent is the same as the mark allocated to the candidate on the Front Cover of the coursework portfolios.

Marking Criteria

A small number of Centres had not used the OCR published marking criteria on pages 40 – 43 of the approved specification. Centres should not make up their own mark schemes, as this could harm their candidates results.

Communication Mark

Some Centres are being too generous and awarding full marks for all candidates.

Assessment Objective 1

Choosing and Describing Applications

Candidates performed well, the level of evidence for this section is getting better with every session.

Using Hardware & Using Software

Most candidates reached the higher mark threshold.

Inputting Data

Most candidates were in the 2/3 mark threshold. Candidates still need to give more evidence as to how their designed system reduces the possibility of data errors, although there is now evidence of this being put right.

System Output

Candidates are now performing well in this section, and the level of evidence for this section was much improved for this session.

Assessment Objective 2

Analysis

One of the most important aspects of coursework. Candidates who performed well here tended to perform well throughout the Unit. When done well, candidates maintained their focus and knew exactly what they were designing and why.

Design, Implementation, Testing

Centres should remember that the lower order marks relate to the Analysis, and the candidates ability to identify and complete their ICT system.

Most candidates performed well, but to secure the highest marks candidates should annotate their own work giving reasons as to why changes have been made, why some designs have been retained and others discarded.

Some Centres were very generous in awarding marks for AO2b without any of the above evidence. These Centres will have had their marks adjusted.

For full marks candidates need to produce evidence of critical thinking, testing and refinements.

Evaluation, Application and Effects

This was the weakest aspect of coursework. Candidates did not compare ICT with other methods, or justify when and why using ICT is more appropriate.

Documentation

This could be improved by stating who the User Guide is aimed at, that will then focus the candidates into the type and detail of guide needed, eg is it for the employee or customer?

AO3

A number of candidates did not attempt this AO. Those candidates, who did, attempted this in various ways. Some had tried to meet the criteria within other reports, whereas some gave this a discrete section within the coursework. Moderators reported that those Centres who tried the former found annotation more difficult to follow.

If candidates identified the person/people who would benefit from their system, then again this focuses the candidate to meet the marking criteria.

AO4

Again those candidates who scored well on 'the use of ICT in the wider world' did so using a discrete section of coursework.

2379 Coursework Extension Task

General Comments

Please Note that January 2012 is the final time for entries and awarding for this specification. Anyone following this course that requires a grade MUST be entered in time for a January 2012 certification.

Candidates following this course were advised to submit coursework based on the use of ICT and the Environment, although a significant minority used previous topics. These topics are still acceptable although it does not give candidates the best preparation for their final examination.

Centres are now aware of the 2nd paragraph of 7.1, Marking Criteria for Internally Assessed Work on page 40:'each successive statement builds upon the previous statement and candidates must have completed the lower statement before they can be awarded the next mark range.

Annotation

Most Centres used the Assessment Sheets giving the page numbers where evidence could be found. This helped with cross-referencing and aided the moderation process.

Some Centres gave extra annotation within the coursework portfolios, and this was greatly appreciated by the moderating team. Some annotation or indication where tutors are allocating marks benefits both the candidate and the moderator.

Although annotation is not essential, its use is greatly appreciated and aids the moderation teams and is an example of best practice.

Arithmetic errors

A small number of Centres had different marks on the MS1 form or electronic equivalent and on the Cover Sheet of the candidates work.

Before posting the coursework sample to moderators, Centres are reminded to double check that the mark on the MS1 form or electronic equivalent is the same as the mark allocated to the candidate on the Front Cover of the coursework portfolios.

Digital Submission

Again not many Centres submitted their work digitally. Those submissions came in various forms, from candidates being filmed while they explained their work to assessors to downloading candidates portfolios to CD.

Many thanks to those Centres.

Submitting the same work for 2378 & 2379

Although it is possible for candidates to submit one portfolio for both 2378 & 2389, candidates **MUST** identify where the extension task begins.

The full portfolio can be assessed for the 2378 mark, but only the extension task can be assessed for the 2379 mark. Therefore it is possible for these candidates to get different marks for 2378 & 2379.

If the extension task is not clearly identified then the whole of the portfolio will be assessed as 2378 only.

Producing A Working System

Moderators look for a complete working ICT system, and Centres should be encouraged to send in digital evidence of websites rather than paper based portfolios. It is becoming apparent that some Centres are producing more and more reports. Moderators look at work using the marking criteria not the volume of work.

<u>Assessment Objective 1</u>

Choosing and Describing Applications

In the main candidates performed well, although only a few candidates commented in detail on the benefits and drawbacks of a selection of different types of hardware and software that could have been used, for the 4/5 mark threshold.

Using Hardware & Using Software

Again candidates performed well. Some candidates did not describe the benefits and drawbacks of their chosen hardware very well.

Inputting Data & System Output

Candidates linked these sections together and provided some excellent evidence.

Overall the performance at AO1 level was greatly improved from the summer session.

<u>Assessment Objective 2</u>

Analysis

Candidates who performed well here tended to perform well throughout the coursework. When done well, candidates maintained their focus and knew exactly what they were designing and why. Overall those candidates who scored highly had put in a lot of work into this section. Probably more than the 5 marks merited but candidates benefited in the final mark.

Design, Implementation, Testing

Most candidates performed well, but to secure the highest marks candidates should annotate their own work giving reasons as to why changes have been made, why some designs have been retained and others discarded.

Some Centres were very generous in awarding marks for AO2b without any of the above evidence. These Centres were more likely to fall outside the tolerance and have their marks adjusted accordingly.

Evaluation, Application and Effects

This was the weakest aspect of coursework. Candidates did not compare ICT with other methods, or justify when and why using ICT is more appropriate.

Documentation

Candidates performed well here, there was some good evidence of testing and refining user guides.

AO3

Candidates attempted this in various ways. Some tried to meet the criteria within other reports, whereas some gave this a discrete section within the coursework. Moderators reported that those Centres who tried the former not only found the annotation more difficult to follow, but in some cases the Centre had not given the candidate their full credit.

Candidates need to link their discussion of AO3   to their task, some are   too general to score in the top range. If candidates identified the per   son/people who would benefit from their system, then this focuses the candidate to meet the marking criteria.

AO4

Those candidates who scored well on 'the use of ICT in the wider world' did so using a discrete section of coursework.

2380/01 Foundation Tier (Written Examination)

General Comments

The examination paper allowed candidates to demonstrate their ability in this subject, and the questions catered for a differentiation in the level of the candidate's ability. The levels of achievement in this examination were wide ranging, but very few candidates achieved high marks.

In general, candidates completed the paper in the time allocated, and only a small minority did not attempt all questions.

Candidates lost marks by not keeping the scenario of the paper (*Our Future*) in mind when answering questions.

Questions that were well answered included Q1, Q2.

Questions that were poorly answered included Q3, Q4 and Q7.

Comments on Individual Questions
(Q No)

1   This question was generally very well answered. A few candidates lost marks for missing a line; they should check they have the correct number of lines. Marks were lost mostly by confusing the use of databases and spreadsheets.

2   Candidates generally achieved good marks, producing some very good answers with well expressed uses. A few candidates were confused between input, output and storage devices. Some did not give uses but described the device. The storage devices section was the most poorly answered section, with many candidates not giving two clearly distinctive answers. USB on its own, as a storage device, was not awarded a mark but appeared infrequently.

3   This question was not answered well. Most candidates named passwords or backups as a correct method but they were not able to give expansions of their use which were worthy of any marks. Very few, if any, gave access levels as their answer. There were quite a few references to 'validation' and 'verification' to prevent the errors.

4   This question was not well answered. Although candidates were able to give generalised answers to all four parts, the large majority did not relate their answers to the scenario, Our Future. The question states 'You must state why the particular function would be beneficial to *Our Future*.' A few candidates managed to score one or two marks for built in cameras and mobile Internet. Most candidates described or defined what the function was rather than saying why it would be beneficial. Very little or no reference to *Our Future* was evident in the answers which meant they were vague or suggested businesses (customers and clients), rather than showing an understanding of this organisation's needs.

5   Over half the candidates gained full marks for this question. If candidates selected the correct answer, the majority gained full marks for the question. Many candidates showed understanding of a strong password in their answer. However, if they selected the incorrect password they gained no marks.

6   This was generally very well answered with many candidates scoring three marks. Candidates often made reference to failure of systems and equipment such as computer crashes or the Internet not connected.

7   This question was not well answered. Only a very small minority of candidates were able to score good marks for this question. Most candidates did not think through the comparison and wrote advantages that were true of both calculators and spreadsheets and did not show how spreadsheets would be more advantageous. Marks were mostly given for being able to save/use formulas on a spreadsheet, and make changes to recalculate. Only a very few candidates mentioned printouts and being able to create graphs.

8   This question was generally answered well with most candidates gaining four or more marks, many achieving all six marks. There were some very detailed, well designed examples. However, some candidates provided a generalised design without any reference to Our Future, which lost them valuable marks.

9   A full range of marks was achieved in this question, with the majority gaining two or three marks. Many candidates did not read the statements carefully, choosing the method based on a word in the statement rather than on an understanding of what was being asked eg *'used to input feedback to multiple choice questions. Users put a simple mark in the box next to the chosen answer'*   with the incorrect answer '*Questionnaire*' A few candidates drew more than one line from a statement, and consequently could not be awarded a mark. Other candidates did not draw lines from every statement.

2380/02 Higher Tier (Written Examination)

Generally the standard of student response is similar to last year. Most candidates do appear to have studied the case study materials.

1 Generally well answered, with most candidates gaining at least 5 Marks.

2 Most candidates failed to mention backups and file protection by locking the file, many misreading the question and giving long descriptions about verification.

3 **a)** Most candidates had a reasonable try at this question and many of them understood the differences between Email and IM.

3 **b)** Many candidates do not understand the nature of on-line discussion forums although most did gain marks by describing chat forums.

4 **a)** Although many candidates are able to describe what each system is, many were unable to relate this to the company and their needs.

4 **b)** Some candidates failed to address the fact that the question was to 'aid the walk'.

5 Generally candidates gained marks on this question although many failed to show a tree structure or arrows to show the page links.

6 Most candidates gained some marks on this question.

7 **a)** Many candidates did not realise that these are images and are used to prevent automated systems from accessing the website. Many candidates thought they were passwords.

7 **b)** A generally well answered question with most candidates gaining marks.

7 **c)** **i)** A poorly answered question. Most candidates mentioned passwords and failing to understand the reason for a passphrase and a password.

7 **c)** **ii)** It seemed that many candidates could only gain a mark by guessing the answer.

7 **c)** **iii)** Generally a well answered question.

7 **d)** A well answered question.

7 **e)** Many candidates seemed unaware of the use of hyperlinks in an email to validate an account.

7 **f)** Most candidates thought that this was to gain their telephone number and failed to understand the security issues.

8 Generally a well answered question.

9 This question generated a response from almost all the candidates and the better candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the digital divide and how access to the technology led to cheaper prices and social networks.

10   Some candidates answered this question very well Others got a little lost with issues of hacking rather than anti-social behaviours of other types.