Cambridge Nationals

ICT

Level 1/2 Cambridge National Award in ICT **J800**

Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in ICT **J810**

Level 1/2 Cambridge National Diploma in ICT **J820**

OCR Report to Centres January 2014

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Coursework Units

Introduction

This qualification was available for first teaching from September 2012. Both examined unit (R001) and moderated units (R002-R011) were available this series, with repository, postal and visiting moderation options.

General Comments

Entries were received for all units. The majority of entries were for units R002, R005, R006 and R007. Detailed reports have been provided for each of the previous three series. It is not the intention here to repeat comments that have been made previously and centres wishing for more information to help prepare for future series are advised to consult these previous reports.

Clerical errors, where the mark submitted by the centre did not correspond to that shown on the Unit Recording Sheet (URS), or where the total mark on that sheet had been calculated incorrectly, were found in the submissions from many centres. It is important that these marks are double checked before sending them to OCR as failure to do so delays the moderation process and could even result in learners being given the wrong grades.

Most centres provided an OCR URS for each portfolio, which is required to allow clear identification of learner work and to clarify centre marking decisions. Problems were caused in some cases where this sheet was not provided or where all the details had not been fully completed, with the most common omission being the candidate number.

Where centres tagged paper portfolios with the URS at the front and candidate names on each page this was helpful to the moderator. Instructions for presenting work can be found in section 4.3.1 of the specification document and it is important that these are followed. Many centres submitted loose sheets, sometimes in plastic wallets or envelope folders, and these caused problems for the moderators. It is a JCQ requirement that 'if the coursework is word-processed, the candidate must ensure that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appears on each page as a header or footer' (*JCQ Instructions for conducting coursework,3.7*). Many submissions did not include this information.

Most centres opted for postal moderation, with many supplementing paper-based portfolios with electronic evidence on optical media or memory stick. Electronic evidence was most often provided to show the product created by the learners, whether this be spreadsheet, database, multimedia or game. Where it was possible to view the final product in this way this generally assisted moderators in making more accurate judgements about the quality of the product.

As in previous series, considerable problems were encountered where learners submitted evidence that could not be read because it was printed at a reduced size, sometimes in draft quality and/or with insufficient contrast. Additionally, monochrome printouts were sometimes provided to evidence colour. It is important to recognise that moderators can only make judgements on the evidence submitted, so it is essential that this is clear. If centre staff recognise that some printed material cannot be read then electronic files can be sent to supplement and clarify the printed evidence.

Some centres chose to present all evidence electronically and used either the OCR repository or postal moderation. If the repository option is chosen then additional items should not be sent by post. Some problems were encountered in repository submissions where the instructions for using the repository had not been followed with respect to file names, which must be prepended by candidate numbers. Where this was not done, centres had to be requested to resend all their work, as the repository system was unable to point moderators to the correct files for each learner. For repository submissions it is essential that the instructions provided by OCR are followed, not only regarding file names but also to ensure that all files, including URS's, are uploaded under each individual candidate name, with centre-wide documents, eg mark sheet and Centre Authentication Statement, uploaded to the Administration area.

Appendix C of the unit specification provides guidance on the production of electronic internal assessment. Where these guidelines were followed, moderation was generally straightforward, but problems were encountered with the evidence supplied by some centres. In some cases this was due to centres sending files in file types that could not be read by the moderator, with MS Publisher being a common file format that caused problems. Frequently it was due to centres sending multiple files for each learner without any guidance for the moderator to show which files needed to be opened, in which order, for each section of the marking grid. Just as paper portfolios should be page numbered, with references provided on the URS, it is equally important that electronic evidence is clearly referenced for the moderator. Files that are not relevant to the moderation should not be sent, unless this is in the context of evidence for learners' folder structures, with clear indication given of which files do, and do not, need to be opened by the moderator. If MS Excel and Access files are sent, centres are requested to provide clear indication of the version used, to avoid any confusion regarding the evidence.

A few centres supplied evidence that had not been generated using the OCR Model Assignment. It is a requirement of the specification that an approved OCR Model Assignment is used for final assessment and no other work should be used. Work produced as part of teaching and learning activities has not been undertaken in the required conditions and can form no part of evidence submitted for final assessment. Although centres may contextualise the assignments, the extent of permitted modifications is outlined in the tutor notes within each assignment and no other modifications should be made.

It is essential that all coursework is carried out in accordance with the JCQ instructions for conducting coursework. Some centres provided additional direction to their learners; verbally, through worksheets and/or writing frames and by providing specific feedback on areas to improve, leading to over-similarity in learner responses. Work produced after such additional help and guidance may not be considered for assessment.

Most centres sent the Centre Authentication Statement (CCS160) to the moderator with the sample. Centres are advised that this sheet should be sent with the mark sheet (MS1 or equivalent).

Centres are advised to be vigilant in areas where learners provide written descriptions, for example of email etiquette in R002, file types in R007 and throughout R009, which may be the result of learner research. If learners submit work which has been copied from external sources, such as websites, without acknowledgement, this cannot be accepted and must be removed before the work is assessed. Simply deleting or altering a few words does not make a description the learner's own. Learners must give detailed references even where they paraphrase the original material. Whilst correctly referenced material can be included within portfolios its content cannot be credited to the learner, only any comments that the learner adds.

Many centres demonstrated a good understanding of the marking criteria and moderators were able to confirm the marks awarded. Regrettably this was not always possible, with some centre marking found to be over-generous, often with insufficient attention paid to errors and omissions in the work submitted. Some centres misinterpreted key words in the specification; in such cases reference to Appendix D should enable centre staff to award marks more accurately.

OCR provides a programme of INSET events for teachers of this specification. Where a centre is new to the qualification, attendance at such a session would be particularly appropriate.

Comments on Individual Units

R002

Most centres submitted work that had correctly been completed following the OCR Model Assignment 'MStreamIT'. This assignment remains live but a new assignment 'JB Clothing Emporium' is now available on the OCR website. A small number of centres submitted work for this unit that had either used the OCR practice assignment ('Little Theatre Company') or their own tasks. It is a requirement of the qualification that one of the live assignments is used.

Whilst specific guidance and feedback on the assignment tasks is not allowed, it would be appropriate to remind learners, throughout the assignment, of the scenario and of the role that they have been given within the business.

Where centres had over-generously marked this unit this generosity was often particularly significant in Learning Outcome 1, where there are three different measures of learners' ability to search for, store and share information.

To meet the requirements of Mark Band 3 in Learning Outcome (LO) 1, folder structures should be at a level that would be acceptable in a business environment, allowing files to be located and identified with ease, both now and in the future, bearing in mind the volume of files that might be expected in such an environment. Folders labelled only with task numbers and files labelled with generic names such as 'poster' and 'database' (unless in a folder that makes the context clear) do not meet this requirement. Appropriate responses to the assignment task of ensuring files are protected from *accidental* loss are expected at this level, also appropriate use of versions, using accepted conventions.

Where learners explain only *how* or *when* to use the various features of email this does not demonstrate a thorough understanding – it would be expected that learners working at the highest level will demonstrate their understanding of *both* aspects – how to use the different features of email software *and* situations in which they would be appropriate, demonstrating good netiquette throughout. This should be demonstrated through both tasks – setting up their own email system and the email guide for new employees of MStreamIT. It is expected that the range of email features listed in the specification content will have been taught before learners begin their assessment and a range of advanced tools of equivalent range would be expected from learners working in Mark Band 3 for LO1. Some learners included more advanced tools within their evidence but provided no evidence of their understanding of the more basic tools listed in the specification. Whilst many provided lists of email etiquette guidelines, these were not always evident in the examples of emails tools in use, showing that learners had **not** got a thorough understanding. It was disappointing to see a significant number of learners who had simply copied lists of email etiquette guidelines from websites – centre assessors must be alert to this possibility and ensure no such material is included within portfolios.

Very few learners demonstrated the correct use of advanced search criteria, which would be expected to credit them with using *effective* search criteria, as required in Mark Band 3 of LO1. Where learners have only vague ideas of what they are looking for it is very difficult for them to demonstrate the use of effective search criteria. Some learners tried to use the Advanced Search page of search engines but did not know how to use these effectively, frequently including Boolean operators within their search criteria, or repeating words and phrases in the different option boxes. Learners who had been taught to check the resulting criteria and the outcome of the searches were more likely to show understanding. Many learners provided only URLs for the information found, which in some cases were from third-party websites, thereby showing no information at all about the copyright holder. Only a few learners provided sufficient information to contact the copyright holder, as required by the task. Many learners chose to use

a standard source table that they had presumably used for teaching and learning tasks. Unfortunately, these tables often had headings that did not fully relate to the requirements of the task.

For LO2, many learners completed a significant proportion of Tasks 3 and 4, using appropriate software, but the accuracy of their results was not always sufficiently considered by centres when awarding marks. There are many different approaches that can be taken to Task 3, many of which can be considered equally effective, but to be considered as meeting the requirements of Mark Band 3 they must produce the correct results. Similarly, the accuracy of database edits and queries and the appropriateness of output should be considered within Task 4. Where 50% or fewer of the tasks have been accurately completed then marks will fall within Mark Band 1. A major problem for moderators within this LO was lack of clear evidence to show what learners had done. This was sometimes because of over-cropped or illegible screenshots or because no evidence of methods, eg formulae, query designs and merge fields, was provided.

The range of software used to communicate information, ie for LO3, was often disappointing, with most learners using only word processing and/or desktop publishing (DTP). Some centre annotation suggested that credit had been given to the use of data handling software within this LO. The range of communicating software that is expected to be taught is listed within the subject content for this LO. Although learners should be given credit for *communicating* using software that is not listed, eg video-editing and animation, data handling software does not contribute to this area of the specification.

Most learners chose to create simple pieces of DTP for their advertising solution and in many cases it was not clear exactly how it was anticipated that this item was to be used. Where learners chose a more creative option this not only increased the range of file types produced but often resulted in products of a much higher quality, more appropriate for the specified purpose of promoting both the company and the top-up cards. Given the open nature of this particular task it was disappointing to note that in most centres all learners had used the same medium for this task.

Some centres over-generously assessed the second section of LO3, where the content included in documents did not meet requirements. For example, where learners had not produced an email guide that would be appropriate to give to new staff at MStreamIT, where they had not included all the specified text within their magazine advertisements, where their promotional item did not include sufficient information about both company and product being promoted, where letters did not include standard features such as date, appropriate salutation and valediction and where the report did not have relevant details inserted into the correct places.

Most learners were able to use formatting that generally enhanced the readability of documents, with poor choice of colour generally being the main error. Learners from some centres, often where evidence was produced electronically, used inappropriate font sizes, for example too small to be read in the magazine advertisements and over-large in other DTP items. This may have been due to the fact that learners did not notice the scale at which the software was displaying their work. Centres are recommended to teach the value of printing proof copies as part of checking documents. The main limiting factor within learners' evidence for LO4 was the limited range of formatting evidenced. The specification lists a wide range of features that should be taught and where learners used only a very limited range it could not be considered that their approach was 'thorough'. Some learners made good use of formatting within Task 2 but minimal formatting was applied to the spreadsheet, letter and/or report.

The assessment criteria within LO4 refer to the level of support given to learners. It is essential that clear evidence for this is provided for all learners. Short statements on the URS's, where they stated specifically what, if any, support had been given rather than simply repeating the assessment criteria, were found to be appropriate.

R003

As for LO2 of R002, a significant issue with this unit was the lack of evidence provided by some learners to show what their final product was like. Where electronic evidence was included, this allowed for more informed judgements about functionality and effectiveness.

Since different versions of Excel do not always display features as they were originally created, eg drop-down lists, it is important that the centre documents the version that has been used by learners. If macros are included it is important that files are tested to ensure that such macros are included within the files sent to the moderator.

The extent to which learners' spreadsheets are user friendly, using a range of different features as listed in the specification, is a significant differentiating factor within LO1. In some cases it appeared that centres had over-generously awarded marks within this section because learners had used a particular feature once or more, without considering how clear and easy to use the final sheet was, for a novice user. Although comments are undoubtedly useful, they are only one way of making a spreadsheet easy to use. Other methods, which were not commonly seen, might include helpful titles, use of text boxes with explanatory text and clear formatting, eg colour coding. Although specifically included within LO2, macros can be significant in making spreadsheets easy to use and where these have been included they should be given credit here too. Where macros were provided by learners these were generally very limited in range and often provided the same functionality for most learners within a centre, possibly reflecting examples used in teaching and suggesting limited understanding of the flexibility of this tool. The most common uses were to provide navigation between sheets and to print the invoice. Whilst both of these can be considered to improve the ease with which a spreadsheet can be used, they are relatively simplistic uses of the macro feature. Few learners demonstrated any consideration of the user requirement to be able to add new products and customers in the future. Print settings are also part of LO1 and should be considered within the assessment of the structure of the solution.

Most learners used at least one form of validation within their spreadsheets, but useful input and error messages were not always set and sometimes marks were over-generously awarded where there were many other areas where validation should have been added to *minimise* data entry errors. Most spreadsheet software will allow different responses to potential errors, ie warnings as well as prevention of the entry. Where learners had been taught these different types of validation they were able to add more effective validation rules throughout their solutions.

Where electronic evidence is not provided it is essential that learners provide clear evidence of the overall structure of their spreadsheets, also of *all* comments, validation, messages, macros, conditional formatting, etc, rather than simply providing evidence of one use of each tool. Where the final file is provided electronically learners should note *where* the different features have been added, so that assessors do not miss any functionality.

LO2 assesses the extent to which learner solutions use formulae and macros, as listed in the specification content, to produce solutions that are effective and efficient in meeting user requirements. Many learners used functions additional to those listed in the specification content, demonstrating a wider grasp of functions offered by their spreadsheet software and it is appropriate to consider this range when assessing this LO. Some learners were assessed over-generously within Mark Band 3 where their systems, although producing accurate results, could not be considered effective and efficient. When assessing efficiency it is important to consider whether or not learners have included features that minimise the amount the user needs to input, making effective use of any data already stored within the system. It is equally important to consider how effectively the system could cope with future changes - eg prices, VAT rates,

postage rates and discount policies. An effective and efficient system should be sufficiently robust that a user would never need to alter any formulae.

Learners were frequently assessed over-generously in the second section of LO2 where they described some or all of the different functions and operators used within their formulae, but did not explain *why* they had been used. Such descriptions do not fully meet even Mark Band 1 requirements. To be considered *justification* there should be some comparison with alternative methods, explaining why the final decisions were considered to be the most effective/efficient methods to meet user needs. This level of explanation is possible where learners have spent some time refining their solutions to make them as efficient and future-proof as possible. Although testing is not specifically assessed within this unit, it should be taught within this LO and those learners who have rigorously tested their solution are more likely to produce final solutions that are both efficient and effective in meeting user requirements. Some centres awarded marks in this section for descriptions/explanations of features other than formulae and the functions used within them. 'Functions' here is a technical term for those pre-determined functions used within formulae and not in the generic meaning, ie 'tools'.

The tasks within LO3 were generally attempted well, although some learners did not provide clear evidence of what they had done and/or the results they had obtained. The spreadsheet file alone cannot provide all the evidence needed for this LO. A few learners corrupted the data within their files by sorting only single columns rather than the complete data set, demonstrating poor understanding of this feature and a lack of testing of results. Some poorly chosen charts were over-generously assessed.   Where the chart type was not suitable for the type of data being displayed, labelling could have been more helpful and/or unrequired legends had not been removed. Modelling was generally carried out well with any errors being caused by uncorrected errors within the solution itself rather than any difficulties with the modelling activities. However, many learners provided single solutions only where a range was required. Learners from many centres demonstrated the ability to use the goal seek tool although few were able to explain reasons for using this feature, thereby limiting their potential marks in the last section of the marking criteria.

R004

Almost all learners submitting work for this unit produced a relational multiple-table database, potentially allowing access to the whole mark range. It should be noted that where learners are working at Level 1, they can access the lower marks without the ability to create more than a single-table solution.

Where multiple tables are created it is important to assess their efficiency within LO1. Where there is duplication of data, new fields are included within the wrong tables or links have been made using the wrong fields, the solution cannot be considered to be completely 'sound'. Where learners had been taught to enforce referential integrity they were more likely to create successful structures. This process is an important method of detecting basic structural errors as well as preventing future errors when the database is used and edits made. It is important that learners are taught to check *all* field properties – many left all field lengths as their default settings.

Whilst the database itself, presented in electronic form, can provide a substantial amount of evidence for this unit, some documentary evidence is also necessary. Where no explanation is provided for the validation rules added then even Mark Band 1 requirements are not fully met. Simply describing the rules and what they do is not an explanation – learners need to consider why they have chosen the settings they have. For example, where a range or length check is used, why was that particular range/length chosen? If a check against a list has been used, why is this more appropriate than another type of check? Justification requires some clear consideration of alternatives.

Most learners created queries that at least partially met requirements, although they did not always show consideration that some of the specific situations in the Model Assignment were examples only. Careful consideration of which output fields would be most appropriate was not always evident. Reports that met Mark Band 3 requirements had been edited to remove any truncation of fields and to ensure that they fit well onto the page when printed. Some learners produced a consistent house style but used colours that did not allow the contents to be read and so were not appropriate.

Some learners were over-generously awarded high marks in Mark Band 3 of LO3 where they had created only one form. The criteria for this band states 'creates effective data entry forms for *most* of the tables' - this is in recognition that some database structures will include tables which do not necessarily require data entry forms, for example tables whose sole purpose is to create lookup tables. To be considered an *effective* user interface it is necessary to create data entry forms for all tables which the user will need to access directly in order to edit data. It is easy to add buttons to a form but those learners who created fully effective data entry forms had thought clearly about which buttons they thought would help the user and how to arrange them on the forms.

Where learners had appropriately created a report for every query and a form for every table they were able to create relatively simple menus that met the Mark Band 3 requirement to provide access to 'forms, queries and reports' from the user interface – best practice is that access to queries for day-to-day users is through the reports although learners are not penalised at this level if they provide direct access to queries.

The most meaningful explanations of testing were found where learners had explained their testing and improvements throughout, as guided by the Model Assignment, rather than carrying out all the testing at the end.

Some learners did not provide any evidence of carrying out peer testing of another person's user interface and therefore did not meet all the requirements of LO4. It is expected that learners will test each other's solutions and they are then assessed on the appropriateness of their testing and the detail and relevance of their feedback. It is not appropriate for learners to be provided with a form for this feedback, either by the teacher or by the owner of the database, as the quality of feedback is the responsibility of the tester. It is likely that learners working at the higher levels will wish to take peer feedback into consideration within their analysis of testing of their own work so they may include within their portfolios both their own feedback of another interface and peer feedback of their own. This is entirely appropriate but it is imperative that feedback is clearly labelled to show exactly who did the feedback and whose database was being tested.

R005

Centres submitted work this series that had correctly been completed following the OCR Model Assignment 'Out and Up'. This assignment remains live but a new assignment 'Wind & Waves' is now available on the OCR website.

It was disappointing to note that in most cases learners within a centre all chose to create the same type of product using the same software. Although it is recognised that there is limited teaching time, it is expected that learners will have some experience in creating different types of multimedia product. The requirements of LO1, even at Mark Band 1, include learners giving reasons for their choice of software, including the presentation method of the design, ie the method by which users will view and interact with their final product, which is determined by the type of product created. Where they have no experience of using alternative software or using/producing alternative types of product it is difficult for learners to meet this requirement at anything more than the most basic level.

Even the most basic specification should include a clear definition of the task being attempted. Some learners included no such specification, with only implied evidence of the problem they had been set. Many identified success criteria from the wording of the user requirements but did not analyse these in order to produce measurable criteria. These cannot be fully considered to be 'suitable'.

Some learners showed limited understanding of what an interactive, multimedia product might look like, with only limited use of multimedia components and effects and very limited navigation. The range of interactive features and multimedia effects that can be included is, to an extent, software dependent and this might be considered by the centre when choosing software to include in teaching programmes.

Some learners included evidence of excellent planning, using a good range of techniques from the specification and providing site plans with directional arrows and page plans with details of all elements, not just text and graphics, sufficient for a third party to implement and a solid foundation from which to search for appropriate components. Many learners, however, included very little planning documentation with little detail. Where learners produced page plans using software rather than by hand they often copied and pasted from one page to another with very little detail shown. Some documentation, though appearing to be detailed, was clearly produced retrospectively and so could not be credited as 'planning'.

Most learners included evidence of the sources of at least some components they had used with many including this evidence within a table. Where learners chose to use generic tables that they have used within teaching and learning activities this was acceptable but in many cases they disadvantaged themselves because the prompts in the table column headings did not always correspond to the task requirements. Because of this, many did not provide reasons for their choice of components and consideration of legislation was often limited to copyright rather than the range of legislative constraints they should have learned about as listed in the specification.

Best evidence for LO2 was provided where centres sent electronic copies of the final products. Although many of the final products could be seen as competent, few were considered to be truly *effective* in meeting user requirements. Those that did fall into this category generally did so because they demonstrated individual creativity on the part of the learner, containing unique features that distinguished their product from alternatives. It was disappointing to see learners from a number of centres producing very unimaginative products with the same basic content and structure and interactive features beyond the basic navigation structure either missing or limited to control buttons on video content. This may have been due to over-direction by the centre or from a limitation in the range of techniques included in the teaching content of the unit.

For marks above Mark Band 1 in LO3 it is necessary that learners provide clear evidence of testing throughout the completion of the product as well as final testing of the finished product. Some learners tried to evidence this with two sets of identical test plans but these did not demonstrate any real testing during completion. Those learners who documented the production of their products, showing how they tested elements as they were added with the corrections/improvements that inevitably resulted from this genuine testing, were more able to demonstrate achievement at the higher levels. Where evidence from the product itself conflicts with test plans that claim everything works as it should then testing cannot be considered 'sound'.

Many learners had collected feedback through the use of a questionnaire but the analysis related to the feedback was often very limited and did not always refer back to the success criteria. Where learners had been only very vague with their success criteria this obviously limited the effectiveness of any analysis. Some learners provided their own evaluation against their success criteria, with little or no reference back to the feedback obtained. This did not meet the requirements of the higher mark bands.

R006

Most centres submitted work that had correctly been completed following the OCR Model Assignment 'The Camera Never Lies'. This assignment remains live but a new assignment 'Keep Pets' is now available on the OCR website.

Comments for R005 above regarding specification, success criteria, retrospective 'planning' evidence, choice of software, choice of components and legislation also apply to this unit. Research methods did not always cover the range of techniques that would be expected to have been taught as listed in the specification. Some learners did not include a clear plan of what they wanted to produce. The best planning was found where learners had clearly analysed the implications of the title of the competition – 'The Camera Never Lies' and the aim to promote the local area. This often elicited relevant research which provided learners with a range of ideas that they could use to produce an imaginative and effective final product. However, it was disappointing to note that very few learners demonstrated any originality or creativity in their designs with many simply choosing two or three images to superimpose with no clear reason for their choice.

LO2 requires learners to demonstrate that they have set image size and resolution for their image. In some cases learners loaded an existing image and then set the image size and resolution when they had completed all the editing. This often had a detrimental effect on the quality of the final image as the original image was often smaller than the final size set. Some centres awarded marks over-generously where there was no evidence of setting resolution. Although the specification states 'and/or' resolution this is in recognition that some software, eg vector graphics do not have this feature. Where learners are using software that requires resolution to be set then this should be evidenced. Explanation of these settings is far more than stating the settings that have been used.

It is important that the range of standard and specialist software tools is clearly evidenced by the learner. The specification lists the range of tools that should be taught. Although detailed screenshot evidence is not required, it is important that assessors and moderators can identify the tools that have been used, so some evidence, over and above the final image, is required. Some of the best editing is so effective that the tools used cannot be identified merely by looking at the final product. Additional evidence may be through interim printouts/screenshots showing development with some annotation. If the original images are provided most of the tools can be recognised if the learner describes what they have been used for.

In many cases the final product was disappointing, demonstrating little creativity or originality and displaying only a very limited range of tools, albeit sometimes these had been used very well. For example, the most common outcome was a background onto which two or three items cut from other images had been superimposed. The items were often cut from their backgrounds with accuracy but there was often little or no evidence of any other tools being used, other than the addition of a line of text and the final product could not be considered an effective solution to the task set.

Some learners provided no evidence of their folder structure, file names or file types so it was not possible to confirm the marks awarded by the centre for the first part of LO3. Where evidence was provided electronically often working files were not included. Effective storage would be expected to show good practice as listed in the specification including folder structures, file names and versions using standard naming conventions.
Specific evidence is required for the last section of the marking criteria to show how the learner would present their final image to the client. This was not always well evidenced with some learners printing out their final image but not demonstrating the choices made.

R007

Most centres submitted work that had correctly been completed following the OCR Model Assignment 'Local Promotional Campaign'. This assignment remains live but a new assignment 'The Shoulderpads' is now available on the OCR website.

Comments for R005 above regarding specification, success criteria, retrospective 'planning' evidence, choice of software, choice of components, legislation and testing during production also apply to this unit.

Learners from most centres produced a video clip for this unit although sound clips and animations would be equally acceptable and it would be expected that centres would have taught a range of techniques and software before allowing learners to attempt the final assessment. Learners are assessed, as part of LO1, on their choice of software and it is not possible for them to provide any but the most basic reasons if they have not experienced the use of a range of different software. At the higher levels they need to include their choice of software for 'the presentation method of the design' which should be interpretation as the software needed by the user in order to view the final product which is clearly linked to the type of product chosen.

Some centres were over-generous in their assessment of relatively simple video clips which consisted of sets of photographs linked together, sometimes with one or two short video clips and a single soundtrack. These could rarely be considered to demonstrate any originality or creativity. Those solutions that did show some creative flair generally were the result of some detailed analysis of the user requirements followed by purposeful research to gain ideas.

Evidence of techniques used to create their product, including the creation of any original components and any editing of components carried out to make them appropriate, was often difficult to find. Where specific evidence was not provided it was often difficult to agree that a range of sophisticated editing and enhancing techniques had been used, as required at Mark Band 3 of LO2.

Best evidence for the quality and appropriateness of the final product was found when the centre provided the product itself in electronic form. This also provided clear evidence that the product had been exported as a suitable file type although evidence of saving in raw editable format was not always found. Some documentary evidence is required before learners can be credited with understanding the advantages and disadvantages of exporting as different file types, even at

Mark Band 1 level, and with the higher-band requirements of explaining/justifying the choice of file type.

Most learners produced test plans for LO3 but they did not always include all required elements. In particular, learners working at the higher levels should identify the actual tests being carried out, rather than just what is being tested, showing that they have considered how best to test different elements of their solution.

Testing during production was generally poorly evidenced with comments under R005 above also applying here.

R008

Only a few centres submitted work for this unit this series, making generalised comments difficult and centres are referred to previous reports for more advice.

Some learners demonstrated real creativity and flair in their programs which generally were sufficiently complex to meet the demands of the higher levels. In some cases learners produced solutions that met the letter of the requirements, eg asking for the user's name and keeping a score but disappointingly did not then do anything with this information. Some learners' solutions were very simple indeed which met the requirements of the lower marks but in some cases these were marked over-generously.
Annotation of code was often over-generously assessed where learners had written about what different procedures did but had not demonstrated any real understanding of the different constructs, ie sequence, iteration and selection, variables and operators had been used.

R009, R010 and R011

There were insufficient entries for any of these units to make any generalisation possible. Centres are referred to previous reports for advice on these units.

Examined Unit R001

General comments

Centres are reminded that they should cover the specification for the unit and then, having done so, spend some time preparing for the examination by using the areas for suggested study given in the pre-release materials. Hopefully, in doing so, centres will then allow learners the opportunity to answer the whole of the paper with sufficient understanding and depth.

Centres are also reminded that this paper requires learners to work within a scenario. Not only should their preparation focus on the given scenario but also the answers they give should match that scenario and, where required by the question, area of focus. This therefore precludes general answers that could be correct in general terms but which would not fit the scenario. For example, question 8d asked learners to identify a period of time for which data could be held that was collected in connection with a school play. Whilst many learners focused on the relatively short period of time this would be relevant, a small but significant number linked the time to the time for which students were at the school, which therefore resulted in answers that stated that the data could be held for up to five years. In making this link, learners were ignoring both the overall context and the focus of the question.

Question 1

This question focused on the work of the Data Team and their use of hardware. The first question asked learners to link statements to either laptops or spreadsheets. The vast majority of learners scored full marks for this question.

Question 1b was equally accessible to the majority of learners. Whilst the question required learners to identify devices, answers which correctly identified items of hardware were awarded marks. Again, most learners achieved full marks for this task.

Question 1c was in three parts and assessed learners' understanding of the roles of passwords and usernames. These questions were slightly more technical than the previous two and the quality of answers seen from learners reflected this. Many learners were able to give some indication of how a username is used by the operating system, although relatively few were able to give answers that deserved full marks. A significant number of learners missed the focus of the question and did not answer in terms of what the operating system does. Answers to parts cii and ciii were more successful.

Question 2

This question focused on the application of Health and Safety legislation, both specifically (2a) and in general terms (2b).

There was a range of answers for both questions. However, it must be stressed that learners need to be fully aware of context and focus when answering the question. Question 2a asked for actions that members of the Data Team may take. Many learners failed to take note of this focus and gave actions that could be taken by employers, rather than employees. Question 2b then asked for responsibilities placed upon employers by the Health and Safety Act. As with question 2a, some learners failed to take note of this focus and gave actions that could be taken by employees.

Question 3

This question was the first of two that required extended answers from learners. Learners were given the focus areas for the answer and the vast majority were able to give answers that dealt with these three areas. However, whilst many learners were able to describe each of the three factors, relatively few fully answered the question by explaining how these impacted on the School's decision to buy the DRIMS system.

Question 4

This question focused on the use of the DRIMS system. The particular focus of question 4a was on an application of the Data Protection Act (DPA). Whilst many learners correctly identified that the DPA was pertaining to the question this was not necessarily required for full marks and many learners gave good descriptive answers that achieved full marks without mentioning the Act. Question 4b required learners to identify hardware devices that could be used to add data. This question was again opened up and made accessible to all learners and, as with other such questions, a wide range of answers was accepted.

Question 5

This question tested learners' understanding of back up. Answers to question 5a were generally accurate with most learners showing that they understood why back ups need to be made. However, some learners simply gave answers along the lines of 'in case data is lost' but failed to fully answer the question by stating that the backed up data could then be used to replace the lost data. Question 5b proved to be more challenging. Many learners gave general answers about back ups failing or making copies of the wrong data. These are general answers and did not address the specific focus of the question which was the implication of an automated system. Answers that addressed the issue of a failure not being noticed until it was too late, for example, were accepted.

Section B developed the scenario from that established in Section A. The specific focus was a school play.

Question 6

Question 6a was answered correctly by the vast majority of learners. However, question 6b proved more challenging. There were two key issues with the question. Firstly, many learners failed to appreciate that the question was addressing understanding of collaborative tools. Despite being specifically defined in the specification, many learners either discussed tools within word processing software or more general forms of collaboration, such as sending the work by email. Where learners did appreciate this focus, few then included any discussion of efficiency.

Question 7

This question focused on the creation of graphics and the legal implications. These three questions showed a good level of understanding in the main. However, where learners are asked to justify the choice of one option over another, they should be advised that where they give two sides of an answer (as in a graphics table can do X, whilst a mouse cannot do X) this is likely to only be awarded as one answer.

Question 8

Question 8 showed a good ability to apply theory in context, with many learners giving good answers that dealt well with why the school may have gathered telephone numbers, added names to tickets and for how long they might hold onto contact details.

Question 9

Question 9 was a design question. Although this was a new type of question for this qualification, many learners scored extremely well on this task. As the task called for learners to design an online form marks were given for the overall design as well as content that was suitable for use on an online form, such as submit buttons.

Where learners failed to score well on this task, this was generally because they failed to address the issue of the form being an online form and therefore did not include elements that would be found on an online form uniquely, such as radio buttons whilst other learners failed to design a form that met the brief and simply created a form for any purpose.

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