



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 June 2016

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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.

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Understanding Computer Systems (R001)

General Comments

Candidates coped well with the scenario and had clearly done a good deal of preparation for the external assessment. Overall, the performance by all candidates was in line with expectations. Questions that had been expected to prove difficult discriminated well, whilst others that were intended to be accessible to all were answered well by the vast majority of candidates.

The nature and style of the questions asked in this paper followed the format used in most of the preceding versions and candidates coped with this format accordingly. However, as with previous papers, other than those candidates operating at the very top end of the grade boundaries, there was still an apparent lack of technical understanding across the cohort. However, alongside this, the number of scripts with no answer, or which included answers that were, apparently, guessed at, was down on previous series.

Finally, candidates continue to make good progress with the concept of this being an applied paper, where answers have to match the context within which the questions have been set. However, as will be discussed below, this was not necessarily reflected in the answers to all questions.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1 included the usual settling questions and candidates coped well with 1a and 1c. However, question 1b required candidates to comment on the impact of the spell checking tool on the effectiveness of a website. Whilst many were able to identify that a website with few spelling errors would be easier to understand, there was a large number who suggested that the website would be more professional. This answer is rarely accepted, if ever, as an implication, not least because professionalism as a concept is hard to define.

Question 2 followed on from the format of 1a and 1c and did not present much of a challenge to the vast majority of candidates. However, question 2b had a very clear context and this did provide something of a challenge. Whilst some candidates did appreciate that the issue was how to remedy a poor photograph taken by a bad photographer, others suggested answers that were not suitable. For example, answers that dealt with resizing or making the image less blurry were not awarded marks. However, answers that dealt with removing inappropriate items, for example, were.

Question 2c was a banded response. Despite optimisation being clearly flagged in the pre-release, there was a clear lack of basic understanding around this concept. Candidates often talked about checking that the content was appropriate or legal and did not address the focal point of the question. When candidates did have an understanding of optimisation, they rarely dealt with the positive and negative factors that would impact on the decision about optimising pictures. Compared to previous years, the number of candidates achieving marks in Mark Band 3 was somewhat reduced.

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Questions 3a, b and c came as a related group. Of the three, 3a was the best answered, with many candidates linking the need to protect access (whether to protect private data or stop non-members making bookings) to the need for a passport. Question 3b asked for a benefit to the Gym of stopping members booking the same session twice and, unfortunately, seemed to confuse many candidates who gave answers that were benefits to members. Question 3c then asked for a benefit to members. Generally, candidates were better able to answer this question than question 3b.

Question 4a deliberately focussed on a narrower use of spreadsheets than has previously been the case when this type of software has featured in the paper. This subtlety was, unfortunately, missed by most candidates, who gave general answers that could have been about the use of spreadsheets in any context. As indicated above, candidates are increasingly giving answers that are in context or are based on the context. However, when faced with a marginally more technical question such as this one, this improvement seems to disappear.

Question 4b followed the previous question in that it required a more technical understanding and split the cohort into two very discrete groups - those who knew the answer and those who did not. Unfortunately, the latter greatly exceeded the former.

Question 5 focussed on Tom's work for the Gym. The first two questions were slightly more technical than those that opened section A of the paper and proved something of a challenge, with many candidates confusing devices, file types and media. Question 5bii required candidates to work with the context and realise that if Tom forgot one form of storage media, he would not remember another. This did catch some candidates out. Incidentally, any one who forgets their storage media in such an important situation was also considered to be someone who would forget their phone.

Question 5c was a slight twist on previous questions and was structured so that candidates could not simply write 'copyright' and receive a mark. Many candidates gave full and clear answers to this question.

Question 6 focussed on the use of DTP software and features thereof. Many candidates gave really good answers to these two questions and seemed very happy to explain in full how their chosen feature could be used.

Question 7 was a slight departure from the style of previous questions which caught some candidates out. The spelling of email addresses was not incorrect, nor was the inclusion of time. Many candidates scored well here but where there were problems in accessing the marks available this was because they did not state why the error was an error.

Question 8 was really gratifying and showed a really good level of understanding of e-safety issues. Many candidates were fully aware of how to deal with cyber bullying and, again, gave competent, descriptive answers.

Question 9 allowed candidates to explore their imagination. It would appear from the answers given that some candidates could not quite believe that the answer 'dance mat' was sufficient for one mark and so gave some very inventive answers about what a dance mat was.

Moderated Units (R002 – R011)

General Comments

Most centres chose to submit their evidence by post or through the OCR repository but those centres that chose visiting moderation appreciated the opportunity to meet the moderator and to ensure electronic files were seen on the centre's equipment.

Problems for moderators and centres this series were dominated by two issues:

a. Malpractice

All work submitted by candidates for assessment must be their own, individual, unaided response to the tasks in the chosen OCR assignment. Centre staff are not permitted to supplement these tasks with additional material, whether this be additional breakdown of tasks, writing frames/templates, verbal guidance, examples to follow, specific feedback identifying potential improvements or any other guidance or structure that will give candidates an advantage over those in other centres who follow the assignment tasks without additional help. Although some contextualisation of assignment scenarios is permissible it is not permitted to amend or add to the tasks in any way. Centres must ensure that assessment takes place under appropriate conditions, as directed in the JCQ Instructions for the Conduct of Coursework, so that they can guarantee the authenticity of the work submitted. Further guidance has been provided by OCR in the form of a document 'Guide to Generating Evidence', which is available under 'Key Documents' in this qualification's page on the OCR website. The provision of additional guidance and/or feedback to candidates constitutes malpractice and several centres were involved in investigations into the conduct of their assessment. Additionally, several candidates were reported for plagiarism that had not been identified and dealt with internally by the centre. Centres are advised to ensure their procedures are adequate to ensure the authenticity of all work submitted and that candidates are fully aware of the requirements, both before they begin their work and at the point of signing their authentication statements. Where malpractice is confirmed this can result in candidates' marks being reduced or annulled.

b. Electronic evidence

Centres are increasingly submitting evidence in electronic form. Whilst this is equally acceptable to paper when it is done correctly, in the majority of cases problems were caused by a failure to follow the guidance given in Appendix C of the specification and in many cases these severely delayed and/or caused inaccuracies to the moderation process. The most common problems were:

- Submission of many different files with no indication of which files needed to be opened, in which order, to find the evidence for each section of the marking grid. Moderators cannot be expected to search for evidence and should they not find what was credited by the centre it is unlikely that they will be able to agree the centre's marks. Moderators will be instructed in future series to return any such work to the centre for signposting to be added to the Unit Recording Sheet (URS) before moderation can take place.
- Submission of files on the OCR Repository or by post that were in formats that could not be opened by the moderator or using non-standard fonts that were not available to the moderator. These issues did not generally arise with visiting moderation, as moderators would view files on centre equipment. Sometimes centres submitted file types that are not listed in the specification, most commonly MS Publisher, Serif software and Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, where there can be no guarantee that the moderator will have the necessary software and there is no freely downloadable viewer. Sometimes it is necessary to include such files so that candidates' filing structures can be viewed and assessed (R002, R006 and R007) but if contents need to be viewed they also need to be exported into a non-proprietary format or provided in printed form. Sometimes files could

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not be opened correctly because they had not been correctly exported for viewing on a standalone computer. MS PowerPoint files were commonly provided without their associated media files and some websites were not viewable because only the html files had been provided, without their associated image folders, or because links had been set up with absolute rather than relative references. Centre staff are recommended to carry out their own assessment on computers that are not attached to the school network, so that any such problems can be addressed before external moderation.

- Low quality scans of hand-drawn planning documents. If contents cannot be read by the moderator then credit cannot be given. In many cases it would have been more appropriate to submit the work as a postal entry (component 02) and submit the original paper documents as well as the electronic files (on CD/DVD or memory stick).
- Submission of files that did not match paper-based evidence supplied, with no indication given to show which was to be considered.
- Files clearly missing from the submission, where credit had been given for a task but no evidence provided.
- Candidate files/folders inadequately labelled. In some cases candidate work was supplied in folders identified only by candidates' first names, sometimes abbreviated. All work, whether on paper or electronic, must be clearly labelled with candidates' full name and candidate number.

Many of the problems encountered suggested that centres had not used the files provided for their own assessment – if scanned documents cannot be read and yet centres have given marks for 'detailed designs', for example, it must be supposed that the centre marked the original paper documents. Similarly, if centres have awarded marks for a task for which no evidence has been submitted it must be assumed that centre staff have seen a file that was not sent to the moderator. Choosing to provide evidence electronically does not take away the need for candidates to produce and hand in for marking a distinct portfolio of work, which should then be kept securely by the centre until after the moderation process, as required by JCQ instructions. It is essential that moderators see exactly the same evidence as that used in the centre to make assessment decisions.

Other General and Administrative Issues Noted were:

- A number of centres submitted their marks and/or samples after the required deadline. As work should be stored securely after marking by the centre, selecting and sending the required sample should not be time-consuming. Where there are 15 or fewer candidates entered for a unit the administrative guide states that the work of all candidates should be submitted to the moderator at the same time as the marks, without waiting for a sample request. Where this was done it was very much appreciated by moderators but regrettably the majority of centres with such entries did not send the work until they received the sample request email.
- OCR Repository (entry code 01)
 - Some centres had difficulty uploading all their candidate work to the OCR Repository. It should be noted that there is a 20Mb limit on the size of any individual file uploaded to the Repository. If candidates are likely to create files that exceed this limit, which is possible in R005, R006 and R007 if they do not optimise their component files, then the centre should consider a postal entry.
 - Some centres found uploading to the Repository very time-consuming. If a number of files are to be uploaded it is more efficient to do so as a single zipped folder.
 - A few centres failed to follow the file-naming convention given in the OCR Repository Guide, which requires all file names to begin with the candidate number so that they system can map each file to the correct candidate. Failure to do this can result in the wrong files being shown to the moderator. Where this issue was found centres were requested to resend all evidence on memory stick or CD/DVD, by post.

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- Where paper evidence was submitted the majority of centres presented portfolios as required: tagged with treasury tags, and where this was done it was helpful. Some submissions were more problematic, most especially where these were loose sheets in plastic wallets or envelope folders. Not only does this take more time for moderators to access the work but it also creates the possibility of pages from different candidates getting mixed up, particularly if moderators wish to compare two or more portfolios side by side.
- Some centres submitting work electronically by post also included printed copies of the Unit Recording Sheet for each candidate in the sample, which was much appreciated by moderators. Centres are reminded that postal submissions allow a mixture of paper-based and electronic evidence.
- JCQ Instructions require all word-processed work to contain the candidate's name. This not only provides some protection against mistakes when using shared printers but also aids moderation where sometimes candidate work is compared. Many centres submitted work, both on paper and electronically, where names were not provided on each page. In some centres errors were found, where the wrong candidate's work was included. Such errors are treated very seriously.
- Where unit recording sheets were correctly completed, with all candidate details filled in and comments explaining assessment decisions, with reference to specific evidence used, this met the specification requirements and was helpful. Regrettably many centres omitted required information, particularly centre and candidate numbers, and/or failed to explain assessment decisions. Many centre staff simply copied the assessment criteria into the 'comment' column, rather than explaining why it was felt that these criteria had been met and directing the moderator to the evidence used to make the claim. The 'page number' column was only rarely completed. Whilst this is not large enough to enable teachers to add file names easily, for printed portfolios it is sufficient and where candidates submit multi-page documents electronically it should also be used. Where centres explain their assessment decisions and direct moderators to the pertinent evidence it is much easier for moderators to agree the marks awarded.
- Centre marks can only be confirmed by the moderator where there is evidence to support them. In some cases no evidence was provided but claims made on the Unit Recording Sheets. This was particularly the case for filing structures and testing. If centre staff wish to supplement candidate evidence with witness statements these must meet the requirements of Appendix A of the specification. In particular this states that "a witness statement should record what the learner has done and in doing so should not seek to repeat or paraphrase the marking criteria"; also "witnesses should describe what the learner did and not assess the learner". No marks can be confirmed on the basis of a statement that merely says that candidates have achieved certain criteria, without describing in some detail what the candidate has done.
- Some printed evidence supplied by candidates was unreadable. This was sometimes due to the use of over-cropped and/or over-reduced screenshots and sometimes due to poor colour contrast – commonly red on blue printed in monochrome. Both of these problems were sometimes exacerbated by draft printing. Where pertinent details were simply not readable then often centre marks could not be supported. In such situations it was clear that centre marks must have been based upon evidence other than that supplied to the moderator. As stated in point (b) above, it is essential that centres provide moderators with exactly the same evidence, in the same format, that has been used to make centre assessment decisions. Where this evidence was in both printed and electronic form then both must be provided to the moderator.
- Some centres presented wholly printed evidence which, whilst acceptable, are not the most effective way of presenting evidence of the products created by candidates. In some cases candidates presented weighty portfolios full of annotated screenshots which could have been effectively replaced by the electronic file of the product. Some centres presenting work in this way appeared to mark according to the clarity of candidates' explanations rather than according to the assessment criteria and this led to some inaccuracies and inconsistencies in centre marks.

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- It was disappointing to note that there were still a significant number of centres where even the highest-achieving candidates relied upon presentation software for documenting their work. Whilst this is common practice in Key Stage 3 it is not appropriate in a vocational setting where candidates should be able to demonstrate competence in creating multi-page documents. Additionally, documentation produced using presentation software was often difficult to read, with screenshots over-cropped and/or too small, becoming illegible when printed.
- Some centres' marking was found to be over-generous at the higher levels because key words such as 'most', 'thorough' and 'detailed' had been misinterpreted. The glossary in Appendix D of the specification document provides useful guidelines in the interpretation of key words used in the assessment criteria for the units.
- Some centres' assessment was over-generous because they appeared to have a fixed 'tick list' of skills they were looking for and credited these regardless of the quality, accuracy and appropriateness of their use. Most assessment criteria across all units differentiate on quality of outcome as well as range of skills demonstrated, with quality and appropriateness often being the most significant differentiators between the highest two mark bands.
- Assessment standards from a number of centres were found to be inconsistent. As moderation adjustments cannot alter a centre's order of merit, where this order is found to be invalid the centre is asked to remark the work of their candidates. It is regrettable that this procedure had to be applied in a number of cases this series. It is essential that centres have a robust system of internal standardisation to ensure consistency of standards. OCR has produced a guide 'Internal standardisation, generic guidelines', which is available under 'Key Documents' in this qualification's page on the OCR website.
- It is expected that candidates will be provided with copies of the OCR assignment and of the assessment criteria. It cannot be expected that the assignments will detail exactly what evidence is needed for each task – candidates should use the assessment criteria to determine what they need to evidence. It is also recommended that candidates are provided with copies of the learning content of each unit, enabling them to track their learning within the unit and to understand the context in which the assessment criteria will be applied.

Comments on Individual Units

Most of the issues identified by moderators were similar to those seen in previous series and centres. Unit-specific comments are provided below for those units where there were sufficient entries to make generalisations possible. For further guidance and commonly occurring issues centres are recommended to refer to previous Chief Examiner's reports.

Unit R002

As the only mandatory unit for both Award and Certificate, this unit represented the majority of entries this series.

Both OCR assignments - 'JB Clothing Emporium' ('Tailored Tops') and 'MStreamIT' continue to be acceptable. Both assignments provide a vocational scenario within which the work should be carried out. Where candidates remained aware of this throughout their work they generally produced more appropriate outcomes. This was particularly the case in Learning Outcome 1, where many candidates' folder structures and email evidence demonstrated little or no consideration for the context of the assignment.

Many centres over-generously awarded high marks in Learning Outcome 1 where candidates' folder structures and names were based on tasks rather than content and where there was no evidence of versions or measures taken to protect files from accidental loss. Many candidates provided evidence of password-protecting files, presumably because this was relevant in a practice task, but this would not protect from accidental loss. Candidates should be advised that whilst practice assignments (such as the Little Theatre Company) are useful to allow candidates to practice interpreting requirements and generating evidence it should not be supposed that the live assignment will require exactly the same skills to be demonstrated.

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Similarly, many candidates provided evidence of their use of email but not in the context of the assignment tasks, thereby not meeting specified requirements. Many candidates demonstrated some understanding of the use of some more advanced tools and features of email software but did not cover basic tools. Many centres over-generously assessed candidates as demonstrating a 'thorough' understanding of email etiquette simply because they had written down a fairly long list of 'do's and 'don'ts' but where their explanations and examples of email tools such as sending, forwarding, use of cc/bcc, signatures and out-of-office messages did not mention and/or demonstrate appropriate use this could not be agreed. Centres should be vigilant to ensure that any lists of email etiquette rules are the candidates' own work and not simply copied or reworded from external sources. Even if candidates change some of the words, if the work is recognisable as originating with a particular source it must be attributed by the candidate and its content cannot be considered as part of the assessment.

Many candidates used a table format to evidence their searching and sourced components. This was not always successful as there was rarely sufficient space to clearly show the search criteria used and most generic source tables do not prompt for details of the copyright holders, which is what the tasks and assessment criteria require. Centres are not permitted to supply templates specifically for this task and should warn candidates that if they choose to use generic source tables from previous tasks these may not have the most appropriate column headings. Where candidates create their own tables this can be credited within Learning Outcome 3.

Some centres over-generously assessed candidates' search criteria, especially where they had attempted to use advanced search pages and/or Boolean operators but done so unsuccessfully. Centres are advised that Boolean operators are not listed in the specification content because of their limited effectiveness in many modern search engines. The JB Clothing Emporium assignment provides clear pointers to search criteria that might be helpful and where candidates simply chose items at random to look for this could not be considered sound. Some candidates were over-generously credited with understanding copyright when they provided details from third-party websites rather than copyright holders. Candidates are asked to record information about the copyright holders of the information found from their internet searches so that permission to use them can be requested. URLs provide very little information and do not fully meet mark band 1 requirements.

Many candidates provided effective solutions to the data handling tasks assessed in Learning Outcome 2 and centre marking was sometimes inconsistent here. It is important to note that the assessment criteria refer to accuracy and the extent to which specified requirements are met rather than to any documentation created by candidates. Some candidates' solutions contained errors that had not been taken into account within centre marking. It is important for centres to work through these tasks themselves, so that they know what outcomes to expect, then if candidates' results are different it is necessary to make an assessment of the extent to which their data handling is accurate. Whilst a single error should not be over-penalised, even if it has effects on all output, the extent to which output meets the specified requirements is an important differentiator. Formatting is assessed in Learning Outcome 4. A few centres over-generously awarded high marks to candidates who had only attempted one of the two data handling tasks in the assignment and had therefore not met more than 'some' of the specified requirements. Some evidence of candidates' methods, ie their data handling, is required, simple spreadsheet printouts showing the required results do not demonstrate that the software has been used effectively to process the data. The best evidence would be the electronic file of the completed database/spreadsheet but where this is not provided some screenshot evidence of methods used is needed. Where candidates print out spreadsheets in formula view it is essential that the formulas are presented in a way that they can be viewed and understood by the moderator, ie not truncated and large enough for them to be read, with column and row headings showing.

The data handling tasks within each assignment are written in such a way that there are many ways in which candidates can approach the tasks and obtain the required results. It is not anticipated that all candidates from a centre will take the same approach.

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Marks were sometimes over-generously awarded in Learning Outcome 3 where centres credited the use of data handling software such as MS Excel and MS Access. Data handling is assessed within Learning Outcome 2 and this third learning outcome assesses candidates' use of software to communicate information. Some centres were over-harsh in the first section to candidates who had used a range of software and had completed every task, although the content and/or formatting may not have been good. If problems in the work are caused by poor content then this is assessed within the second part of this learning outcome, whilst problems with formatting are assessed in Learning Outcome 4. The first section of Learning Outcome 3 should be assessed in the context of the learning content for the unit. It should be noted that this includes the importing of items from one piece of software to the other and the use of mail merge, including merging selected data. Where candidates have set up a mail-merge file but only previewed it rather than merged the data they have not fully met the requirements.

It was pleasing to see more candidates creating items other than simple flyers/posters for the additional item of publicity within the MStreamIT assignment, but there remains some concern where all candidates from a centre are producing the same type of item. The wording of the task is very open and whilst centres may not direct candidates in a particular direction they can emphasise the importance of thinking creatively and remind candidates that there is no one 'best' solution. Some candidates produced excellent flyers, including all necessary information laid out well whilst other candidates attempted more complex items such as videos but produced results that were much less appropriate.

Some centres were over-generous in marking the second part of Learning Outcome 3 because they did not pay sufficient attention to errors within the content of documents created by candidates. Both assignments include the creation of a letter with provided text and the extent to which the letter would be acceptable in a business context is important here. In the MStreamIT assignment consideration should also be given to the appropriateness of the content of the email guide in terms of audience and purpose, the content of the magazine advertisement, whether or not the additional item of publicity advertised both the product and the company, also the completion of the report with appropriate information. In the JB Clothing assignment key additional considerations are the documentation of email tools and features in terms of audience and purpose and the extent to which the content of the on-screen resource meets the given requirements.

Marks in the highest mark band of Learning Outcome 4 were sometimes over-generously awarded by centres when candidates had used only a limited number of formatting tools and, whilst what they had done had enhanced the readability of the work, much more could have been done to make it more appropriate. The specification provides a list of formatting techniques that candidates should be taught and it is expected that a wide range of these will be evident in the work of candidates scoring highly in this area. Where candidates had used formatting to improve some, but not all, of their work, full marks in mark band 2 were sometimes over-generously awarded by the centre. However, where candidates had applied formatting that did enhance the readability of at least some of their documents this would suggest a mark in band 2, rather than 1, would be most appropriate and centre marking was sometimes over-harsh here. Where candidates have not completed all tasks this should have been assessed within Learning Outcome 3 and candidates should not be over-penalised within the final learning outcome, although where work is missing it is likely that the range of formatting evidenced will be narrower, suggesting a lower mark within the appropriate band. Centres are reminded that formatting within the data handling tasks is also considered here.

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The level of independence when formatting work is assessed in Learning Outcome 4 and is a limiting factor when deciding on the mark band of best fit. Many centres provided no evidence for the level of support provided. Where centres made a comment on the unit recording sheet that clarified any support given, this was helpful and appropriate.

Unit R003

There is one OCR model assignment for this unit – ‘Make the Grade’.

Most centres appropriately provided the electronic spreadsheet file as part of the evidence for this assignment. Where this was not provided it was not always possible to clearly ascertain the overall structure created by candidates, nor the consistency and appropriateness with which some tools, eg validation, comments and conditional formatting, had been used. Some centres appeared to have awarded marks because candidates had demonstrated that they had applied particular tools rather than considering the appropriateness and consistency to which they had been applied.

When sending electronic files, centres are requested to inform the moderator of the version of software used, as some features such as drop-down lists may not work on earlier versions than that used by the candidates.

It is very important in this unit that moderators are clearly directed to the evidence pertinent to each assessment criterion. If evidence is supplied electronically moderators cannot be expected, for example, to search every column of every worksheet to find out what validation rules have been applied and where. If candidates do not document this then assessors must clearly reference the evidence on the Unit Recording Sheets. If electronic files are provided there is no need for extensive screenshot evidence; candidates could simply list the features they have added and/or annotate printouts to show where they are.

Many candidates produced effective solutions that met many of the requirements in the model assignment, although few considered the issue of enabling new customers and new products to be added and this limited the extent to which user requirements were met. Where consideration had been given this was generally limited to providing space for them, without thinking of validation or ensuring new entries could be included on invoices. Where macros were included these were largely for fairly generic purposes such as navigation between sheets and simple routines such as saving and printing. Some created macros for routines such as printing for which there is already a software button, in which case they added little if any functionality to the solution. The extent to which navigation macros add user-friendliness is open to debate, as the software provides functional tabs which are always visible and, if well labelled, provide easy navigation between sheets. Many candidates provided menu systems but then demonstrated little understanding of their purpose by saving the file without the menu as the active sheet.

A few candidates had given a lot of thought to ways in which their solutions could be made user friendly, but most solutions could have been significantly improved in this area by making more use of features listed in the learning content of the specification and marks in band 3 of Learning Outcome 1 were often over-generously awarded by centres. Whilst most candidates were able to apply formatting to emphasise headings etc in their spreadsheets, few used it well to help users understand how to use the spreadsheet, eg to identify clearly those cells where data needed to be entered and those which contained formulae and so would be automatically updated. Use of input/error messages was often limited and few candidates added any comments or instructions/explanations for the user. The best solutions ensured that the invoice would fit onto a sheet of paper when printed, with some candidates adding appropriate headers/footers.

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The most significant differentiator within the second part of Learning Outcome 1 is the extent to which a range of validation types has been applied to minimise data entry errors. Some centres appeared to credit error messages as input messages. For validation to be considered relevant and effective it should have appropriate messages at both stages. Some candidates restricted data entry in ways that could limit the functionality of the solution, for example introducing limits to the number of items that could be purchased. Had candidates been taught the range of validation settings available, including the use of warnings rather than always using the default 'stop', they may have been able to demonstrate a wider range of appropriate settings. Those candidates who recognised that new customers and products would need to be added in the future were able to demonstrate a wider range of validation types than those who restricted their validation to the invoice.

Learning Outcome 2 is separated into two parts – the first assesses the appropriateness and efficiency of formulae used whilst the second assesses candidates' reasons for choosing them. Some centres failed to distinguish adequately between these, in some cases being over-harsh in the first section, where formulae were appropriate but poorly documented and in others over-generously awarding marks in the second section where formulae were appropriate but no explanations were given. Choosing the correct formulae is assessed within the first part of this learning outcome and any understanding credited for the second part is expected to be demonstrated through candidates' documentation. Some centres failed to distinguish between formulae and other features such as validation settings, where there is no requirement for candidates to explain the settings chosen. Centres are reminded that assessment criteria should always be interpreted in the context of the content for the learning outcome concerned.

An efficient solution is one where the user is not expected to enter any more data than is necessary and is not required ever to edit formulae, also where functions are used correctly and where future changes, eg VAT rate, discount policies and delivery policies, can be made easily by the user. Where absolute values for these variables had been simply included within formulae this did not meet the requirements at the highest level. Candidates who had used LOOKUP functions in their invoice but had no method of avoiding errors if lines were blank were sometimes over-generously assessed by centres. Since such systems would rarely meet user requirements, as customers would be unlikely to order exactly the number of items required for the system to work, mark band 2 requirements are not fully met, although a mark within that band might be appropriate.

Centres often over-generously assessed descriptions of what formulae did rather than explanations of why these methods/tools had been used. Describing functions without explaining why they have been used best fits within mark band 1. At the highest level candidates would be expected to be explaining decisions that led to their formulae being more effective. If formulae are not documented in any way then no requirements of the second part of Learning Outcome 2 are met.

The first part of Learning Outcome 3 – sorting, filtering and creating graphs – was generally completed very well by candidates and assessed accurately by centres, although some candidates did not provide clear evidence of the outcome of their sorting and filtering – this was particularly the case where they relied upon the electronic spreadsheet file for evidence, as they had not always saved each version separately.

Most candidates attempted some of the modelling scenarios, although few provided a range of solutions where these were required. Where candidates did provide a range of solutions they rarely considered how to present this information to the customer, although some did use the scenario manager tool, which summarised the results, albeit usually requiring a little additional explanation to enable them to be fully understood. Marks in this last section of Learning Outcome 3 were often limited by a lack of explanation of the results and of the tools used. Many candidates used the goal-seek tool for one or more of their solutions but did not explain why it was appropriate for some, but not all of the problems given. Candidates from some centres were over-generously assessed in the highest mark band when they had not made any use of advanced modelling tools such as goal-seek.

Unit R004

There is one OCR model assignment for this unit – ‘Cards by James’.

Where candidates submitted their final databases in electronic format this provided the clearest evidence of the structure of their solution, including all field names, types, lengths and validation/input masks used, which is difficult to achieve in a purely paper-based portfolio without extensive use of screen shots. Centres are requested to provide moderators with the name and version of any database software used. Where candidates relied on screenshot evidence this rarely covered all properties of all fields in all tables and often appeared to be trying to evidence the range of features used rather than the appropriateness of all settings within the candidate’s solution.

Centres should note that the assessment criteria allow for a wide variety of responses within this unit. It is possible to fully meet mark band 1 requirements throughout the unit by editing and adding to the single-table database; there is no need to produce a working multi-table relational database at this level. Some candidates who produced very little work for this unit may have been able to gain more marks had they not been attempting to produce a relational database that was outside their capability.

Marks in the highest band of Learning Outcome 1 were sometimes over-generously awarded where the table structure was not efficient; for example, where additional fields had been added but to the wrong table or where field lengths had been left at their default values. Where candidates enforced referential integrity within their solutions they were able to ensure that the links were functional and some realised that this formed a key part of their testing process. Where referential integrity could not be enforced, this demonstrated a fundamental flaw in the structure. Centres are recommended to ensure candidates are taught to enforce referential integrity and to interpret any error messages that might be encountered at this point.

Most candidates demonstrated good understanding of validation, although sometimes the validation set was not consistent with the data provided and/or the scenario, demonstrating a lack of testing as well as poor choices of validation. Some candidates’ testing of validation rules was limited to ensuring that erroneous data would not be accepted but they failed to test with normal or extreme data and so did not notice that the settings they had chosen would not allow some data to be entered. Some candidates provided only one or two examples of validation, concentrating on showing that they knew how to set rules rather than using validation to minimise data entry errors in the scenario provided. Similarly, some candidates changed other field properties effectively for only a few fields. Although candidates from most centres appeared to have been taught how to create a lookup from values typed in, few appeared to know how to create a lookup from values in a table, which would have allowed them to validate foreign fields and further improve their database.

Learning Outcome 1 requires candidates not only to set validation rules but also to explain/justify their choice and this was a weakness in most portfolios. Where they simply described the rules this met mark band 1 requirements – for higher mark bands some reasons for the rules need to be given. To be considered detailed justification it is expected that candidates will show that they have considered alternatives, where appropriate, and will explain why they have chosen one over the others. Some candidates explained the purpose of validation rather than their own rules; this did not meet the assessment requirements.

Queries were generally carried out well by candidates and assessed well by centre staff, although some centres were over-generous where candidates had provided queries that generated results for the specific examples given in the tasks, without providing the more generic solutions that were needed by the client. Additionally, the quality of reports did not always meet the requirements when higher marks had been awarded. For mark band 3 they should require little or no amendment to the layout in order to make them fit for purpose.

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Common problems that were not recognised by centres were inappropriate/unhelpful titles; a failure to consider the fields that needed to be output to meet client needs; the use of inappropriate colours, impairing readability; and a failure to set up reports appropriately for printing.

Most candidates were able to create usable forms and a menu that provided access to some, if not all, forms and reports. For candidates' interfaces to be considered effective, it would be expected that the menu will load at start-up and that there will be a data entry form for every table for which this is appropriate. Although the assessment criteria for mark band 3 state that forms need to be created for most tables this is in recognition of the fact that some tables, for example lookup tables, do not require a data entry form, rather than allowing candidates to achieve full marks for a solution that is not fully usable. Although many candidates were able to add function buttons to their forms they did not always show that they had considered which would be the most appropriate. Some candidates added every button that could be easily added, in default format, whilst others just added buttons such as navigation that repeated functions already available without considering what a user might want to do, for example delete a record, that was not already easy to do. The best forms were clearly laid out with a logical tab order and clearly labelled buttons that would allow an inexperienced user to view and amend data easily. Candidates from some centres had been taught how to add sub-forms, which added to the functionality of their solutions although this was additional to the requirements of the unit. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of house style by maintaining the style used in the reports when they created their forms and user interface.

Candidates from some centres used macros to add tables and queries to the user interface. This should not be necessary, as forms should provide access to tables and reports should provide access to queries. Providing users with direct access to tables and queries, where changes could be made and errors introduced, is not generally considered good practice. Where these additional items were added to menus candidates were not penalised but gained no benefit.

As in previous series the weakest section of most portfolios was learning outcome 4, where candidates often did not document well the testing they had carried out, did not explain the methods they had used and did not include any evidence of testing another person's user interface. The test methods candidates are expected to be taught are listed in the teaching content of the specification. Few candidates showed any appreciation of the need to test queries and validation with a range of data. Where a range of data was used, including normal, abnormal and extreme, it was easier for candidates to explain their testing methods, as they could explain the data they had chosen to test with.

Some candidates included evidence of other peoples' testing of their user interfaces, which is a valid part of their own testing and which could have been explained, but failed to include evidence of their own testing of someone else's user interface, on which they need to be assessed. If, when marking the portfolio, centre staff find that this is the case it should be possible to find the feedback that has been given by the candidate and ensure it is included in the portfolio.

R005

Both OCR assignments – 'Out and Up' and 'Wind and Waves' were used successfully by centres. A number of centres provided their own scenarios and where the tasks were not altered this was acceptable. However, it is important to ensure that any centre-produced scenario is of equal complexity in terms of user requirements to those provided by OCR. Where amended scenarios provided only very simple requirements, eg 'promote the school', this disadvantaged candidates by restricting the extent to which candidates could analyse the brief and demonstrate a thorough understanding of it through the success criteria identified. In some cases the scenarios were not vocationally appropriate, as they were very open, allowing candidates to choose purpose and/or audience, again limiting the extent to which they could meet the

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requirements of Learning Outcome 1. In some cases the user requirements were too specific, stating, for example, the type of product to be created, the number of pages/slides to be included and/or the focus of each page; such scenarios limited candidates' opportunity to demonstrate their ability to interpret user needs and create appropriate designs. Where centres have provided candidates with a different scenario they are requested to ensure a copy is provided for the moderator.

Candidates completed this unit using a range of approaches, including websites, mobile apps and stand-alone products created using MS PowerPoint and Matchware Mediator. All of these approaches can be equally appropriate.

Most centres provided electronic evidence of the final products, which is appropriate. However, some problems were encountered when these products had not been checked on a standalone computer to ensure all features, including sound, video and hyperlinks, worked. If it is found that a product does not work fully on a standalone system then some means of providing more complete evidence to the moderator needs to be found. Sometimes this can be achieved by exporting the final product in another format (eg PowerPoint exported to CD) and sometimes additional evidence can be provided by, for example, video, screen capture software and/or witness statements confirming the features that work when the product is viewed in the candidate's user area. Some centres chose visiting moderation for this unit so that they could check for themselves that the products were seen correctly, although checking them on a standalone computer should be sufficient.

Candidates from some centres made use of online tools to create websites or mobile apps. Where these are used well they can allow candidates to design and create suitable solutions but when assessing the outcomes it is important that centres take into consideration the tools that candidates have used and the extent to which the outcome is a result of their own design ideas and efforts rather than based on a template provided by the tool being used. Whilst the type of product to be created and the software used for the task must remain the independent choice of each candidate, centres should make sure that candidates understand that the use of pre-populated templates is not acceptable.

Some candidates produced very extensive products, beyond the expectations for this unit, perhaps limiting the amount of time they had to complete documentary evidence. Whilst for the highest marks in Learning Outcome 2 there must be sufficient pages to allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to create a clear and coherent navigation structure, making use of drop-down/sub-menus according to the type of product being created, candidates should be discouraged from creating many more pages than they need. However, the assignments do not specify the number of pages needed and it is not permissible for centres to do so – the structure of their product must be each candidate's own decision. Part of the planning process at the highest level is ensuring the plan will meet all success criteria, including those relating to content needed and those relating to deadlines. Balancing these potentially conflicting success criteria is something candidates working at the highest level should be able to evidence and these candidates are disadvantaged when centres take away that opportunity. Candidates from some centres appeared to have been guided to creating only 3 or 4 pages, which was insufficient to allow them to demonstrate their ability to produce an effective navigation system.

A significant number of centres awarded marks over-generously in Learning Outcome 1 where candidates' specifications were over-brief and general and success criteria were poorly understood. In some cases all that was produced was a short list of success criteria that could equally well be applied to any other product, thereby demonstrating no understanding of the client brief. To be considered 'sound' it would be expected that specifications will address all aspects of user requirements given in the assignment brief and that clear and measurable success criteria that are specific to the user requirements will be clearly identified. Many candidates' success criteria resembled design ideas rather than criteria by which the final product could be assessed. Few candidates considered deadlines within their success criteria.

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Candidates from some centres made very effective use of planning techniques such as spider diagrams and mood boards but some candidates appeared to have created one or more of these items in isolation, rather as part of their planning. Other candidates' planning was limited to page plans and in these cases centre marks were often over-generous. Site plans are a key element in the planning of an interactive multimedia product and where there is no site plan it cannot be agreed that planning is 'sound'. In some cases candidates had created both page plans and a site plan but where these did not correspond with each other the planning could not be considered 'sound'.

Where candidates followed the order of tasks within the assignment they were able to choose components and software that fit their design ideas. Regrettably many candidates appeared to have been guided to choose their software and components first, which made it very difficult for them to justify their choices in the context of the design requirements. Candidates from many centres all used the same software and created the same type of product. Unsurprisingly candidates from these centres often provided minimal explanation of these choices, limited to familiarity and availability, which best fit mark band 1.

As in R002, candidates from many centres chose to list their components using a generic source table and this may have discouraged them from providing clear explanations and justification for their choice. In some cases centres over-generously assessed explanations that did not go beyond simple identification of the subject of each image or a statement of where it would be used. Some candidates provided lists of components that were not used within their products, so any reasons for the choice were invalid.

Some candidates spent a lot of time creating their own components, eg company logos and video clips, which do not contribute to the assessment for this unit.

There was evidence that candidates from many, but not all, centres had been taught about areas of legislation such as photo permissions and privacy but, as in previous series, there were many centres where simple comments about basic copyright were over-generously assessed. As in all units the assignment provides a vocational context within which candidates must work, so any statement about the use of components being for educational purposes only is considered invalid.

Most candidates were able to produce a working interactive system with at least some choice of pathways, making mark band 2 the best fit for the first part of Learning Outcome 2. However, to fully meet the requirement of being a 'sound' navigation system it must be robust and allow a user to move easily between pages in whatever order is required. Where candidates have used MS PowerPoint and not removed the 'advance on click' option, a user could easily bypass any navigation system and click through and out of the presentation. Where candidates have produced applications which operate in full-screen mode with no obvious 'exit' these would cause problems for an ordinary user. A website or other product with an inconsistent or inappropriately sized and/or labelled navigation bar would be considered to have poor usability. In none of these cases could the navigation system be considered fully 'sound'. Those candidates who had put more thought into their navigation systems, providing both internal and external links in a logical and structured way, considering where a user might want to go from each page as well as providing all other options were able to access the highest mark band.

Some centres were over-generous in their assessment of the second part of Learning Outcome 2 because they interpreted interactivity as the use of navigation links, which has already been assessed within the first part of this learning outcome. The learning content of the unit lists interactive features and effects that should be taught, alongside the hyperlinks that are necessary for the navigation system. Although most candidates' products were well organised many had limited multimedia components and the page layouts were often very simple. Where candidates had used MS PowerPoint they had fewer options for interactive features. Although extremely effective interactive multimedia products can be created using this software this is only possible when its more advanced features, eg a range of trigger effects, are fully utilised.

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Some candidates using MS PowerPoint created products to look like web pages and tried to incorporate features such as forms which would be found on a web page but were non-functional in the products created. In such circumstances, where candidates showed that they wanted to create a website, it could not be considered that they had chosen appropriate software, nor that they had made good use of interactive features, as these did not actually work. Candidates are expected to produce working products, or products that would work if hosted, not partly-functional simulations.

Where candidates chose to use on-line web- and app-creation tools and did not start with a blank template they were sometimes over-generously credited with using advanced tools and techniques when they had done no more than replace page names and/or insert content into pre-arranged places. As for any other unit, if the final product does not clearly show which tools/techniques have been used then candidates need to provide their own separate evidence. As it is a requirement that all coursework is stored securely after marking, relying on evidence that is only on-line is inappropriate and centres should consider how such evidence can be supplemented by additional secure evidence. Some on-line systems do provide opportunities to archive pages.

Evidence of testing was not always clear. Whilst extensive screenshot evidence of testing is not required there must be clear evidence what the candidates have actually done. Vague claims such as 'test all hyperlinks' do not show what has been done, especially if some errors can be identified within the product. Some candidates added dates to suggest that some testing had been carried out as the product was being created, but these did not always match the type of test being carried out, which in some cases could only be done on a completed product. The requirement to test while creating can only be met by testing elements as they are added, ie on an incomplete product. Some centres erroneously interpreted this requirement as a single set of tests on a first draft. Where tests are only documented after the product is completed it is likely that most, if not all, of the genuine testing that takes place as components and features are added, and all error correction, has already been completed. Where candidates provided documentation to show what they had done at different stages of the creation of their product, including testing features as they were added and making amendments as necessary, however minor, this evidence was much clearer and acceptable. Some candidates were over-generously assessed as having tested during the creation of their products when all they had done was document the development, with no evidence that anything had been tested. A number of centres claimed that candidates had tested during the creation of their product but provided no evidence so these claims could not be verified. Centres are advised to refer to the comments about witness statements in the first section of this report.

To be considered 'thorough', tests must be clearly identified for all areas of the product, identifying specific areas of the product that need to be tested, which should cover all interactive features. Test tables that included only generic areas to be tested cannot be considered to demonstrate a high level of achievement. Where products had only very limited interactivity then the range of appropriate tests was more limited. Some interactive features, eg forms, need testing more than once, with a variety of inputs; such a thorough approach was rarely seen, indeed most candidates simply claimed to have tested that their form worked, without any details of test data or confirmation that they had tested that the submit button functioned.

The appropriateness of the feedback obtained is an important element of the assessment criteria for the final section of Learning Outcome 3. Factors to be considered include the questions to be asked and the people to be asked, including consideration of how many people to ask. Where candidates' initial success criteria were not clear, it was more difficult for them to achieve high marks here. Some candidates carried out their own evaluation against their success criteria rather than analysing the results of their feedback. This did not meet the assessment criteria. Other candidates gathered feedback and analysed it in a review of their product but made no reference to the success criteria they identified at the beginning of the work; this met only lower-band requirements.

R006

Candidates submitted work using both OCR assignments - 'The Camera Never Lies', and 'Keep Pets', with a few centres providing their own scenario. Comments for R005 above relating to amendments to the assignment scenario are also applicable to this unit.

'The Camera Never Lies' requires candidates to create a competition entry that matches the title 'the camera never lies' and which promotes their local area. Although some candidates included both aspects of this scenario within their specifications many concentrated on only one aspect or the other and so did not demonstrate a sound understanding of the client brief. Where candidates had used 'Keep Pets', many interpreted the brief as requiring only the production of a logo, ignoring the more open, supplementary requirement for 'artwork... .. to be used in the shop and on the company's website', resulting in simple outcomes that generally did not demonstrate a good range of techniques. Candidates from some centres concentrated only on web graphics, which did not demonstrate a good understanding of the client brief.

Consistent with R005 and R007, some candidates did not demonstrate a good understanding of what success criteria are, providing lists of design ideas rather than clear, measurable criteria that would allow them to assess the success of their work. Other candidates listed generic success criteria such as 'must be suitable for the target audience' without applying these to the client brief. Such responses did not meet the assessment criteria at the higher levels.

It was clear from comments from some centres that they assessed candidates' designs within the first section of Learning Outcome 1, despite the fact that these are specifically included in the criteria for the second section. Marks should never be awarded for the same achievement in more than one section of the marking grid.

Candidates from some centres made good use of a range of research methods, including spider diagrams, interviews/questionnaires and 'competitor' research but in some cases marks were awarded over-generously where candidates had included examples of some or all of the above, without any coherent thread or evidence that this was part of the planning of their solution. Candidates from some centres focused on only one area of research, eg company logos, which can only be considered a 'limited range'.

To be considered 'clear and detailed', candidates' design plans must be sufficient for a third party to implement with little or no additional instruction. Many candidates' designs were limited to a few written ideas rather than a design plan. It is expected that a clear design plan will lead logically to a search for appropriate components. Many candidates did not include evidence of a design/plan for their graphic(s), thereby not fully meeting the requirements of the second part of Learning Outcome 1 at any level. Conversely, other candidates provided two or three alternative (sets of) designs, which were not required by either assignment task or assessment criteria. Where these candidates then failed to identify which was their chosen design, it could not be considered that their design plans were 'clear'.

A differentiator when assessing the designs is the extent to which they show originality and creativity. Centres frequently appeared to give credit for this but made no comment about it. It would be helpful if centre assessors could identify on the Unit Recording Sheets what it is about a design that was considered particularly original and/or creative. This would make it easier for a moderator to agree.

Comments in R005 above relating to lists of components, reasons for choice and legislation constraints also apply to this unit.

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In some cases centre marks were found to be considerably over-generous because marks had been awarded in the absence of any evidence. For example, for setting image size and resolution, the storage of digital files and/or the size, resolution, output medium and colour of the image to be presented to the client. Even when digital files were provided for moderation, often the working files were not included, so there was no evidence of the appropriate storage of both working files and final output. It is not possible for moderators to confirm marks if there is no evidence to support the achievement claimed.

In the first part of Learning Outcome 2, candidates are expected to set both image size and resolution if this is appropriate and possible within the software being used. The 'and/or' in the specification is intended to provide flexibility in the type of image and software chosen. For example, resolution would be irrelevant for a purely vector-based image. Where it is possible/appropriate (which is most likely when the scenario is based around photographs) it is expected that both will be set. The marking criteria assess candidates' reasons for their choices and many centres were over-generous in their marking where candidates had stated what they had done but not provided any reasons. In some cases candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding by setting canvas size and then importing an image for the background which was not of an appropriate size/shape, resulting in a poor resolution final image. Others set up a canvas and then opened up an image file for the background, oblivious to the fact that this then imported its own size and resolution, resulting in a final file that was not the required size.

Some candidates provided good evidence of the use of a range of techniques to produce complex images but in some cases the final product was assessed over-generously when it did not communicate the intended message. The final image alone often does not effectively evidence all the techniques that have been used and candidates should be advised to ensure assessors and moderators can clearly see the range of tools and techniques that have been used. In many cases where tools have been used well the effect is very subtle and would be missed if it were not documented. The range of software tools used and accuracy with which they have been used should be used to choose the mark band of best fit in the second section of Learning Outcome 2, but the mark within the band must take into account the extent to which the intended message is communicated, the candidate's evaluation and their feedback on digital images. Many candidates failed to provide any evidence of the feedback they had given on other digital images.

Where candidates provided evidence of their folder structures these were often weaker than those seen in R002. Centres are recommended to ensure that candidates are taught the benefit of saving intermediary versions of their final product, in editable form, and of the use of folders to clearly separate source files, working files and final products. Candidates are assessed on the suitability of the file formats used; detailed comparisons of different file formats were provided by some candidates but these are not required. However, some candidates were assessed over-generously where they had chosen a clearly inappropriate file format; for example where they had created a logo with a transparent background but then exported it in a format that does not support transparency.

The assignment asks candidates to present their image for the competition. It is important that they make their own decision about the method they wish to use and that their choice is made clear within their portfolio. In some cases where centres had made repository entries it appeared that candidates had limited themselves to electronic submission of their competition entries. Had they chosen other methods, this could have been evidenced using an electronic format by the centre. In many cases there was no specific evidence of presenting the image; only a printout or a file, which showed the output for Learning Outcome 2. Candidates can only be credited in Learning Outcome 3 where they have considered how they will present their product to their client. Some centre comments suggested that marks had been awarded here for the quality of the product rather than its presentation.

R007

Evidence for this unit was submitted from both OCR Assignments – promoting the local area and the ‘Shoulderpads’ assignment, which worked equally well. A few centres had provided an alternative scenario for candidates. Comments for R005 above relating to amendments to the assignment scenario are also applicable to this unit.

The majority of products presented for this unit were video clips, with a few candidates producing animations or sound clips. Some candidates created their own soundtrack and/or commentary to use with their animation/video, which met the highest-level requirement of using original components in the first part of Learning Outcome 2.

Many well-designed, creative solutions were seen this series but in some cases relatively simple slide-shows of images or collections of clips with no real coherence or logical progression were over-generously assessed by centres. Candidates from some centres focused extensively on creating video and /or sound rather than on editing components to create the final product. This work did not meet the assessment criteria for this unit. Centres are reminded of the need to focus teaching on the learning content for the unit.

The level of independence when defining the specification is assessed in Learning Outcome 1. Many centres provided no evidence for this. Where centres made a comment on the unit recording sheet that clarified any support given, this was helpful and appropriate.

In order to assess the level of complexity, originality and creativity of the proposed solution within the first part of Learning Outcome 1 it is necessary to assess the candidates’ design plans, eg timeline storyboards. These need to be detailed before the required aspects can be clearly assessed. Some candidates did not provide any documentary evidence of their designs whilst others produced only vague ideas, often omitting any consideration of timing. Screenshots/printouts from completed or partially-completed products cannot be credited as planning documentation. Comments in R006 above relating to the originality and creativity of designs are also relevant to this unit.

Comments in R005 above relating to success criteria, lists of components, reasons for choice and legislation constraints also apply to this unit. Where centres provide candidates with banks of components from which to choose, this is acceptable but it is essential that the banks are sufficiently large, offering realistic options, to enable candidates to make effective choices.

The first part of Learning Outcome 2 should be largely based on the final product created by the candidates. Most centres provided evidence of the final products electronically, which is the most effective method of demonstrating the quality and effectiveness of the products, although additional evidence of the range of techniques used is generally needed. Where candidate imported professional video clips into their video editing software, for example, it was not always obvious which editing was part of the imported component and which had been carried out by the candidate; it is essential that this is clearly identified. A few centres provided only printed screenshots, which provided little evidence of the quality and appropriateness of the final product. Key aspects of a product that might demonstrate more sophisticated editing, such as synchronisation of sound and visual components, are unlikely to be appreciated if the final product is not actually viewed.

In some cases it was not possible to find any evidence for the second part of Learning Outcome 2. Although many centres provided the final exported files for moderation, evidence of how the product had been saved in raw editable file format was not always provided. To demonstrate understanding of advantages and disadvantages of different file types some documentary evidence, either from the candidate or in the form of a detailed witness statement documenting verbal explanations, is needed. Centre assessors are asked to be vigilant when marking this section to ensure that only candidates’ own work is credited. Where plagiarism is detected the

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procedures outlined in sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the JCQ Instructions for the Conduct of Coursework should be followed. Where candidates experimented using different file formats for export and compared the results they were generally more able to justify their choice than candidates who simply tried to reword technical information that they did not fully understand and which was often not fully relevant to their product.

Many candidates provided detailed test plans, showing both functionality and qualitative tests carried out, although some test plans were assessed over-generously where they did not clearly identify the tests to be carried out (ie how the item was to be tested) and/or expected outcomes. Some candidates were over-generously assessed where the tests they included were generic, failing to identify the specific aspects of their own products that needed testing. Where candidates had initially identified clear and suitable success criteria they were able to use these to make sure their test tables covered all aspects of user requirements.

To be credited, there must be some clear evidence of testing during completion, not simply a candidate statement saying that this had been done or a date implying this. In many cases tests that were claimed to have been carried out during completion would not have been appropriate or possible until the product was completed, eg testing the length of the final clip or qualitative assessments of the product. If candidates were encouraged to complete an implementation log, this would more easily and effectively demonstrate the genuine tests that are carried out as pages and features are completed/added.

R008 – R011

Entries for these units were too small for general comments to be made. Units R008-R010 have only been available for the Diploma since January 2016

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