OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

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 2018

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

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

External Examination (R001)

General Comments:

Candidate performance during this series was weaker than for previous series, with few candidates seemingly prepared for those questions that required a technical understanding. Furthermore, the extent to which candidates were able to develop answers so that applied understanding could be demonstrated was not as strong as in previous series. As an applied course, candidates should always be prepared for questions for which they have to show extended understanding beyond a simple statement of what a device does.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

Question 1 covered the use of the CCTV camera system in general. Question 1a offered little challenge, but question 1b caught many candidates out. The vast majority of candidates described the use of input devices as methods by which a camera angle could be changed.

For question 1c(i), candidates had to identify a feature of storage devices. Where candidates answered this correctly, they tended to identify capacity as their feature. However, a few identified the lack of volatility as a suitable feature. Most candidates answered c(ii) correctly, although a significant number incorrectly identified 'USB' as the device.

Question 1d was correctly answered by most candidates.

Question 2a asked candidates to identify a reason why a default password was used. Many candidates attempted to describe a reason and so wasted time in the exam. Most candidates gave good answers, but a significant few gave fanciful answers that did not suit the context of the exam.

Many candidates gave good answers to question 2b, with the vast majority of correct answers being focussed on the negative implication of outsiders having access to the data.

Most candidates achieved at least one mark for question 2c. The second mark was largely missed by candidates not being as clear as required for the second example. For example, an answer that stated that a password should include numbers was considered too vague whilst an answer that stated that the password should include numbers AND letters was acceptable.

Questions 3a, 3b and 3c focussed on the use of utility software. The majority of candidates were able to give an acceptable definition of utility software, but there were some glaring misconceptions. Question 3b required candidates to describe the role of three identified types of utility software. This question was not answered well. The most frequent issue amongst those candidates who attempted the question was that candidates repeated the question, so, for example, they stated that the disk defragmenter utility defragmented the disk, or that the disk checker checked the disks. Of the three, the disk compression utility was the one that was most often correctly answered.

Similarly, candidates struggled with question 3c. Many simply repeated the list from the previous question, whereas others appeared to have guessed at processes that seemed to have been derived from looking at the examples on that list.

Question 4 focussed on the technology used to transfer data around the network. In the first question, candidates were given the opportunity to explain why wireless technology is more vulnerable to attack than wired. Unfortunately, many candidates chose to write about why the signal on a wireless system may be less reliable than a wired system and so wrote about loss of signal leading to files not being transferred, etc. Where candidates did interpret the question correctly, few candidates achieved full marks for this question.

For question 4b, most candidates simply stated answers of the 'use a password' type. This was not sufficient for this question. Others suggested answers that focussed on replacing wifi with a wired connection. As the question clearly asked how wifi could be improved, this answer was unacceptable.

Where candidates interpreted question 4c correctly, there were some good answers. Candidates talked about the camera being anywhere, without the need for physical wires, whilst others stated that the absence of wires meant that the camera would be less easy to be found by an intruder.

Question 4d allowed candidates to explore the alternative method of connection. Many candidates focussed on the improved speed of data transfer implied by this method. However, in such cases, simply writing 'it is faster' is not acceptable for an ICT paper. Candidates who wished to follow this line needed to have talked about the rate of data transfer being improved and why this was an advantage, rather than give such vague answers.

Question 5a asked candidates to design a form. This question was answered very well by the vast majority of candidates, although some did design posters or wrote letters, and so were not awarded marks.

Of those candidates who designed online forms, the vast majority were well designed, including elements that made it clear they were online forms and made good use of space. The major differentiator on this question was actually the annotation. Some candidates annotated every element and showed clear understanding of the purpose of those elements they had chosen to include, whilst others either did not attempt this part of the task, or simply identified elements without saying why they had been included (so, for example, they identified the title, but did not state its purpose).

The remainder of question 5 proved a real challenge to the vast majority of candidates. To some extent, at least one of the questions was targeted at the more able, but the lack of understanding shown across these questions suggests that students had not been prepared for questions from across the specification. For question 5b, very few candidates gave correct answers, whilst for 5c, many candidates missed the point of the question and suggested that by having data entered directly onto a database by a form (rather than keyed in by a member of staff) this somehow meant that data was more likely to be seen by staff from whom the data should be withheld. For question 5d, a fair number of candidates were able to explain that if the data inputted was incorrect the lack of checking may have an impact – i.e. the data would then be hard to find. For question 5e, many candidates thought that a presence check was used to make sure that the member of staff was actually in work. Where candidates did have an idea of how a presence check was used, some wrote answers along the lines of 'it checks data is correct' which was not accepted as an answer.

There were some really interesting answers to question 6. The vast majority of candidates were able to give good arguments both for and against CCTV being used in this way, with the majority of candidates clearly of the opinion that this use of CCTV was unacceptable.

Question 7 focussed on legal implications. A large number of candidates correctly identified the Computer Misuse Act, with most going on to achieve at least one mark from part 7b, if not two. There was no follow through from question 7a to 7b and so those candidates who identified the Data Protection Act as the relevant legislation were not penalised in the second part of the question.

Moderated Units (R002 – R011)

General Comments:

Most of the issues identified by moderators were similar to those seen in previous series. This reports highlights some of the most significant issues found during the session but centres are referred to previous reports for more detail.

Administration

This was the first January session for which only Postal and Repository submissions were accepted, and centres are reminded that these are the only two components that will be available in future sessions as visiting moderation was withdrawn after the summer series 2017. The postal option was chosen by most centres and this is the most flexible, allowing a mixture of paper-based and electronic evidence. There remained a few centres who presented only printed evidence, which may have disadvantaged candidates who then had to produce extensive screenprints to provide evidence that could have been more easily and fully shown if electronic files had also been provided. This was especially the case in R002/6 for filing structures, R0005/6/7 for storage of components and R003/4/5/7 for functionality and appropriateness of completed products.

Regardless of the format of evidence it is important that this is always labelled clearly with both candidate name and number. Documents should include this information on all pages, as required by JCQ instructions. In many cases centres submitted electronic files labelled only with candidate names, not always complete or matching names as entered, and this caused difficulty for the moderator. Candidate details were identified on many printed pages only on the cover sheet. Where these portfolios were not effectively tagged this caused particular problems and the use of shared printers makes it essential that all pages are correctly labelled.

As in previous sessions some problems were caused by centres submitting evidence where pertinent details could not be read. This was sometimes in the form of printed screenshots that were too small, over-cropped or of insufficient colour contrast; in such cases provision of the relevant electronic file would usually have provided fuller and clearer evidence. Sometimes illegibility within electronic portfolios was caused by scanning hand-drawn documents such as design plans, in which case provision of the original paper documents would have been much clearer. Centres are reminded that the process of moderation looks at the evidence submitted and checks that marks chosen by the centre are appropriate for that evidence. Marks cannot be agreed where there is no evidence to support it. Centres must send to the moderator the same evidence that has been used within the centre for assessment purposes. In some cases the fact that evidence submitted was unreadable suggested that this was not the case.

Some centres provided witness statements or comments on Unit Recording Sheets that attempted to verify that assessment criteria had been met at particular levels. Such statements could not be accepted as evidence as they did not specify what had been witnessed. Appendix A of the specification document clarifies the requirements for witness statements, in particular that these must describe in some detail what has been observed and must not attempt to assess what has been seen.

Electronic portfolios did not always conform to the standards outlined in Appendix C of the specification document and this caused moderation problems. Centres' attention is drawn particularly to the list of acceptable file formats. MS Publisher, Adobe Photoshop and/or Serif files were submitted by some centres and moderators were unable to read their contents. Although the original files may need to be submitted to confirm file/folder structure for R002 and

R006, contents should also be exported to a generic format or printed to allow contents to be seen by moderators. Some documents using acceptable formats such as .doc and .ppt could not be viewed correctly by moderators due to the use of non-standard fonts. It is advised that centre staff assess electronic work on a standard computer system, not connected to the centre network, so that such issues can be identified and dealt with before evidence is sent to the moderator. If centre staff need to export files to generic formats this is acceptable so long as a note is made on the Unit Recording Sheet to confirm that this has been done, so that candidates are not credited with this action. It is advised that centres inform moderators of the version of software their candidates have used. Some newer versions of software, eg, MS PowerPoint, Excel and Access, contain features that might not view correctly on earlier versions.

Most centres correctly completed an OCR Unit Recording Sheet (URS) for each candidate to show the marks allocated. Where evidence is submitted electronically these should be presented within candidate folders rather than separately. Some centres submitting electronic evidence by post also provided printed copies of the URS, which were greatly appreciated by moderators, allowing easy reference throughout the scrutiny of portfolios. Centres are reminded again that *all* sections of the URS must be completed, including comments to show *why* each mark has been chosen and *where* specific evidence can be found. Many centres either provided no comments or simply restated or reworded the assessment criteria with no explanation of why it was felt that these criteria had been met. Moderators again reported many problems locating evidence, particularly where centres submitted electronic files with no referencing to indicate which files need to be opened, in which order, to evidence each assessment criterion. Where paper portfolios are submitted it is expected that the 'page number' column of the URS will be completed and where evidence is electronic there must be a clear reference to each required electronic file with, where appropriate, page numbers, for each assessment criterion. Moderators cannot be expected to search for evidence and may not always find everything if file names and locations are not provided. Where candidates have submitted several versions of a particular file it is important that moderators know which need to be opened and, if more than one is required, which criteria/tasks are evidenced by the different versions.

There was again concern that candidates from some centres had been provided with additional materials and guidance, over and above that which is permitted. In some cases this appeared to have advantaged candidates, in which case it was necessary to investigate the conduct of the assessment before results could be issued. In other cases it appeared that centres had given their candidates additional and/or alternative tasks to do, which had disadvantaged their candidates by diverting them from the required tasks against which assessment is based. Centres are referred to the OCR document, 'Guide to generating evidence', which can be downloaded from the 'Key documents' section of this qualification's area of the OCR website. It should also be noted that updated versions of the OCR Model Assignments, now retitled 'OCR Set Assignments' were published in 2017 and it is expected that these should now be being used by all candidates. The scenarios and requirements have not been altered in any way, except for the removal of one item in R002 (see next section) but tasks have been reworded and additional guidance provided to clarify the requirements. Marking criteria have now been integrated into the assignment documents.

Standards

Some centres' marking was found to be over-generous at the higher levels because key words such as 'some', '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. Over-generosity was also identified where evidence was missing and/or where centre assessment did not appear to be sufficiently thorough to identify errors and omissions in candidate submissions. Centres are reminded that the assessment criteria must be interpreted in the context of both the teaching content of the relevant specification *and* the requirements of the assignment tasks, which define the 'stated' or

'user' requirements referred to in the assessment criteria.

Some centres' marks were found to be inconsistent, leading to an invalid order of merit, as a result of which work had to be returned to the centre for remarking before it was possible to complete the moderation process. In some cases this was clearly a result of insufficient internal moderation, resulting in different standards being applied by different assessors. It is essential that a robust system of internal moderation is in place to ensure consistency of standards across all assessors. In other cases inconsistencies appeared to be a result of centre staff applying criteria other than those in the specification grids, for example by assessing documentation and explanations where these formed no part of the assessment criteria, in which case higher marks were often over-generously chosen, with some harshness when choosing the lowest marks.. Where no explanation of centre assessment decisions was provided it was impossible to determine the reason for inconsistencies.

It was pleasing to note that fewer centres submitted portfolios where all candidates had relied on slide-show software to produce documentation, with more evidence that candidates had been taught to produce coherent multi-page documents.

Specific comments on the units submitted.

Comments below relate to those units for which the entry was sufficient to enable generalised comments to be made. For those units where there is no comment, centres are advised to consult reports from the June session of 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Unit R002

As the only mandatory unit for both Award and Certificate, this unit represented the majority of entries this session, as in previous sessions.

The two OCR assignments - 'JB Clothing Emporium' ('Tailored Tops') and 'MStreamIT' continue to be used by centres in equal numbers. 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. There was little evidence of the revised assignments being used and centres are reminded that these provide additional clarification for both candidates and tutors without changing any of the tasks or requirements.

As in previous sessions there was some evidence that centres did not focus on the teaching content of each learning outcome when assessing work. In particular it must be noted that Learning Outcome 3 is concerned with communicating information and data handling software such as databases and spreadsheets, already assessed within Learning Outcome 2, have no relevance.

The highest mark band of Learning Outcome 1 was often over-generously chosen by centre assessors. To meet the requirements at this level it would be expected that filing structures would be appropriate for the business context of the scenario, providing a suitable structure for future work as well as files produced from assignment tasks, with evidence of the *appropriate* use of versions and backup procedures. Filing structures based around assignment tasks or software types are likely to best fit within Mark Band 2. At the highest level it is expected that the full range of email tools will be covered with accuracy and an attention to detail, demonstrating understanding of appropriate use within the business. Specific reference to email etiquette has been removed from both tasks and assessment criteria from this session but this does not take away the need for assessment to be carried out in the context of the teaching content of the unit, ie in a business context. At this level it would be expected that candidates would use at least some advanced search facilities, eg advanced search pages, *effectively* and

accurately to locate items *appropriate* to the stated purpose within the assignment. As in previous sessions this, and identification of contact details for copyright holders, was a notable weakness in many portfolios. Centres continued to encourage candidates to document their searches using source tables, which often disadvantaged them as they did not have the most helpful column headings, nor was the tabular format most useful for evidencing search criteria. Centres are reminded that candidates must make their own individual responses to assignment tasks and there is no expectation that sources will be recorded in a table.

Some centre assessment of Learning Outcome 2 was over-generous where the requirements identified within the assignment tasks appeared to have been ignored. The assessment criterion "creates a spreadsheet *or* database" is correct as for any one task only one type of software will be used. However, the most important differentiator in this learning outcome is the extent to which specified requirements have been met. Therefore if only one of the two data handling tasks has been attempted the mark will not be above Mark Band 1 as only some (ie about 50%) of stated requirements have been met. In some cases marks were over-generously awarded where the extent to which accurate responses to all requirements had not been accurately assessed. In some cases it was not possible to determine the accuracy of candidates' data handling as insufficient evidence of methods was provided. Where electronic spreadsheet/database files were provided this was generally sufficient.

Learning Outcome 3 focuses on the use of software to communicate information and both assignments provide opportunities for candidates to choose for themselves the type of product to create and the software to use. It is not expected that all candidates from a particular centre will choose the same types of product or the same software for all tasks. The two assignments have different requirements, particular for email documentation and publicity solutions, and where candidates produce items that are not appropriate for the task/scenario given this must be considered when assessing the extent to which stated requirements are met in the first section of this learning outcome. Where there was no evidence of the range of software used it was sometimes difficult to agree centre assessment. In some cases centre assessment was over-harsh where candidates were penalised within this section for poor content and/or formatting – these aspects are assessed in the second part of this learning outcome and within Learning Outcome 4.

The content of the documents is assessed in the second section of Learning Outcome 3. Common errors of content that were not sufficiently considered within some centres' marking included the content of the magazine advertisement and additional item of publicity (MStreamIT), the exhibition resource (JB Clothing), the letter, the company report (MStreamIT) and the report on research into giveaways (JB Clothing). As this assignment is set within a vocational scenario, content must be assessed within this context and the tasks did include some specific requirements for content. In some cases centres were over-generous in their assessment of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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 appropriate use of a wide range of these techniques 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, some candidates who used a limited range of formatting tools but generally did enhance the appearance and readability of their documents were sometimes over-harshly assessed within Mark Band 1. Failure to complete all tasks should be considered within the first part of Learning Outcome 3 and candidates should not be over-penalised within the final learning outcome, where the mark band should be chosen according to the general quality and appropriateness of formatting, with lower marks chosen where this is not consistently applied to all tasks.

The level of independence when formatting work is assessed in Learning Outcome 4. 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. Alternatively some centres provided separate, more detailed, witness statements.

Unit R003

Most centres appropriately provided the electronic spreadsheet file as part of the evidence for this unit. 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. 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 and newer functions may not work on earlier versions than that used by the candidates. In some cases candidates had password-protected their files and where centre staff had not provided the required password this delayed moderation.

It is essential that clear direction is provided to moderators to help them identify where particular features have been used – it is not acceptable to expect moderators to search every column of every sheet to identify where features such as conditional formatting and validation, which are not immediately obvious, have been used. In some cases candidates provided screenshot evidence, which is good practice, but some problems were caused where evidence was not complete, often focussing on identifying *one* example of each feature to show competence in its usage, rather than itemising every use so that appropriateness and completeness within the required scenario could be assessed.

As in previous sessions, in some cases the similarity of candidates' solutions within a centre was so clear that it had to be investigated as possible over-direction by centre staff, which is malpractice. Centres are reminded that they should now be providing candidates with the new version of the OCR assignment, which makes procedures very clear to candidates and tutors alike. Whilst the nature of the assignment scenario means that there is likely to be a level of similarity between the best solutions there is still considerable opportunity for variety of structures, functions/formulae and user-friendly features, which is expected to be evident where the assignment has been carried out under the required conditions.

Many candidates produced effective solutions that met many of the requirements in the assignment but consideration of the need to enable new customers and new products to be added was generally absent, limiting the potential usefulness of the systems created. Although macros were often included these were largely for fairly generic purposes such as navigation between sheets and simple routines such as saving and printing, which did little, if anything, more than duplicate features provided by the software.

At the highest level it would be expected that candidates' solutions would use a range of features to make their solutions very user-friendly, clearly identifying where a user would need to add data and where results can be found. The range of features to be taught is listed in the unit specification and often centre marks were over-generous where little had been done other than some basic formatting and a few simple macros, leaving the systems less than helpful to a new user.

Marks in the highest band of the second part of Learning Outcome 1 were sometimes over-generously given where validation was limited to one section only of the solution and was limited to one type, usually a list. At the highest level it would be expected that validation would be applied wherever it could help reduce data-entry errors and that this would include more than one type of validation, with appropriate error and input messages throughout.

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, sometimes crediting or penalising candidates in both sections for the same achievement/error. A totally efficient solution is one where functions are used correctly, where the user is not expected to enter any more data than is necessary and where future changes, eg to customer/product lists, VAT rate, discount policies and delivery policies, can be made easily by editing data within clearly identified cells rather than having to change arguments within functions. 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 – although the use of LOOKUP includes an element of efficiency the solution would not work except in the rare case of having data entered in every line of the invoice, which cannot be considered to fully satisfy even **some** of the user requirements. Candidates whose solutions made use of efficient formulae had the opportunity to explain why these were more appropriate than simpler solutions, thereby allowing their explanations to be considered 'justification', as required at the highest level. Very few candidates achieved the second section of this learning outcome at this level and centre marking was often over-generous in the higher mark bands where candidates had simply *identified* formulae used or *described what* they did, rather than *explaining why* they had been chosen.

The first part of Learning Outcome 3 – sorting, filtering and creating charts – was generally completed very well by candidates and assessed accurately by centres, although some candidates did not provide clear evidence of the outcome for each scenario. Most candidates attempted some of the modelling tasks in section C, although many provided only one solution where a range was required and very few considered how to present the resulting information to the customer. Marks in the last section of Learning Outcome 3 were often limited by a lack of explanation of the results and of the tools used. Candidates from some centres appeared not to have been taught the use of advanced modelling tools such as Goal Seek, limiting marks to the lower bands.

Unit R004

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 reminded that, as in all units, it is the appropriateness of all settings within the candidates' solutions that is the key differentiator, not merely the identification of the use of different tools.

As for R003, centre staff are reminded that they must not provide any guidance to candidates regarding the structure of their solution or how to create it – the solutions must be the candidates' own, unaided work. Candidates can be reminded of the user requirements and the requirements of the assessment criteria can be clarified but step-by-step guidance or model solutions must not be provided. The new version of the OCR assignment, wihch makes this very clear, should be used for all future cohorts.

Centres should note that it is possible to fully meet mark band 1 requirements throughout the unit by editing and adding to the single-table database provided, without converting it into a working multi-table relational database.

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 omitted or added to the wrong table, where field lengths had been left at their default values and/or where links between tables were missing or incorrect. Where candidates had enforced referential integrity they not only produced a more robust solution but also showed that they had set links appropriately.

The range of validation set by many candidates was often very limited, with centre marking over-generous where obvious opportunities were missed. At the other extreme some candidates attempted to validate every field, applying inappropriate rules that would prohibit existing data. Where such errors were not identified by candidates' testing this demonstrated basic weaknesses within testing regimes.

Explanation of validation rules was often a significant weakness within Learning Outcome 1. Where candidates 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 tried to explain the purpose of validation generally, rather than of the specific rules they had set; this did not meet the assessment requirements and centre assessment was often over-generous here.

Queries were generally carried out well by candidates and assessed well by centre staff, although some centres were over-generous where candidates had not made use of parameters to enable their queries to be used for situations other than the specific examples given in the scenarios. Additionally, high marks were sometimes over-generously chosen where candidates' focus was exclusively on search criteria, without considering the fields that would need to be output to best meet the user requirements and/or where the quality of reports did not fully meet the requirements. For mark band 3 reports should require little or no amendment to the layout in order to make them fit for purpose, fitting onto printed page(s) well and displaying the required fields clearly and legibly with appropriate titles and house style.

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 to make their system easy to use and some centres' assessment was over-generous where no such additional functionality had been added. Features such as drop-down lists and calendar entry, which are applied automatically by the system if suitable field types are used, cannot be considered sufficient for the highest mark band.

Candidates from some centres used macros to add tables and/or queries to the user interface. This should not be necessary, as forms provide access to tables, and reports 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 sessions 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/or did not include any evidence of testing another person's user interface. In some cases candidates provided evidence of testing that looked quite extensive but was actually extremely superficial as it only tested each area once, with one set of data, and failed to identify quite obvious errors. The specification lists testing methods that should be taught and a significant part of the assessment focuses on candidates' explanation of testing methods rather than simply evidence of testing.

Where candidates followed the instructions within the Model Assignment and tested each section of their solution as it was implemented they were more able to demonstrate modifications as a result of testing. Where testing was left to the end it was more likely that most

errors had already been corrected, but not documented, making it more difficult for candidates to provide evidence of identifying and implementing required modifications.

R005

Candidates generally completed this unit using MS PowerPoint or by producing a website, with mobile apps and other software less apparent than in the previous few sessions. Both OCR assignments – 'Out and Up' and 'Wind and Waves' were used successfully by centres, with some centres amending the assignment scenario to provide something they thought would be more appropriate for their candidates. Where alternative scenarios were of an equivalent complexity to the original assignment and allowed candidates to choose what they considered the most appropriate product type, software, designs and components to use within them, this was appropriate, but centres are requested to ensure a copy of any amended assignment is provided for the moderator. Centres are reminded that whilst it is acceptable to replace the scenario within the OCR-set assignment it is not permitted to reword or replace any of the tasks. The recent updates of all assignments clarify this requirement and should be used with all future cohorts.

Candidates from some centres all produced the same type of product, using the same software casting doubt upon the extent to which they had been taught the use of a range of software and made their own choices. The number of centres who appeared to have concentrated their teaching solely on MS PowerPoint, with a very limited range of interactive features and effects, was again disappointing and centre assessment of the second sections of Learning Outcomes 1 and 2.was often over-generous in these cases.

Most centres provided electronic evidence of the final products, which is appropriate. However, problems continue to be encountered when these products had not been checked on a standalone computer to ensure all features, including sound, video and hyperlinks, worked when viewing was attempted from outside the centre network and candidate user area. 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 – this might be by exporting the final product in another format (eg PowerPoint exported to CD with components embedded, websites exported to html) and sometimes additional evidence can be provided by, for example, video, screen capture software, screenshots and/or specific, individual witness statements confirming the existence of specific features on particular pages and their functionality when the product is viewed in the candidate's user area. Where candidates are taught to create websites it would be expected that they will be taught to export them to html; otherwise they are not creating a website. Where centres relied on paper-based evidence they created a significant additional burden for candidates by requiring screenshot evidence as well as making accurate assessment and moderation more problematic, as the quality and appropriateness of many features cannot often be accurately assessed without seeing the product itself.

A significant number of centres awarded marks over-generously in the first part of Learning Outcome 1 where candidates' specifications were over-brief and/or general. 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 whilst others provided lists of criteria which were not inappropriate but were not specific and could equally well have applied to any other design brief. In some cases candidates' success criteria related to their project as a whole, or to the facility they were advertising, rather than to the product they were tasked with creating. Such specifications were often over-generously assessed by centres.

Candidates' choice of software was often over-generously assessed where their reasons focused on availability and/or familiarity. Candidates are assessed on their reasons for their choice of software to create the product, also on 'the presentation method for the design', which refers to the software required by users to view the product, ie the type of product to be created. Candidates often had little, if any, genuine choice, with all from the centre creating the same type of product and using the same software, in which case credit for choosing that software could only be very limited indeed. Where candidates stated that they were making a website and then chose slideshow presentation software this could not be considered wholly appropriate and where that software did not allow export as individual html pages it was clearly inappropriate.

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, purely to meet assessment criteria, rather as part of their planning, showing little or no understanding of the purpose of such techniques. Other candidates' planning was much more limited, with over-generous centre assessment.

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 choices. 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.

Most candidates were able to produce a working interactive system with at least some choice of pathways. However, to fully meet the mark band 2 requirements of being a 'sound' navigation system it must be robust and allow a user to move easily between pages in whatever order is required. Those candidates who had put more thought into their navigation systems, providing links in a logical and structured way, and making appropriate use of sub-menus/drop-down menus and/or considering instances where it would be appropriate to provide additional links from a particular page as well as providing all other options were able to access the highest mark band. However, some centres over-generously chose Mark Band 3 simply because candidates had included drop-down menus without assessing their appropriateness.

Some centres' marking in the second part of Learning Outcome 2 was again over-generous in the absence of any interactive features other than the basic navigation system, which is assessed in the first part of this learning outcome. This was particularly evident where slide-show software had been used. Adding a trivial 'quiz' that had no relevance to the client brief was again quite common, particularly in PowerPoint products. Centres are recommended to ensure candidates are taught how to add a range of different interactive features so that they are able to choose appropriately for their own product, in the context of the given scenario.

Centre marks for testing were often over-generous. Whilst extensive screenshot evidence of testing is not required there must be clear evidence of what the candidates have actually done and this was often not the case. Candidates were often over-generously assessed as having tested during the creation of their products in the absence of any evidence. Where there were clear errors within the product navigation and/or interactive features and/or where content did not meet all client needs/success criteria, testing was clearly insufficient and ineffective.

Centre assessment for the final section of Learning Outcome 3 was often over-generous where candidates had written their own evaluation of their product with little or no evidence of feedback obtained from others, or where feedback had been obtained but not referred to in any way.

R006

Candidates submitted work using both OCR assignments - 'The Camera Never Lies', and 'Keep Pets', with a few centres providing their own scenario. In recognition of the fact that many candidates using the Keep Pets scenario did not understand that their task was more than the simple creation of a logo, the requirement to create additional artwork has been reworded in the new versions of the assignment, which should be used with all future cohorts.

Marks from some centres were over-generously awarded in the absence of any evidence. Most commonly this was for setting image size and resolution (first section of Learning Outcome 2), storage of digital files (first part of Learning Outcome 3) and/or the presentation of the image to the client, including size, resolution, output medium and colour (last part of Learning Outcome 3). Centres are reminded that moderation is a check that centre marks are appropriate for the evidence submitted so it is essential that all evidence seen by centre assessors is made available to the moderator.

Consistent with R005 and R007, many candidates did not demonstrate a good understanding of what success criteria are, with some providing lists of design ideas rather than clear, measurable criteria that would allow them to assess the success of their work, whilst others listed vague, general criteria that could equally well apply to any brief and therefore demonstrated little, if any, understanding of the client brief they had been given.

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 research was limited to one method, eg researching a number of different images from the internet.

To meet the assessment criteria at the higher levels there must be at least some originality and creativity within the candidates' designs. This is a subjective judgement and, like all other criteria, it is expected that some comment will be made on the Unit Recording Sheet to say why it is felt that this requirement has been met. In this case it would be a comment to identify what it is about a candidate's plan that demonstrates originality and/or creativity. In many cases the moderator could not agree that plans demonstrated originality and creativity because similar ideas were used by most candidates within the sample.

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. Candidates often provided no evidence of these settings being chosen before they began working on their image.

Centre marks for the second part of Learning Outcome 2 were sometimes over-generous where candidates had demonstrated competence in the use of the software but had not created an image that portrayed the required message and/or where the evaluation and feedback on other people's images was either missing or weak, in which case a lower mark within the chosen mark band would have been more appropriate.

Centre marks was often over-generous in the first section of Learning Outcome 3 where candidates had shown basic file storage but not made appropriate use of folders and/or file versions. Centres are reminded that they need to interpret assessment criteria in the context of the teaching content for the unit.

Most candidates provided little evidence that they had considered how to present their image to their client. Simply providing a printout or an electronic file of their final image, which is evidence for Learning Outcome 2, does not meet the criteria at higher levels and centres are again referred to the teaching content for this learning outcome.

R007

Most candidates created a video clip for this unit, providing evidence 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.

Evidence was submitted from both OCR Assignments – promoting the local area and the 'Shoulderpads', which worked equally well. Both of these assignments are deliberately left open for candidates to decide on the type of product to create and the software to use to create it – these choices are part of the assessment and must not be made by the centre. As for R005 and R006 it is possible for centres to replace the scenario of the Shoulderpads assignment but it is important that any replacement scenario is of an equivalent complexity to the existing context, offering candidates an equivalent range of client requirements and a choice of type of product to create. Where candidates thought that their task was to create a video clip this demonstrated a lack of understanding of the client brief (first part of Learning Outcome 1) and limited their ability to meet the higher-level requirements within software choice (second part of Learning Outcome 1) where they are expected to explain their choice of software for the 'presentation method of the design', which refers to the software users would need to view the finished product, which is largely determined by the type of product chosen.

The level of independence when defining the specification was not always clarified by the centre. Like all other assessment criteria it is important to provide clear evidence here.

As for R006 it is important that, where centre staff consider the timeline storyboard to represent a design showing originality/creativity, some explanation of what it was that was considered original and/or creative is provided on the Unit Recording Sheet. Simple sequences of images/video clips with no apparent coherence or logical progression were again over-generously assessed by some centres.

Some centres provided resource banks for their candidates to use, which is acceptable, but in some cases it appeared that these provided only a limited range of resources, making it impossible for candidates to access the higher levels within the second section of Learning Outcome 1 as they were unable to give anything other than the most basic reasons for choosing what they did. Additionally, in this unit there is a requirement for candidates working at the highest level in Learning Outcome 2 to create some original components. In many cases this was evidenced by the inclusion of original photographs, video clips and voice recordings.

As for R005, candidates' choice of software was often over-generously assessed where their reasons focused on availability and/or familiarity.

The first part of Learning Outcome 2 assesses the range and appropriateness of components, the range of editing and enhancing techniques used and the extent to which the final product resembles planning and meets user requirements. In some cases centre assessors did not appear to consider all aspects and simply gave a mark according to a more subjective judgement of the final product.

Candidates from some centres wrote about research into different file formats rather than considering which file format would be most appropriate for their own product. There was little evidence of candidates looking at the effects of different file formats on their own products.

Testing was often over-generously assessed where candidates provided no evidence of testing their product in the development stage, with some providing two identical test tables rather than evidence of testing that is appropriate to the two different stages of development and after completion.

R008 – R011

Entries for these units were too small for general comments to be made. Units R008-R010 have been available only for the Diploma since January 2016. It should be noted that R011 is being withdrawn following the June 2018 session.

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