Cambridge Technicals

IT

Level 2 Cambridge Technical Certificate/Extended Certificate/Diploma IT - **05340, 05342, 05345**

Level 3 Cambridge Technical Certificate/Introductory Diploma/Diploma/ Subsidiary Diploma/Extended Diploma IT - **05347, 05349, 05352, 05355, 05358**

OCR Report to Centres September 2015

CONTENTS

Cambridge Technicals

Level 2 Cambridge Technical Certificate/Extended Certificate/Diploma IT - **05340, 05342, 05345**

Level 3 Cambridge Technical Certificate/Introductory Diploma/Diploma/
Subsidiary Diploma/Extended Diploma IT - **05347, 05349, 05352, 05355, 05358**

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Cambridge Technical IT Level 2 and 3 - 05340-05358

Overview:

The number of centres delivering levels 2 and 3 has increased this year with the vast majority achieving successful outcomes. It was noted that there has been an increase in centres that have delayed having moderation visits until very late in the academic year. This has provided issues for the centre where they have not allowed sufficient time to address any action points that may have arisen for their learners to achieve the intended grades. A number of centres opted to pay for additional visits in addition to the two free visits available as a means of staggering the completions of their learners and receiving feedback from units that they had not previously submitted. Whilst it is appreciated that it can be difficult to identify exact timescales for the moderation visits, centres are advised to ensure that they arrange dates with their allocated visiting moderator in advance, as there is always a risk that the dates have already been agreed with other centres and any available date may not be suitable for the centre.

Many centres are in their third year of delivering the Cambridge Technicals in IT and have continued to develop excellent assignments, which have provided learners with the opportunity to produce evidence of very good quality.

General Comments

This academic year has seen an increase in the number of centres delivering the level 2 Cambridge Technicals in IT qualifications. Centres have used this particular qualification where there is not a requirement for the learner to achieve UACS points and the level is appropriate to the learners' abilities and timescales. The creative units have proved to be the most popular with learners submitting evidence for website development, computer graphics, multimedia design, developing computer games, spreadsheet modelling and database systems. The mandatory units, Communicating in the IT industry and Working in the IT Industry still prove to be a challenge to centres. In particular Working in the IT Industry has been challenging with regard to finding relevant data for the learners to use as part of the research into IT job roles.

Centres have continued to rise to the challenges and demands of the level 3 Cambridge Technicals in IT by considering projects that will support a more holistic approach to delivery and assessment. In addition, learners are presenting their evidence in a much wider variety of formats with many centres embracing the opportunity to use video and audio evidence as a means of providing evidence of knowledge and understanding as well as competent performance.

Evidence for communication and employability skills for IT has continued to improve every year with centres now using evidence from the optional units as evidence; for example, using IT to communicate and communicating information to different audiences. The PDPs produced by learners have also improved with clear SMART targets and reviews of progress. Some centres are still struggling with information systems and opt for the learners to work towards a pass grade only. Centres that have delivered the qualification for a number of years have succeeded in developing their learners' skills with many achieving merit and distinction grades.

There is a small number of centres that have offered learners the opportunity to develop their skills for the more Technicals units such as computer systems, managing networks and IT Technicals support. The successful delivery of these units depends very much on the resources available to the centre. It is important that learners have access to a wide range of hardware and networking components as well as software that will allow them to develop their skills. They need to have the opportunity to take systems apart and rebuild them, troubleshoot problems and rectify faults.

There has been an increase in centres delivering the project planning with IT unit as confidence has increased with implementing a project approach for the achievement of a combination of units through a clearly defined project. Centres have confirmed that learners have enjoyed working on the units in this way and that it has enhanced their understanding. The most popular units continue to be computer game design, website production, 2D animation production, interactive media authoring, spreadsheet modelling, database design, digital graphics and understanding social media for business.

Centres continue to access the OCR community for information relating to the units and asking questions associated with interpretation of the unit specification as well as discussing ideas for delivery and assessment. Centres have confirmed that the OCR community has been a useful resource and aided their own development for the delivery of the Cambridge Technicals in IT at levels 2 and 3.

Subject expert visits and advisory visits proved popular again this academic year with centres seeking guidance for either their first delivery of the qualification as a whole or for new units that they were intending to offer. There has also been an increase in the number of centres using the OCR assignment checker facility where a member of the moderation team checks their assignments with documented feedback provided. Centres are reminded that this facility is free for the mandatory units only, with a small fee charged for the optional units.

Comments on Individual Units

Level 2 – Unit 1 – Communicating in the IT industry

LO1/P1, learners are required to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills in face-to-face communication. It is important that learners show that they can use a number of interpersonal skills depending on the context of the face-to-face communication and to achieve this it is anticipated that there will be more than one example provided as evidence showing the different situations and what skills they used. Centres are reminded that observations and/or witness testimonies must be detailed and individual to each learner. The context of the situations must be explained with confirmation of the interpersonal skills each individual learner used and why these were effective. If centres opt to use video evidence, then the images and the audio must be sufficiently clear for the visiting moderator to see what the learner is doing and hear what they are saying. Learners who continually read from scripts when presenting information are not demonstrating effective interpersonal skills. It is recommended that centres consider a more holistic approach and consider how the learners could provide evidence of their communication skills based on evidence from the optional units they are/will be working on.

LO1/P2 and P3, learners are required to communicate IT-related information to a non-Technicals audience (P2) and Technicals audience (P3). It is anticipated that learners will provide different evidence for each of these assessment criteria, as they should be adapting their language and terminology based on the type of audience. Some centres have submitted the same evidence for a Technicals and non-Technicals audience claiming that the main audience is non-Technicals but the assessor is the Technicals audience. This is not acceptable, as learners are not being provided with the opportunity to adjust their style of language to suit their audience.

Level 2 – Unit 2 – Working in the IT industry

LO1/P1, learners are required to describe the characteristics valued by employers in the IT industry. Where weaknesses arise in evidence for this assessment criterion, it is due to learners providing a definition for each characteristic and not concentrating on why they are valued by employers and particularly employers in the IT industry.

LO1/M1 – learners are required to explain the main job role categories within the IT industry. The purpose of this assessment criterion is for learners to look at the different categories and the different job roles involved as well as whether the job roles are frequently advertised; and if so, which location they are in and what potential salary could be expected. The CPD hub has an example of evidence for LO2 for all of the pass, merit and distinction criteria, which centre assessors may find useful.

Level 3 – Unit 1 – Communication and Employability Skills for IT

Overall, learner evidence has continued to improve. This is primarily due to centres considering evidence from other units, which could be used to support evidence for LO2, P4 and LO3 P5 and P6. In addition, Centre assessors are looking for opportunities to assess holistically within the unit itself and therefore will encourage learners to present combined evidence for LO2, P2, P3 and D1. Assessors have requested that learners develop presentations explaining the principles of effective communication and at the same time, discuss potential barriers preventing the communication from being effective, with an explanation as to how these barriers could be reduced. This concept provides a more cohesive approach encouraging learners to consider communication as a whole as opposed to individual segments.

For LO2, P2, learners are required to provide evidence of demonstrating a range of effective interpersonal skills. Centres tend to use video evidence where learners are delivering a presentation, or participating in a discussion for example. Centres are reminded that in order for the assessment method to be effective and acceptable, the quality of the audio and video must be of a standard that the visiting moderator can see clearly what is happening and hear clearly what the learner is saying. Learners should also be reviewing the evidence and stating what interpersonal skills they used and why they were effective.

Level 3 – Unit 2 – Information systems

There has been an improvement in the way that the vast majority of centres have approached this unit as they have become more confident in their understanding of the requirements of the assessment criteria. Many Centres continue to use the school as the themed example working through the unit and this appears to work well as it is an environment that the assessors and the learners are familiar with which aids understanding.

LO1, P1 – learners are required to explain how organisations used information. Some centres are still encouraging learners to consider the teaching content as isolated lists; for example, explain the purpose, explain the categories and explain the sources. This can result in learners producing more evidence than is necessary and not considering the content as a whole. Learners could provide individual examples of how information is used within the selected organisation and for each example, explain the purpose of the information and the category it falls under; whether the information flow is internal or external or both; whether it uses primary or secondary sources; and therefore, whether these sources are internal or external, qualitative or quantitative data. This ensures that learners do not miss anything, as well as providing good sound evidence on their knowledge and understanding.

LO1, P2 – learners are required to discuss the characteristics of good information. Learners could link this to their evidence for P1 and explain what characteristics the resulting information had and why it was important that it had these characteristics in order to be classified as 'good information'.

General comments on optional units

For units where learners are required to 'produce annotated design documentation…' to achieve the higher grades, centres are reminded that the annotation should contain sufficient detail to enable a third party to develop the website, game, or animation for example, as intended by the originator.

When a unit requires learners to complete a test plan, it is important that learners start completing the test plan as they are developing the product. It should not be completed at the end as this results in learners stating that 'all is ok' when in fact during construction of the product, they invariably identified a number of issues which they had to rectify. Centres are also reminded that the purpose of the test plan is to test the functionality of the product. That is, does it do what it is supposed to do based on the requirements of the business and intended user? Checking for spelling errors should not be included as part of a test plan, as it is not a test, but something that should always be carried out.

OCR often receives queries from centres asking if certain software can be used. A centre is at liberty to use any software that allows their learners to work towards the highest grades.

Visiting moderators have reported that they have seen some very good evidence from the optional units and that learners are clearly developing skills that they can take with them into employment and/or further study. The quality of end products has also noticeably improved with centres providing visiting moderators with access to the actual product evidence as opposed to numerous screenshots.

Unit 27 – Digital Graphics

LO3, P3, M1 – when presenting evidence for this unit, it is important that the visiting moderator can clearly see the changes made to the original images. When evidence is presented as monochrome printouts it is difficult to see what changes were made and how these enhanced the original images. It is recommended that centres present the evidence electronically to the moderator as 'before' and 'after' images which will ensure that the changes can be clearly seen.

Sector Update

The level 3 Cambridge Technicals in IT has been redeveloped in line with DfE's Technicals Guidance and will include external assessment. The link for information to the developed qualification is http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/cambridge-Technicalss-it-level-3-certificate-extended-certificate-introductory-diploma-foundation-diploma-diploma-05838-05842-2016-suite/.

The redeveloped qualification offers specialist pathways in IT Infrastructure Technician, Emerging Digital Technology Practitioner, Application Developer and Data Analyst. The units have been developed to reflect the skills, knowledge and understanding that today's universities and employers demand.

A number of Expo events for the launch of the new 2016 Cambridge Technicals suite are available and can be access through the OCR CPD hub
https://www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk/DesktopDefault.aspx?e=fjefcbdbhgnidcpinn

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Skills and Employment
Telephone: 02476 851509
Fax: 02476 421944
Email: vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance
programme your call may be recorded or monitored

PART OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT
GROUP

UKAS
MANAGEMENT
SYSTEMS
001