

Applied ICT

Advanced GCE AS H515/H715

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H115/H315

Examiners' Reports

January 2011

H115/H315/R/11J

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, 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 syllabuses 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.

© OCR 2011

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Applied ICT (H115)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Applied ICT (Double Award) (H315)

Advanced GCE Applied ICT (H515)

Advanced GCE Applied ICT (Double Award)(H715)

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

Content	Page
Chief Examiner's Report	1
Principal Moderator's Report AS Units (H115/H315)	3
Principal Moderator's Report A2 Units (H515/H715)	11
G041: How Organisations Use ICT	20
G054: Software Development	25
G055: Networking solutions	29
G048: Working to a brief	31

Chief Examiner's Report

Performance on most papers was similar to previous sessions, although it is pleasing to see that there appears to be an improvement in some aspects of the work presented for G048 and in teachers' understanding of the marking criteria.

The need to apply answers in section A of the written papers is sometimes overlooked and responses in section B of all papers continue to limit the marks that can be awarded. Centres are reminded of the need to teach the concepts covered in the Unit content section of the units, as well as preparing candidates to complete the pre-released tasks.

Generally the quantity and organisation of pre-release work was appropriate. There were still a few candidates who failed to specifically identify their responses to the marked tasks. If tasks are not clearly identified, it is difficult for Examiners to locate these tasks in order to mark them. Please ensure that each task is clearly labelled and that the work is submitted in task order.

Malpractice was again an issue this session particularly for the examined units. Centres are reminded that candidates should only submit work carried out in response to the tasks for use in the examination. In particular, task 1 must **only** include what is specified within the task in the candidate instructions and be clearly applied to the relevant case study. General class notes based on the Unit Content section of the unit or material downloaded from the WWW must **not** be taken in to the examination. However, **all** work taken into the examination room **must** be attached to the examination paper and submitted to the Examiner. Those invigilating the examination need to be given clear instructions to do so. A worrying number of candidates failed to submit their notes for task 1. In some cases this was the case for all candidates in a centre. It was not clear whether this task had been completed or not. Failure to complete task 1 puts candidates at a significant disadvantage when answering section A of the papers.

Centres are reminded that the work submitted in response to the tasks must be each candidate's own unaided work. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the work is carried out in conditions that allow the teacher to confirm this is the case. It should not, for example, be given as homework. Care is needed to ensure that candidates do not share electronic files and that teachers do not provide too much direction when helping candidates to understand what they have to do. Some diagrams will inevitably be similar if they are drawn correctly. However, if candidates produce these individually, there will be subtle differences in the length of lines, positioning of items etc. Whilst they must not mark the work, deadlines for handing in the work should be set so that there is time for the teacher to check the work before signing the Authentication Statement.

All centres should by now be aware of the Joint Council ruling regarding Centre authentication of coursework. This applies to both the pre-release tasks in the examined units and the centre assessed units. Whilst most centres submitted Centre Authentication Forms (CCS160) for the centre assessed units, a significant percentage failed to include them in the script packets for the externally assessed unit. This should be done as a matter of course. Candidate Authentication Statements must be signed, but should be retained in the centre and **not** submitted to the Examiner or Moderator.

Please ensure that all pre-release work is attached to the question paper using a treasury tag. Please also discourage candidates from tying treasury tags in knots or wrapping them several times through the punched holes. It is essential that the Examiner can separate the pre-release work from the examination paper easily to mark it.

Whilst much work submitted for moderation was of an appropriate standard, the standard of some work at AS level was more appropriate to GCSE and the standard of some work at A2 was more appropriate to AS level. Centres need to ensure that the depth and breadth of the work submitted is appropriate for an A level qualification. Candidates need to be taught the analytical skills needed for A2 units in particular.

This session, as last January, snow delayed some centres' preparation but the importance of centres getting marks to the Moderator by the deadline cannot be over-emphasised. Failure to do so may result in delays in the publication of candidates' results. If there are **10 or fewer** candidates entered, **all the work** must be sent to the Moderator with the MS1. Prompt submission of the work requested is also vital.

The importance of a fully and accurately completed unit recording sheet cannot be over-emphasised. Moderators must be able to match the work to the mark on the MS1, so both candidate name and number should be completed. It is also vital that the total mark is indicated, that it correctly totals the individual task marks and that the total on the unit recording sheet and the MS1 match.

There is a worrying tendency for candidates to submit excessive amounts of material for moderation. This can be counter-productive, especially when the work is not page numbered and the evidence referenced on the unit recording sheet, as moderators may well not be able to locate evidence in order to confirm the marks. Candidates should be encouraged to be selective in what they submit and only include what is required by the tasks to demonstrate their coverage of the mark bands.

As with pre-release tasks for examined units, plastic pockets, folders and particularly ring-binders should not be used to send unit portfolios. Work should be hole-punched and secured with treasury tags.

Principal Moderator's Report AS Units (H115/H315)

General

As is usually the case in January, the number of centres submitting work for moderation was relatively low, particularly for the double award units, and many candidates were re-submitting previously moderated work, often with very limited attempts to improve it. It was clear from the number of centres where the difference between the centre's and the moderator's mark was outside of the allowed tolerance or, in a number of cases, more than double the allowed tolerance, that many assessors have not yet appreciated the requirements of the post September 2009 assessment grids.

There were still a few centres this session using the wrong component codes. The component code 01 is now for units submitted via the OCR repository, while 02 is for postal submission. Please ensure that you use the correct component code for all future sessions.

Due to the fact that this qualification was written and amended with paper based evidence in mind, the repository should be treated as an electronic post box, rather than a means to provide moderators with access to multimedia, spreadsheet and other files that cannot be easily evidenced in hard copy format. Centres should, therefore, ensure that all the evidence is available to moderators in exactly the same way as they would if sending hard copies by post. When submitting work via the repository, please ensure that you use the smallest file size possible and that a single task is not split between a number of files. Filenames should make it very clear what each file contains and the unit recording sheet should also make it clear which file the moderator needs to open to locate the evidence, as well as page numbers within the file. Also, if paper-based work is scanned for uploading, please ensure that pages all appear the same way up. Where work has been assessed on screen, so that annotation of the work is not possible, please include a commentary with page numbers explaining the assessment decisions made.

Some centres did not submit the MS1 mark sheets on time. Others sent all the candidate portfolios to the moderator. This was problematic where **more than 10** candidates had been entered. In this case, **only** the MS1 mark sheet should be sent in the first instance so that an appropriate sample can be selected and requested. When **10 or fewer** candidates are entered, the work **must** be sent with the MS1 mark sheet as all portfolios are required for moderation. Centres are reminded of the need to submit the requested portfolios promptly on receipt of the sample request. Snow again caused problems for some centres this session. Where centres had a valid reason to request an extension, this was granted but too many centres created their own extension by simply failing to submit mark sheets and work until they were 'chased' by the moderator. This approach could lead to delays in the work being moderated and, ultimately, delays in the issue of results to candidates.

Although the sample is now selected and requested electronically, the MS1 mark sheet should still be sent to the moderator by the deadline, so that the moderator knows that the marks have been submitted. When centres use electronic methods to submit marks to OCR, a printed copy of the marks submitted must still be sent to the moderator.

Centres are also reminded of the need to complete and include Centre Authentication forms (CCS160) with the work. Centres submitting work electronically can either upload the CCS160 into the administration area or send a hard copy to the moderator with the mark sheets. The Joint Council has indicated that centres who fail to authenticate a coursework unit will not receive marks for that unit. Only one form per unit is required – it is not necessary to attach a

form to each candidate's work. Also, if the form is sent with the mark sheets, it is not necessary to send a second copy with the work. Whilst candidates must sign a Candidate Authentication form, these should be kept securely in the centre and not submitted with the work.

Centres need to ensure that the unit recording sheet is fully completed showing the candidate name, candidate number and centre number. Correct candidate numbers are particularly important as only the candidate numbers in the sample are presented to the moderator by the moderation management system. Centres also need to ensure that the mark for each task is clearly shown and that the final total is accurate. Notification of clerical errors is now provided by email, with the amended mark provided by the moderator being accepted unless the centre indicates otherwise.

The portfolios should include page numbers to aid moderation. Assessors should include page numbers and comments on the unit recording sheets to show the moderator where and why the mark had been awarded.

Some work was very poorly organised, making the moderation process more difficult. Candidates need to be taught how to assemble a portfolio, rather than merely collect together a number of different pieces of work for assessment. They should be encouraged to organise the work in a logical order, use suitable section headings and to include a contents page. However, it is not necessary to scan in hand-drawn designs unless the work is to be uploaded to the repository. When these are drawn in pencil, the scanned image is often too faint to be read. Remember, the moderator is checking the content of such designs. It is far better to simply include the original versions. The volume of work submitted should also be considered. Portfolios that are hundreds of pages long are counter-productive, as it makes it more difficult to locate the evidence required. It is the quality, rather than the quantity, of the work that is being assessed and candidates need to be selective about what they include.

Although most centres are using treasury tags or other suitable methods to secure the work sent, plastic pockets, plastic folders and occasionally ring binders are still being used by some centres. These should be avoided.

Where centres operate as a consortium it is vital that OCR are informed of this arrangement so that all the centres involved are assigned to the same moderator and flagged as a consortium on the moderation management system so they can be treated as one centre. It is, therefore, vital that internal moderation takes place between all teachers involved so that invalid order of merit issues are avoided.

Comments on Individual Units

G040

Some centres continue to provide assignments that require candidates to create standard business documents such as letters, invoices, memos and agendas. These do not give candidates sufficient opportunities to demonstrate their abilities to use the range of software, facilities and media required for this unit. The banner of the assessment evidence grid requires that the six created communications 'would be communicated by different methods'. We would, for example, expect to see screen-based communications such as slide presentations and web-based communications such as web pages or blogs. 'Content-free' documents such as blank letterheads, business cards and compliment slips are also not appropriate at this level.

Where candidates have not created all six of the required communications, they can still be awarded marks in task b. However, the mark awarded is likely to be significantly lower than the quality of those communications created would suggest.

Some of the unit portfolios produced for this unit were very extensive. This can be counterproductive as it becomes difficult for the moderator to locate the required evidence. Unless the comparative report for task a is being used as one of the six original communications, which is not recommended, it is not necessary to include planning or draft copies of this document, neither are draft copies of evaluations required. Draft copies of other documents should be carefully selected, labelled and annotated to show development. Two or three drafts should be sufficient. Also, whilst the collection and analysis of existing documents to inform the design of the candidates' documents is good teaching practice, these do not need to be included in the portfolio. However, the documents compared in task a must be included in the portfolio, so that the moderator can judge the accuracy of the descriptions given.

Task A

This requires candidates to write a report which **compares** two documents from three organisations. It is vital that candidates choose the same two types of document from each organisation and that a comparison between the three similar documents is actually made. Too many candidates described and evaluated each document separately and then provided a very brief comparison at the end. By doing so they often 'ran out of steam', with descriptions of the later documents lacking the detail provided for the first one or two. Candidates should consider discussing all three documents together so that they can identify the similarities and differences as they complete the report. As well as improving comparisons, this would reduce the repetitive nature of the task and overcome the problem of a document being too good to need improvement, providing others were not. Writing style and house style are often misunderstood. Writing style refers to the type of language used (formal, informal, persuasive, informative etc) rather than the font size, style and colour or the use of bullets. House style should be considered by looking at the two documents from the same organisation and finding common elements, such as the colours and fonts used, rather than the fact that all the pages of a website or brochure are consistent. Descriptions often lacked the detailed descriptions and critical analysis required for mark band 3 and, whilst valid improvements were suggested, they were not explained in relation to the identified purpose of the document. Critical analysis means not only stating a valid good point or bad point but explaining why it is such in terms of the purpose of the document. Centres are reminded of the need for candidates to include copies of the documents being described so that the moderator can judge the accuracy of the comparisons made. Centres are also reminded that the quality of candidates' written communication is assessed through this task. Spelling and grammar errors were often noticed by moderators and these were not always reflected in the mark awarded.

Task B

This requires candidates to plan, draft, create and evaluate six original communications. A range of communications should be created and, as indicated above, it is not appropriate for them all to be paper-based – some should be communicated by different methods for example on screen. Some of the documents created were creative and allowed the candidates to demonstrate a range of technical skills. However, some centres are still not encouraging candidates to design documents which allow them to access mark band 3 for biii.

One of the six communications should describe different methods of communication and the technologies which can be used to support them. As in June, some centres had misunderstood this requirement and candidates had created a seventh document that had not been planned, drafted or evaluated.

The best way to approach task b is for candidates to complete six mini projects – one for each communication. Each mini project should include detailed planning and drafting, the final communication, supporting evidence showing the adaptation of information and evidence of the less obvious features used (for example automation), an evaluation and a list of the sources

used. A final evaluation at the end of the unit to summarise the candidate's own performance is also useful.

To achieve beyond mark band 1 of task bi, candidates need to show evidence of planning for all six communications, with some planning being detailed. They also need to have annotated draft copies to show development. Candidates may carry out research on existing communications of the type they will create to gain ideas, however, these ideas should be summarised, rather than detailed research being included. Candidates should then produce a **single** design, usually by hand. This should include plans for layout (including component positioning and possibly measurements), details of the font styles, colour schemes and content (text, graphics and other media) to be used, along with a possible source of this content. For mark band 3 for task bi all six communications need to be fully planned and drafted. Planning too frequently lacked the required detail so that somebody else could make the communication as planned and annotation of draft documents was poor. Drafting should be drafting and not the development of work. It is not appropriate for candidates to include an incomplete version of a communication and then declare through annotation that a substantial part is missing. Following a plan a complete version of the communication is required which is then scrutinised and assessed on how well it meets the initial requirements. A maximum of three well annotated drafts for each communication is all that is required – some candidates are still producing excessive amounts of drafts which are either poorly annotated or have minor changes. Centres are also reminded that drafting is a natural process and should certainly not be manufactured – for example, including versions of communications with words 'accidentally' spelt incorrectly although in previous versions they are not, is not drafting. More alarmingly there was an increase in this session of assessors suggesting improvements to drafts; this is not only, contradictory to the spirit of this unit but also a breach of JCQ regulations. This unit requires candidates to reflect upon their own work and suggest improvements themselves. It was pleasing to see that the bibliographies produced by many candidates included the required detail for marks bands 2 and 3 however some candidates are still just including a top level URL or referencing search engines as their information sources. Mark band 3 requires the precise URL of the web page, the date it was accessed, the date it was last updated and the author (if known). Mark band 2 requires candidates to list **all** the sources they use. Too often errors remained in the final versions of communications, suggesting a lack of careful proof reading. As well as affecting the mark for task bi, this also had an impact on the quality of the final communication in task bii.

Many communications lacked the quality required for mark band 3 of task bii. Nearly all the communications need to be of a high standard to achieve in this mark band. As indicated above, errors in the final versions often affected the mark for this task. There also needs to be evidence of how information from existing sources has been adapted. A few selected screen shots showing the original material and the outcome after manipulation is sufficient. Mark band 2 of this task requires that communications are mailable. A letter without such standard content as a date and the recipient's address does not fall into this category.

Mark band 3 of task biii requires a range of techniques for automating document production to be used. This could include mail merge, auto contents pages/indices, styles which candidates have created themselves and master page layouts for a presentation. Too often high marks were awarded when there was only evidence of a template and/or a master slide. The requirement at mark band 2 that a template is created and used was often overlooked. Overt evidence in the form of selected screen prints should be included to prove automation has been used. More overt evidence that candidates have included sound and video clips is also required. This too make take the form of selected screen shots or a witness statement can be provided by the teacher. This may simply take the form of a signed and dated comment next to the candidate's evidence to confirm that the media clips have been seen working and that they are appropriate.

Task biv is improving with many candidates annotating drafts with comments which justify potential changes – this shows ongoing evaluation with reflection on draft communications as required by mark band 3. However, candidates often just provided a description of what they did or only evaluated the final copies and not the drafts. For the award of mark band 3, candidates should be indicating what was good and what was not so good about each draft communication, as well as describing what they did to improve the not so good features. Evaluation of their own performance was forgotten about by many candidates. There was also very little on how they would approach a similar task in future in some cases. Centres could encourage candidates to write a final evaluation at the end focusing on how they worked during the whole unit. The final evaluation also needs to include comments about the experiences gained from analysing existing business communications (task a) and the relevant merits or issues which this causes. This was which often omitted within the work seen.

There was some misunderstanding of the requirements of task bv. Too often candidates discussed types of information (written, multimedia, graphical, video, audio and web-based), rather than methods of communication (eg paper-based, screen-based SMS, e-mail). These are included in the second bullet list on page 15 of the Applied ICT specification. This list is now quite extensive and candidates are advised to initially select at least six methods from this list. They should then also explain how the technologies listed at the bottom of page 15 support their chosen communication methods. There was often confusion between methods of communication and technologies or the technologies were simply identified, rather than described. There were a few instances this session where candidates provided quite detailed descriptions of technologies but did not describe communication methods at all. The evidence frequently lacked the depth required for mark band 3. Mark band 3 requires candidates to describe at least 6 of the communication methods listed within the specification and their relative advantages and disadvantages. Technologies utilised should be linked into the method rather than being an after thought or section at the end. For high marks a good description including diagrams of how the technology works (if appropriate) is expected. It is worth repeating that this must form the content of one of the six communications created with suitable planning, development and evaluation. The detail required is more easily achievable if candidates present the information as a report or newsletter, rather than a slide presentation.

G042

The choice of assignment is key to the successful completion of this unit. Although many centres are using the sample assignments available, others are using inappropriate assignments that make it difficult for candidates to produce the evidence required or are giving candidates too much freedom in their search topic. While the latter approach ensures that there is individuality in the work produced, it may be difficult for candidates to find appropriate large websites and online databases for task b and for the centre to provide a relevant database for task c. If candidates are not investigating an appropriate topic, it can be difficult for them to present the results of their investigation coherently, as required by task e.

Task A

This proved very troublesome for centres as many had failed to pick up errors made by candidates in the syntax used when searching. It is vital that candidates are taught how to use the advanced search facilities of search engines and construct their own search strings containing logical and other search functions correctly. Far too often candidates were awarded high marks in mark band 2 for advanced searches where the same search terms had been entered into each box, which is unproductive.

Find web pages that have...

all these words:

this exact wording or phrase:

one or more of these words: OR

But don't show pages that have...

any of these unwanted words:

INCORRECT The same words have been used in both boxes.

Find web pages that have...

all these words:

this exact wording or phrase:

one or more of these words: OR OR

But don't show pages that have...

any of these unwanted words:

CORRECT The candidate has thought about what they are looking for and used the advanced search boxes properly.

Candidates also struggled to construct their own operator search. Typical errors including using NOT in Google with the first few results including the word which they wanted to omit, not using quotes around phrases and not using spaces properly around + and - operators. Errors need to be taken into account when awarding marks for this task as both bands 2 and 3 require the **“correct use of”**.

[Advanced Search](#)
[Language Tools](#)

Google Search I'm Feeling Lucky

INCORRECT Quotes are missing from phrases and spacing for the - sign is incorrect.

 [Advan...](#)

Search: the web pages from the UK

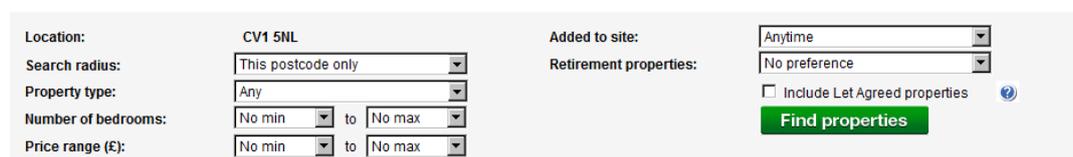
CORRECT Quotes have been used around phrases and the spacing round the + and - signs is correct.

Other common errors included logical operators in lower case and logical operators placed inside quotes.

Task a also requires candidates to list the information required before they go looking for it, a detailed comparison of search results and a recommendation of which search engine is the best to use for the investigation. Candidates need to ensure they take a logical approach to this task to ensure that evidence is not missed out. Candidates need to start off by listing the information required – this helps them to focus on the investigation and understand exactly what they are looking for. The next step should be to use simple searches and then the advanced search facility of three different engines in an attempt to find **some of** the information required. After a few such searches have been carried out it is then expected that a detailed comparison is written which not only compares the number of results yielded but also the quality of the results in terms of the relevance and validity of the information being displayed. It is sensible to suggest that candidates carry out a few identical searches in the different engines to make any comparisons fair. Candidates then need to recommend which search engine they intend to use

for the rest of the investigation and why. For higher marks this needs to be in detail and explanations should draw on the results from the searches and the comparisons made. At this point candidates should use Boolean and other search aides, (listed on page 31 of the course specification), within the **chosen search engine only** to find all the information required to complete the investigation. These searches should be documented clearly with screen shots showing the terms used and the results. Candidates often presented logical searches which had been generated from the advanced search option, rather than entering their own search strings. However, wild cards and other operators were seen more often than previously.

Task b requires candidates to use large websites to find information for their investigation. They should start off by listing what information is required, as in task a, so they are focused and know what they are looking for. Overt evidence of using menus and other navigational aides should be presented. This is often omitted. Also, some simple searches using an internal search facility is expected to be included for mark band 2. In addition to this for mark band 3, candidates need to provide evidence of using the search facilities of an online database to carry out a range of searches to find information that demonstrably meets their requirements. The choice of online database needs to be carefully considered as it needs to offer a good array of operator use by having lots of pull down menus and the ability to enter ranges.



The screenshot shows a search interface with the following elements:

- Location:** CV1 5NL
- Search radius:** This postcode only (dropdown menu)
- Property type:** Any (dropdown menu)
- Number of bedrooms:** No min (dropdown) to No max (dropdown)
- Price range (£):** No min (dropdown) to No max (dropdown)
- Added to site:** Anytime (dropdown menu)
- Retirement properties:** No preference (dropdown menu)
- Include Let Agreed properties (checkbox with help icon)
- Find properties** (green button)

An example of an online database which allows candidates to use a range of operators within their searches

Entering their own logical operators into a standard search box of an internal search engines is not appropriate for mark band 3 of this task, as frequently they don't actually work. Whilst most large websites could be considered as databases, what is required here is that candidates are able to use the facilities provided to search for information that is stored in a structured format. It is certainly not acceptable for candidates to use a single site for both the large website and the online database evidence. For maximum marks, candidates should explore the full range of options offered by the advanced search facility of the online database to carry out a range of different searches.

Task c requires candidates to use a wide range of operators available in a local database to find data useful for their investigation. A list of those expected can be found on page 31 of the course specification – candidates often failed to include enough range for mark band 3. Reports produced should be customised so they present data clearly and neatly – they need to have the correct page orientation for the data being displayed, meaningful titles and ensure fields are wide enough for the data to be fully displayed. It should be clear exactly what the report shows without reference to any other material. It is also expected that reports are printed or, if work is being submitted electronically, output to a PDF file for both mark bands 2 and 3 of this task. Candidates must provide screen print evidence of their queries in design view. However, it is not necessary to include a step by step guide to how they built their queries or, indeed, how they created and edited their reports.

Within task d spreadsheets were often too simply for this level of qualification. The Amplification of Criteria on page 158 of the specification suggests the types of formulae and functions expected for mark bands 2 and 3. Macros are required to aid the input of data and production of results rather than simply moving from sheet to sheet. They should also replace more than one action to be of value. Creating a macro to print a whole sheet is fairly pointless, as the user would only need to click the print button on the toolbar, but creating a macro to print a selected area of the sheet would reduce the number of actions required. Testing was too often based on

testing the macros worked rather than the accuracy of results produced by formulae. A simple way of illustrating that formulae work would be to replace the data found with dummy data, ie 1s 2s or 10s so that it can be easily seen that the formulae work as intended. Alternatively, candidates can do some manual calculations, showing their working out, using the actual data.

Task e was poorly executed by many of the centres moderated. The emphasis is to report on the findings of the investigation and not describe what has been done, which often simply repeats the evidence provided in tasks a-d. Mark band 3 requires candidates to produce a well-structured presentation of their results that effectively combines at least five types of information from at least five different sources. The term 'presentation' is used in its widest sense and candidates might find it easier to provide the coherence and quality required by this mark band if they presented the information in a report or newsletter, rather than a slide presentation. As far as possible, candidates should import or copy and paste data from spreadsheets, web pages and other sources into their presentation. It is not sufficient to simply include screen prints. It is the ability to combine different types of information that is being tested. If all the information is included as screen prints, candidates are effectively only combining text and graphics. Too frequently candidates tended to cram all of the information they had found into a couple of slides, forgetting the design and presentation principles learnt in G040. Mark band 3 also requires a detailed bibliography using similar techniques to those required for mark band 3 of task bi in G040. This should be an integral part of the 'presentation' rather than a separate bibliography for the whole unit. In task f candidates need to comment on the way in which they refined the presentation of results. The inclusion of an annotated draft of the 'presentation' with relevant reflective annotation would be helpful to secure marks for this component.

Although task f was reasonably well evidenced in some cases, some candidates focused only on search methods rather than the techniques used to both search and present the results, while others described what they did, rather than evaluating the methods used. There were also instances of candidates providing task by task evaluations, rather than focusing on the methods used for searching and presenting results. Ongoing reflection is required for mark band 3 and, although this was present in some case for searching, candidates often forgot to evaluate over time how they were presenting what they had found. Although presenting results mainly refers to task e, candidates could also gain marks for evaluating how they adjusted the reports made in task c to suit their purpose better and how, in task d, they adjusted the charts they had automatically generate with a wizard, so the information displayed was easier to understand.

Task g continues to cause problems with candidates either focusing on generic benefits of the internet or talking about how their friends and family use it. However, in a few cases, there was no mention of how the candidate and his/her family were affected. This task requires candidates to write about the **impacts** that having access to information electronically has on them, their family and wider society rather than simply how it is used. For mark band 2, candidates need to research the issues related to electronic information being available outside their daily life. Page 159 of the specification suggests aspects that could be covered. Mark band 3, in addition, requires candidates to consider what the impact of organisations communicating electronically has on society and to analyse the consequences for people who don't have access to or don't want access to electronic information. Too often candidates were able to identify who these people were without considering the impact this lack of access might have.

G043 – G047

Too few entries were received for these units to make generalised comments. Centres should refer to the Amplification of Criteria sections within the unit specification and the June 2010 report to centres for guidance on the requirements of the tasks and mark bands.

Principal Moderator's Report A2 Units (H515/H715)

Introduction

The introduction to the report for the A2 units should be read in conjunction with the introduction to the AS reports as many, if not all, of the issues are common.

A small number of centres failed to detail their assessment decisions. All portfolios should have a fully completed Unit Recording Sheet (URS) with a comment to explain the marks awarded for each task. Page numbers should be completed on the URS. Due to the absence of any teacher annotation indicating the awarding of mark bands it was difficult to confirm in some cases that these had been awarded appropriately. Although annotation is not essential, its appropriate use is very helpful and is an example of best practice.

Centres are reminded of the importance of meeting the deadlines for the submission of marks to moderator and the board as well as the requirements to send the sample of coursework requested within the timeframe specified in the correspondence. The majority of centres this session met the deadlines.

Centres need to take care with administration for this qualification. There are two component codes, one for OCR Repository entries and one for postal moderation entries. A significant number of centres made Repository entries when they intended to make postal moderation entries.

A number of Centres made careless mistakes with marks resulting in amendments to marks submitted. This slows down the moderation process and centres risk delays to issue of results while these issues are resolved.

Unit G049 Numerical Modelling Using Spreadsheets

For this unit candidates were required to produce:

- an analysis of a suitable user problem and a design specification that describes how they will solve it by numerical modelling;
- evidence of implementing their solution using suitable entry aids and processing facilities;
- a record of how they overcame their problems;
- a specification for testing their spreadsheet, and evidence of the results of these tests;
- technical documentation that explains how their spreadsheet works, and user documentation that explains how it is used;
- an evaluation of the effectiveness of their solution and their personal performance.

A small number of centres continue to fail to identify that the emphasis of this unit is on numerical modelling rather than data manipulation even though this has been fed back in every Principal Moderator report for this unit. However, it is pleasing to note that the proportion of centres in this category is lower than in previous sessions. The problem that the candidates attempted to solve must provide the opportunity for significant numerical processing. Using a spreadsheet to simply store and present information, eg database solutions that involve little or no data processing are not suitable for this unit.

The design specifications produced by a number of candidates lacked the necessary detail. At the simplest level for task a, these must incorporate consideration of user requirements, data sources, processing to be carried out and output to be generated. Evidence of planning formulas

lacked detail in many portfolios seen. More able candidates incorporated ideas for screen layouts, identification of spreadsheet layout, spreadsheet facilities to be utilised and considered how the numerical processing aspects of the solution met the user requirements. Candidates achieving high marks for task a must produce a specification that is detailed enough to enable a competent third party to implement it independently.

The solution implemented in task bi and task bii by some candidates showed clear evidence of the use of complex spreadsheet facilities, as listed on page 63 of the unit specification, as well as clear evidence of a range of spreadsheet functions appropriate to the solution of the problem. Ease of use was frequently implied rather than being explicitly evidenced. Some Centres awarded high marks for task bii when there was little or no evidence of the use of specialised numerical processing functions and complex spreadsheet facilities to support numerical modelling; marks were adjusted accordingly. Some centres failed to recognise that functions such as lookup functions were now part of the common built-in spreadsheet functions and not specialised built-in functions. Annotation of printouts or a commentary detailing the spreadsheet solution provided clear evidence of the use of the spreadsheet facilities and functions. This in turn provided evidence towards task c, the strategy for implementing the solution. Where no clear evidence could be found, often due to lack of annotation, marks were adjusted downwards as the Moderator could not easily locate the use of the functions within the spreadsheet solution.

For task c, the evidence presented often lacked details of the problems encountered by the candidate whilst developing the spreadsheet solution and how these were overcome. On some occasions there was little evidence to support the strategy used to implement the solution.

Testing the spreadsheet solution, in task d, was carried out poorly by the many candidates. There should be clear evidence of planning the testing to be performed. This should address testing functionality with the use of normal, abnormal and boundary data. To access mark band 2 candidates must provide explicit evidence that the solution meets the requirements of the design specification.

The technical and user documentation produced for task e need to be separate documents as they are for different readers. The technical documentation must be sufficiently detailed to allow somebody to maintain or amend the spreadsheet. In many cases the documentation provided would not allow this to happen.

A small number of candidates performed well in mark band 3 in task f. In some cases the evaluation was descriptive rather than critical, restricting marks that should have been awarded. Candidates must refer back to the initial requirements of the problem and, in order to access the higher mark bands, consider feedback from users and relate to the design specification.

G050 Interactive Multimedia Products

For this unit candidates were required to produce:

- a review of **two** non web-based commercially-produced interactive multimedia products, showing how their design influenced the design of the interactive multimedia product that they produce;
- detailed designs, of which one is chosen as the design for the final product;
- a multimedia product to meet the client's requirements;
- a detailed test plan;
- a detailed user guide;
- a review of both the interactive multimedia product that they produced and their personal performance.

A number of centres still need to give careful consideration to the software used to evidence this unit. Page 69 of the specification indicates the types of interaction that could be incorporated into the final product. Not all multimedia software will facilitate the majority of these. It was noticeable

this session that more centres appeared to use more appropriate software for the production of the interactive multimedia product. The design of a website is not appropriate; candidates wishing to design websites should undertake G053 Developing and Creating Websites. The unit specification makes it clear that this should be a standalone product; task e requires evidence of the system requirements and how to install and use the product, none of which are fitting for a website.

In order to access the higher marks in task a, candidates must evaluate the commercial multimedia products, rather than describe them. There must also be a detailed explanation of how the product influenced the design of the product that the candidates produce. A number of candidates evaluated web-based multimedia products rather than non web-based multimedia products. Some candidates produced evaluations that were descriptive in nature rather than a critical analysis of the products; this restricted the marks awarded to a maximum of mark band 2. In some cases candidates failed to draw conclusions about what to include in the final product.

For task bi some candidates produced plans for completely different products; the requirement is to produce different designs for the same product. Content must be considered as part of the plan to access higher marks; some plans seen in this session contained very little indication of content. To access mark band 3 the plans should contain sufficient detail to allow a third party to implement the plan as envisaged.

Task bii required a critical analysis of the designs in order to access higher mark points, not just a description of the designs. Good and bad points of each design need to be identified and a reasoned argument presented to explain why the final design was chosen by the candidate and how it met the needs of the client. Again, an analysis that was not crucial in nature restricted marks awarded to a maximum of mark band 2.

Task ci and task cii required evidence of the use of a variety of ICT skills to produce a multimedia solution. The nature of these skills is identified on page 69 of the unit specification. Many candidates failed to identify how they had used their initiative to develop and extend their ICT skills to create a variety of elements to be used in the product. Candidates could annotate their evidence to explain how the skills have been used and the how the skills are aiding the development of the multimedia product. Frequently the evidence presented was a narrative of how the candidate had used their skills to develop the solution with no reference to developing and extending their skills. Task ciii required the candidate to bring together the various components into a complete solution. This is where the nature of the multimedia software may restrict the nature of the product developed. A small number of centres continue to allow candidates to create products that are mainly text and image based with little or no interaction.

The testing of the product for task d was carried out well by a minority of centres. The candidates needed to test not just the functionality of the product, but the fact that the product met the requirements of the design specification. Candidates must provide explicit evidence of testing that the solution meets the requirements of the design specification; this cannot be implied.

Task e required candidates to incorporate installation instructions as part of the user guide for the product. Candidates are encouraged to incorporate images within their user guide in order to clarify the steps within the user guide. The user guide needs to include details of the system specification for the product and details of how to install the product. Some candidates omitted to explain what the purpose of the multimedia presentation was.

For task f the candidates must critically analyse their solution in order to access the higher mark points. More able candidates provided evidence of obtaining feedback from users that tested the product, as well as providing clear evidence of linking the product to the design specification. Evidence for this task must also incorporate a critical analysis of the candidate's own performance to secure mark band 3.

G051 Publishing

For this unit candidates were required to produce:

- notes taken during an initial, and any subsequent, meeting with a client, negotiating and amending a brief for the production of a publishable version of a document;
- evidence of the drafting and production of a publishable version of their final document to meet the brief and, in doing so, will show that they can create and capture images, as well as import material from other packages, utilise object libraries such as clip art, and select and further develop images to meet the style and content of the final copy, as negotiated with the client;
- a publishable version of a document, of approximately **ten** A4 pages or the equivalent, that combines different types of information presented to the client for approval, together with a letter which correctly describes the final production stage and external factors which may affect completion of the final published document;
- an evaluation of both the layout and content of their final copy and their performance.

It is important that candidates address all parts of the unit rather than concentrate on the production of the CRC document; some candidates did not sufficiently document the processes involved.

The evidence of the meeting(s) with clients varied greatly in evidence presented for task a. If the candidates cannot access real clients, then the teacher, or other suitable person, should act as the client. It is important that interim and final deadline dates are considered to move beyond mark band 1. It is important that candidates evidence a sequence of meetings and not solely a single meeting.

It is a requirement of mark band 3 in task bi that candidates explore different means of presenting the same information and use a comprehensive range of editing and manipulation tools. Some candidates were awarded marks in mark band 3 when there no evidence to support this.

Evidence for task bii and task biii frequently lacked evidence of the design stage processes. To access marks in mark band 2 in task bii there must be explicit evidence to include the following:

- sketching different initial document designs;
- following housestyle;
- creating master page layouts;
- presenting page proofs;
- producing artwork sketches;
- setting text orientation;
- creating style sheets.

Some candidates did produce sound evidence to demonstrate that the design stage process had clearly been followed.

For task biii annotation of evidence generated enables candidates to access mark band 2, whereas an accompanying explanation will enable candidates to access mark band 3. Many centres awarded marks based on the final product when the candidate had included little or no explanation of the design stages followed and how this enabled the production of the product. Production of the product does not imply any understanding of the process and overt evidence is required.

Higher marks in task ci required clear evidence of using styles and attributes to produce a publishable version of the agreed design. The work of some candidates did not match the agreed design. Candidates are required to evidence editing a piece of imported text. This is best evidenced through careful annotation of the evidence as the evidence should be explicit

rather than implicit. A number of centres gave high marks in task ci when the candidate had made use of WordArt; at this level candidates should be using style sheets to control the appearance of the publication and the presence of WordArt in a publication at this level suggests that the candidate has little understanding of the design stage processes. Many candidates had made simple errors in their publications and these had not been identified by the assessor; for example, a contents page with page numbers for the sections of the document, yet the pages of the publication did not include page numbers.

The letter produced for task cii lacked detail in the work of some candidates. The unit specification identifies the content of the letter.

Task di and dii requires analysis of the CRC and how the solution was refined to meet the client's needs as well as an analysis of the candidate's performance. Candidates in mark band 3 will produce a critical analysis. There will be an evaluation, not a description, of the candidate's role in the development of the solution.

G052 Artwork and Imaging

For this unit candidates were required to produce:

- A portfolio of artwork samples produced to demonstrate a range of artwork skills;
- Evidence of the development of computer artwork, using a variety of graphics software, following negotiation of a brief from a client, from initial ideas to final product accepted by the client, to include:
 - notes taken during the negotiation of a brief, together with a range of initial proposals in response to a complex problem;
 - an analysis of their design proposals to select the one they will develop;
 - development of a final product, showing editing techniques and choice of printer type, media and resolution;
 - development of ICT skills required by their solution;
 - a substantial artwork product that meets the requirements of the brief;
- An evaluation of both the final product, including consideration of the hardware and software used, and their performance.

In task a some candidates failed to include samples of artwork produced covering the range listed on the assessment grid. A small number of candidates included material which they had not produced, but taken from other sources. Mark band 3 was achieved in only a small number of portfolios as few candidates explored the development of the materials using advanced editing and manipulation techniques. It should be noted that it is not necessary to provide step-by-step screenshots explaining how the original images were produced. The referencing for task a must relate solely to the portfolio of artwork and must not include reference to the product developed for the client. Candidates may benefit from including evidence using colour printouts or colour documents.

A small number of centres did not ensure that an appropriate product was created for the client. Candidates are required to develop **artwork**, not publications, presentations, web pages or other such products; other units exist within the GCE Applied ICT specification addressing the development of such items and such evidence should be used for these units. The artwork must be sufficiently detailed to allow the candidate the opportunity to develop artwork and images using a variety of skills listed on page 77 of the unit specification.

Task bi was poorly evidenced by many candidates as the sketches, in response to the client brief, were very brief and in many cases did not consider the capabilities of the software. The level of artwork was minimal in some of the sketches presented by candidates. In some cases, it was not clear if the client existed; if there is no opportunity for a real client, then the Teacher or other suitable person should act as the client. Task bii was difficult to achieve if task bi was poorly evidenced, as it was not easy to comment on the strengths and weakness of the designs.

Mark band 3 required critical analysis and not just descriptive comments. Task biii requires candidates to show development of the product and the use of ICT tools, not just to present the final product. Task biv requires explicit evidence that ICT skills have been developed. A diary can help to evidence this, or alternatively annotated screenshots can provide evidence. Evidence for task bv varied greatly as some candidates had not considered client feedback in order to access higher mark bands.

Task c required a critical analysis of the final product, identifying how well it met the brief. Some candidates made little reference to the brief and some omitted to mention the printer, media or resolution. Candidates that appeared to have limited experience on working with computer artwork found it difficult to critically reflect on the final product and identify how weaknesses could be tackled in future briefs.

G053 Developing and Creating Websites

For this unit candidates were required to produce:

- an evaluation of commercial websites that have been downloaded;
- analysis and design notes for a website that has at least three pages, together with detailed plans for publishing their website;
- annotated print outs of their own web pages in WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) format identifying the features and techniques used in the web page;
- annotated printouts of their own web pages in HTML format identifying edits to script commands to change page layout; documentation of website testing;
- documentation of website testing;
- an evaluation of both their website and the components used to produce it, and their own performance.

This unit remains the most popular unit in the A2 specification.

For task a some candidates failed to explain the reasons for choosing, or not choosing, features in web pages examined, as required to mark band 2. In order to access mark band 3, there must be a critical analysis of the web pages examined. Frequently, the evidence provided was solely a description of the web pages visited, meeting mark band 1 requirements.

In task b, candidates were required to identify domain names suitable for the site and, in order to access higher mark points, explain the reason for this name and provide alternative options. It was pleasing to see that a number of candidates had actually uploaded the site designed, although this is not necessary. Task b also required structure diagrams, a story board, an index of pages and a task list/action plan. Frequently some of these components were missing from the candidate work; the most common omission was the index of pages in the website. Some candidates had not sufficiently analysed the website to be produced.

In task c, to secure mark band 3, a full explanation is required to explain the design techniques, hyperlinks, multimedia and interactive features used. It must be clear from the evidence presented what features have been considered by the assessor to allow the evidence to be considered beyond mark band 2.

Evidence of understanding HTML script in task d was implicit rather than explicit in a number of portfolios. For mark band 2 candidates were required to edit script commands. Evidence to support this could include a before and after screen shot of the implications of the changes as well a narrative to describe the changes. Mark band 3 requires evidence of adding script commands to include at least two from graphic, table or hyperlink. A number of candidates concentrated on embedding scripting language code, such as JavaScript, rather than editing and adding HTML script. The use of JavaScript contributes to task c and not task d. This has been contained within reports for previous sessions, yet some centres have failed to address this issue.

In task e a small number of candidates failed to ensure that the website met the design specification; explicit evidence of this is required. It is useful if candidates include before and after screenshots if changes are required to the website as a result of testing. Candidates accessing higher mark points for this task are likely to have tested the website in a variety of browsers.

Task f required candidates to produce a critical analysis of their website in order to gain higher marks. An analysis of the candidate's own performance was also required. In many cases the evidence was a description of what they had undertaken, rather than a critical analysis.

Unit G056 Program Design, Production and Testing

For this unit candidates were required to produce:

- a program specification to meet the given requirement and a description of how their specification meets the program requirements and how they have considered the user's needs;
- a program design arising from their specification and an analysis of the design methods they have used;
- an annotated modular program to realise the design, which must include at least one data structure, all data types, all control structures and all appropriate operators listed in the programming section;
- test documentation including a test plan with valid, invalid and boundary data, expected results, actual results and changes identified as a result of testing;
- a program review and evaluation report including an evaluation of their performance.

Only a small number of candidates were entered for this unit.

G057 Database Design

For this unit candidates were required to produce a relational database to meet a given specification requiring at least three related tables supported by design and analysis notes, technical and user documentation and an evaluation of the database produced.

Their evidence to support this should include:

- analysis and design notes;
- normalisation of the data model to 3rd normal form (NF) with documentation;
- a user interface, including data input forms and methods of obtaining output;
- a working relational database;
- user and technical documentation;
- test plans and the results of the testing of the database;
- an evaluation of the effectiveness of their solution and own performance.

The design produced by candidates within task a must be sufficiently detailed to allow a competent third party to implement the designs if mark band 3 marks are to be considered.

In order to access mark points beyond mark band 1 in task b, candidates must produce a correct entity relationship diagram and, for mark band 3, define the data model clearly and show that it is correctly normalised to 3rd normal form (3NF). Some candidates failed to provide clear details of the entities, attributes, keys, relationships and internally generated or processed data. It should be noted that the use of 'autonumber' primary keys in all entities is unlikely to be an appropriate solution to the database problem. Many candidates provided good evidence to explain how the model was normalised, although this varied from centre to centre.

The data input forms for task c required evidence of data validation and should have been fully labelled in order to access mark band 2. These should also incorporate pull down lists and labels. More able candidates demonstrated the use of forms allowing data entry into multiple tables and customised the database to hide the underlying software.

Candidates were required to evidence the manipulation of data in the database and use queries and reports for task d. More able candidates designed reports with evidence of grouping, arithmetic formulae and used data from more than one table, accessing mark band 3.

The database documentation in task e must enable somebody else to maintain the database. There was little evidence of the use of software generated technical documentation; such documentation does not demonstrate an understanding by the candidate of the evidence generated unless it is annotated. Design documentation created by the candidate often showed a greater understanding of the design of the database for task e.

Testing of the database in task f must include evidence of testing both functionality and rejection of data outside the acceptable range. Where input masks have been used as part of the solution, these must also be tested.

The reflection within task g of how well the database met the specification needed to be a critical evaluation, rather than a description, if the higher mark points are to be accessed. Likewise, the analysis of the candidate's performance needed to be more than descriptive in order to access higher mark bands.

G058 Developing and Maintaining ICT Systems for Users

For this unit candidates were required to produce records of specifying, upgrading and repairing ICT systems, to include:

- records of interviews with two different users to identify their key requirements;
- detailed specifications for an ICT system for each user, along with explanations of the reasons for selecting particular components, in non-technical language;
- records of carrying out an upgrade involving selecting and adding a new component to a system;
- records of carrying out an upgrade by replacing a component in a system;
- records of troubleshooting procedures carried out to identify faulty components;
- an evaluation of the information sources used to find information on components;
- an evaluation of the specifications and approaches taken to specifying, upgrading and repairing systems.

No evidence submitted for moderation for this unit in this session.

G059 ICT Solutions for People with Individual Needs

Candidates will produce a report or presentation for ICT solutions which assesses the needs, defines ICT solutions and evaluates the solutions in response to **three** case studies. Each of the individuals in these case studies will have different needs and candidates need to include **one** case study that relates to an individual who has sensory needs.

For this unit candidates were required to produce evidence that:

- shows an understanding of legislation and the rights of each of the individuals in connection with their ICT solutions;
- shows a clear understanding of the disabilities or limiting factors, and resultant needs, identify and show suitable items of equipment and software as appropriate;
- evaluates the viability and effectiveness of their proposed solutions, indicating how the solutions will enhance the quality of life for each individual;

- presents their reports or presentations in a way that is suitable for the needs of the individuals outlined in each case study, or for a carer if the case study is that of a young child or a person with very limited understanding
- for at least one case study, provides a specification for a complete system, to include configuration and customisation of software and equipment as appropriate and demonstrate that they can customise the available operating system and applications, evaluating their actions and role in solving this problem.

Evidence for task a, on a few occasions, extended unnecessarily beyond the legislation listed on page 117 of the unit specification. Candidates need to consider the implications of the legislation on the individual to secure mark band 3; it is not appropriate to write about the legislation in generic terms.

Task b was, on the whole, evidenced well by candidates; although a small number of candidates did not evaluate the effectiveness of the recommended solution but had been awarded marks within mark band 3 by the Centre.

Task c required candidates to produce an analysis of their solutions in order to gain marks in mark band 3.

Task d required candidates to produce the recommendations in a format that suited each of the users. Some good evidence was presented for this task, although candidates occasionally omitted to provide evidence of verification of the accuracy of the information, as required for mark band 3.

Evidence requirements for task e had been misinterpreted by a small number of Centres. Some candidates presented evidence suggesting that limited customisation of the operating system, application software and the hardware had been carried out. Task e requires alternative suggestions to meet the needs of the user; evidence for this is likely to involve consideration of specialist hardware and software that is available to support people with individual needs, rather than relying on generic hardware and software customisation.

G041: How Organisations Use ICT

General Comments

Performance on the paper was comparable to previous sessions with a good range of marks but very few in the top 20% of the mark range.

Some candidates only submitted task 2 and 3 with the examination paper. It was not clear whether this was because task 1 had not been attempted, it had been completed but not taken into the examination or the centre had failed to send it to the examiner with the examination papers. Candidates that took the risk of not completing task 1 were generally unprepared for the exam and were not familiar with the case study. Consequently, these candidates found it difficult to answer the questions based directly on the case study. Centres are reminded that task 1 must be submitted to the examiner if it is used in the examination.

The work taken into the examination **must only** include the candidates' responses to the tasks set. Class notes, hand-outs and worksheets on aspects of the What You Need to Learn section of the unit **must not** be taken in to the examination. The requirements of task 1 change from year to year, so centres need to ensure that the task is read carefully and responded to appropriately. Teachers need to set deadlines for completion of the tasks so that they have sufficient time to check (but not mark) the work carefully prior to the examination.

Most pre-prepared work was word processed and most candidates had clearly labelled tasks 2 and 3. All reports for task 3 were word-processed as required. Hand-drawn diagrams are acceptable for task 2 and candidates may benefit from hand-drawing the information flow diagram, or at least hand-labelling the information flows, as marks were sometimes lost due to candidates' inability to manipulate text boxes. However, hand-drawn diagrams should be clearly laid out with candidates making use of a ruler to draw boxes and arrows.

In most centres candidates now clearly distinguish between Task 1, Task 2 and Task 3, and put the tasks in order but there are still some where the work is poorly organised. Where examiners have to search for the tasks to mark, they are more likely to find inappropriate material that the teacher may have missed.

Although most centres had secured the work with a treasury tag as requested, there were some who stapled the work together in such a way that it could not all be seen. Please do not do so. The work should be hole-punched in the top left hand corner and secured with a treasury tag. The exam paper has a pre-punched hole to attach the tasks. Please discourage candidates from wrapping the treasury tags too tightly so it is difficult to separate the tasks from the exam paper.

In addition to checking for material not related to the tasks, centres are reminded of the need to check the work carefully for authenticity before signing the Centre Authentication Form. Candidates should be warned that it is very obvious when they simply copy and paste from a website for task 3. While most candidates included the required list of sources, some still failed to do so. Also, quoting the website used in their list of sources does not excuse copying and pasting significant sections into their report.

A number of centres failed to send a Centre Authentication Form but did send individual candidate authentication forms. A Centre Authentication Form **must** be included with the scripts. If no Centre Authentication Form is received, candidates will not receive their results. The candidate authentication forms, however, should **not** be submitted. These should be retained securely in the centre until final results are published. Also, only one Centre Authentication Form is required; it is not necessary to attach one to every script.

Care is needed to ensure that candidates are not given too much guidance when carrying out the tasks. Whilst it is acceptable for teachers to ensure that candidates understand the content of the case study and the requirements of the tasks, they should not give help that relates directly to carrying out each task. Too often, the diagrams created for task 2 and the topics addressed in task 3 were similar for all candidates within a Centre.

Some candidates lost marks because they did not apply their responses to the question set – not reading/not understanding the question/not giving the type of response required. The skill of picking out the key points required is something that needs to be taught, as is using the number of marks available as a guide to the number of points they should make.

Centres are encouraged to use the What You Need To Learn section of the unit, as well as previous Examiner Reports, question papers and mark schemes when preparing candidates for the examination. Candidates should also be taught examination techniques to help them provide appropriate answers to the questions. The topics in the Unit Content section of the specification must be taught before candidates sit the examination. Questions in section B can ask about any of the topics covered. Too many responses to the questions in this section suggested that insufficient emphasis had been placed on teaching the content of the specification for this unit.

If candidates use a supplementary sheet because they run out of space for their answers, they **must** indicate to the Examiner that they have done so. Such sheets easily get mixed in with the pre-released tasks and may be overlooked, possibly losing candidates a significant number of marks.

Comments on Individual Questions

Task 2

As in the previous two sessions, fewer candidates gained full marks than in the past, although most gained more than half marks and many gained almost full marks. Most candidates gained the six marks for the boxes, although some lost marks for failing to distinguish between the administration staff in head office and the administration assistant in a garden centre. This resulted in them losing several marks, as arrows to or from an incorrect box cannot be marked. Candidates should be encouraged to copy the terminology in the case study to ensure the entities are labelled correctly to avoid losing marks. Marks were also lost due to candidates describing processes, rather than identifying information, for example 'decides what will be sold', rather than just 'details of what to sell' or 'items to be sold'. Some candidates write a whole sentence from the case study on each arrow, rather than picking out the information and method from it. Such candidates rarely gain many marks for the information flows. The most common errors this session were failing to differentiate between the different versions of the stock sheets and suggesting that the order template, rather than an order, was emailed at the end of the process. Most candidates presented a correctly structured information flow diagram. There were very few examples of complete centres submitting incorrect diagrams.

Candidates need to be taught to use nouns, rather than verbs, when identifying the information and method. Whilst 'completed stock sheet' may be acceptable, 'completes stock sheet' is not. If candidates get into the habit of writing 'stock sheet – post', 'order – email' and so on, they are less likely to fall into the habit of describing processes.

Task 3

This task was very poorly attempted by the majority of candidates, with very few achieving marks in the highest mark band and the majority being restricted to the lowest band. The task required candidates to evaluate the impact on the company and its staff of introducing state of the art greenhouses with computerised environmental control and plant management systems.

To achieve a mark in the middle mark band, candidates needed to include specific references to the case study related to points that were relevant to the task set.

Many candidates provided a textbook or website description of computer- controlled greenhouse systems, disregarding the requirements of the task to evaluate impacts. Some candidates used up 50% or more of their word allocation in this manner. They had also wasted a considerable amount of time searching the WWW for information when what they needed to do was apply their knowledge of the impact of ICT on working practices and methods of production to the given situation.

A number of candidates were penalised due to poor quality of written communication. This was most often due to the omission of paragraph breaks or recognisable sentence structure rendering the report unreadable.

The overwhelming majority of answers were general descriptions unrelated to Progress Plants and its staff. Some candidates did attempt to consider the impact of the implementation but mainly discussed negative aspects, or impacts on the company or its staff, rather than both; thus they could not rise above the middle M band. About 80% were marked in the L band, due to simple and general statements about 'staff', 'loss of jobs' and 'cost of equipment'. Candidates need to focus on the company described in the case study much more closely.

There were very few candidates gaining marks in the H band. This was mainly due to lack of a clear structure to the report and the ability to evaluate both sides of the staff/company question in clear written English.

Centres should advise candidates that the quality of their written communication is important and assessed in this task. A significant number of candidates do not correctly proof read their work and there are a high number of spelling errors present. In addition, a very poor level of grammar and expression suggestive of a lack of drafting or re-reading was noticeable.

There are still many candidates who pass up the opportunity to gain 3 marks by failing to include any attempt at an evaluation. Those who did attempt to evaluate the methods they used gained at least one mark and often 2 or 3.

- 1 Generally this question was well answered, though some candidates lost marks through not identifying the job function properly at the start of the answer; using job titles or adding the word 'staff' rather than giving the job function. Some candidates gained no marks because they did not know the difference between a function and a task. Others lost marks because they failed to identify that a task is something that people do, so it should include a verb, for example they gave 'records of financial transactions' rather than 'keep records of financial transactions'. Candidates also lost marks by paraphrasing answers or being too brief.
- 2 Generally this question was well answered though most candidates only scored 3 or 4 out of 5 by not searching for the extra information available in the case study. Some candidates mixed up the Centre and Head Office Administration functions and gained no marks.
- 3 This question was very poorly answered, with few candidates gaining any marks. Most candidates did not answer the question and explained what Progress Plants does rather than discussing the organisational structure. Some discussed the structure within a garden centre, rather than considering who the Centre Manager reported to, while others were under the misconception that the Centre Manager reported to the Operations Director.

- 4 Parts a and b of this question were answered well by all but the weakest candidates but parts c and d were poorly answered. In part c, the majority of candidates only gained one mark for indicating that the amount on the cheque is compared with the receipt total, with no indication of how this receipt total is calculated. Only a very few were able to gain an additional mark by stating how the difference in value is calculated, ie by subtracting the receipt total from the cheque value.

In part c, there was much confusion between the mail order process and the process at the tills in a garden centre. Where candidates gained marks, it was usually because they quoted the phrase from the case study 'a detailed receipt listing all items supplied along with the price of each and the total cost' and then went on to state that it is printed on multi-part stationery. Some candidates lost marks because they simply listed the items they could see on Appendix 4, rather than describing the receipt, for example by stating that it contained the details of the company, the order details and payment details.

- 5 This question was structured differently from equivalent questions on previous papers, with 2 marks being available for each section of the process, rather than 10 for the process as a whole. This did not seem to have a negative effect on candidates but did provide better differentiation, as candidates were not able to gain the majority of the marks by providing a number of answers to just one or two sections.

Hardware: Many candidates were able to access the 1st mark for this section but then failed to expand their answer to achieve the 2nd allocated mark. This was often because they misunderstood the 'separate screens for incoming and outgoing goods' as two monitors, rather than two data input screens provided by the software. Where no marks were awarded, it was often because candidates had given peripheral devices, such as a keyboard or had suggested that there is more than one workstation.

Software: Many candidates failed to achieve both marks on this section. The main issues were failing to identify the stock control software and failing to identify the storage location or facilities offered.

Input: Most candidates were able to access the two marks allocated to this section of the question. However, this was most usually for the quantity being keyed in. Candidates need to be taught the difference between the product code and a barcode.

Process: There were mixed responses to this section of the question. The most common response was that of using the product number to locate the item record. Some candidates lost marks because their answer did not make it clear that the process was carried out by the computer. For example, some if candidates simply stated that the quantity was added to the number in stock, this could mean the process of physically adding the items to the stock in the warehouse, whereas 'adding the quantity to the number_in_stock field' makes it clear that this is a computer process.

Output: Most candidates were able to access the two marks allocated to this section of the question. However, some missed the point and discussed delivery notes, while others identified the reorder log or the low stock warning but failed to expand on their answer.

It was noted in a few cases that candidates had clearly learnt by rote that 'hardware is what you can touch' etc and simply quoted this, rather than applying this knowledge to identify and describe the hardware, software etc in the system required by the question.

- 6 This question was poorly answered by the majority. In parts a and b candidates focused on the actual catalogue, rather than the process of sending and receiving orders. Very few candidates suggested a suitable improvement in part c, and did not understand that this should be related to ICT. If any marks were given it was through candidates stating a website could be produced, but few of these candidates could give an advantage or disadvantage of a website. Common incorrect suggestions for improvement related to allowing ordering by phone, delivering catalogues with the local paper, and buying a barcode scanner, all which missed the point of the question. Many incorrectly suggested email or made vague suggestions that ordering could be done 'online' without saying how this would be achieved. Where marks were awarded for part ci, many candidates struggled to gain marks for the benefit of the suggested improvement in part cii, although more were able to suggest that the cost of setting up a website could be a problem for at least 1 mark in part cii.
- 7 The vast majority of candidates were able to correctly identify the Data Protection Act for part a. However, despite the relevant bullet in Task 1 asking them to 'explain what Progress Plants must do to comply with legislation relating to ICT', the vast majority of answers simply paraphrased the eight principles of the Act, rather than specify the information that the company must provide to the Information Commissioner.
- 8 Part a was answered with limited success; where candidates recognised that the government was involved the generally managed to find both marks. However, many answers were too general or simply stated that a 'public service organisation serves the public'. The majority managed to gain at least one mark in part b. Where marks were lost it was because two similar organisations were given, eg two different emergency services, or they repeated the example given in the stem. Part c was less well-answered. There were some good answers but many were vague and a number suggested proprietary organisations, such as Tesco, rather than a type of organisation. Most failed to identify more than one service for any organisation.
- 9 Brand names of software lost marks in part a or candidates gave a number of different types of software and left the examiner to select the correct one, which they were not prepared to do. The majority gave some sort of acceptable answer in part b but in some cases this lacked precision. There was a long list of acceptable answers for part c and the majority managed to give at least 3. Common errors included giving age, rather than date of birth or length of service, rather than start date. Candidates should be taught that a database would not store data that will change continuously with time. Other errors included giving two answers for the same mark point, such as telephone number and email address or information that would be stored by finance or payroll systems, such as bank details. Many candidates were able to identify a document to obtain the information from in part d but others gave documents that were insufficient, such as a birth certificate or passport. Whilst these may be required to confirm some of the information provided, they would not provide all the data required.
- Part e was poorly answered. The required format of the answer was 'if this specific information was incorrect, this would be the consequence'. A lot of answers seen were of the type 'if an employee had an accident the company wouldn't be able to contact their family' without any indication of how this relates to the accuracy of the information stored. Such answers gained no marks. Others attempted to link the question to the Data Protection Act, again gaining no marks.
- 10 Very few candidates gained more than 1 mark for this question, with many gaining none at all. Where a mark was awarded it was because there was some general reference to the distribution function being involved in delivering goods. Few, if any, candidates demonstrated any real understanding of what the distribution function in an organisation actually does.

G054: Software Development

General Comments

It was pleasing to note that many centres had actioned the issues raised in the reports on previous examinations. Once again, there was a wide range of marks on this paper with many candidates accessing the marks available for the pre-release tasks.

Centres are reminded that all answers given to questions in Section A must be applied to the case study; in this case A Clean House. However, the performance of the candidates on section B of the paper continues to be disappointing

The majority of candidates had attempted all of the questions producing good quality pre-release material to help them in Section A of the examination paper. Centres are reminded that the work for Task 1 must only cover the topics listed in the instructions to candidates. A minority of candidates had not fully prepared the pre-release tasks failing to submit at least one of the tasks. This strategy disadvantaged those candidates who are unable to access all marks available for the tasks.

There were very isolated instances of candidates not producing work for Task 1 of the pre-release material. There were also some instances where the pre-release tasks for the June 2011 session had been completed. This disadvantaged candidates who were unable to access the marks available for Tasks 2, 3 and 4. Centres are reminded that, although the case study and Task 1 are the same for both examination sessions, Tasks 2, 3 and 4 change from January to June. It is, therefore, vital that the correct candidate instructions are used.

It would be helpful to examiners if centres could clearly distinguish between the tasks, and put the tasks in order. Candidates should be encouraged not to tie the treasury tag into a knot or wrap it through the hole several times – this leads to the examiner having to cut the tag to mark the paper. There were instances where the work submitted for the tasks was not fastened together/named etc. This may cause problems during transit.

Some questions were poorly answered due to the students not reading/understanding the question. The need to read the question carefully and answer accordingly cannot be over-emphasised. Centres should give candidates some guidance on the key words that are used in a paper ie describe, explain and discuss, and the requirements of these key words.

Care is also needed to ensure that candidates are not given too much guidance when carrying out the tasks. Whilst it is acceptable for Teachers to ensure that candidates understand the content of the case study and the requirements of the tasks, they should not be given help that relates directly to carrying out each task. Too often, the work produced for all tasks was very similar for all candidates within a Centre.

Centres are reminded that Section B of the paper can focus on any part of the unit specification. It was obvious that some centres had concentrated on the requirements of the pre-release tasks and the case study and had not fully covered the requirements of the specification. This strategy disadvantages candidates when they are attempting to answer Section B of the paper.

Comments on Individual Questions

Task 2

The task required candidates to produce a system flowchart with the start point being given as a customer contacting A Clean House to arrange a regular cleaning appointment with the end point being the receipt being sent to the customer. There were many instances of the start and end points shown in this task being different.

The main failing on this task was to produce a flowchart rather than a systems flowchart. There were some instances of candidates producing L1 DFD's in response to the task. Those candidates who produced a flowchart, including the start and end being identified, failed to gain any marks for this task. Few candidates were able to clearly identify the columns used in the systems flowchart as being the Customer, Admin/Head Office, the appointments system, the payment system and the warehouse. To access all marks allocated to this part of the task the actions taking place had to be in the correct column.

Those candidates who produced a system flowchart used symbols consistently. It is appreciated that there are many different sets of symbols that can be used to develop system flowcharts but which set is used is irrelevant as long as the set of symbols used is consistently.

Too many candidates failed to achieve any marks for AO4, as they had made no attempt to evaluate the methods used to produce the systems flowchart.

Task 3

This task required candidates to produce a decision table to show the discounts available to customers. Many candidates failed to define all rules and associated actions. There were many instances of candidates failing to use consistent notation in the decision table. Some candidates defined each individual service carried out by A Clean House rather than just defining the number of service in the rules section. This lost candidates marks for this task.

Task 4

Candidates were required to design a printed report layout showing the details for a given day. Some centres misinterpreted this task and designed a report to show either the appointment details for a given customer or the cleaning schedule for a given member of the cleaning staff.

There were a large number of candidates who had produced the evidence for this task using some form of software package. This was accepted unless the screen showed any form of population of fields. If this was present then no marks were awarded for this task.

Section A

- 1 Many candidates answered this question well. Candidates were able to explain why the purpose of a new system has to be defined and were able to provide examples from the case study.

There were, however, still some instances of generalised purposes such as 'to improve/modernise the business'. Some candidates still appear to be confused about the difference between the purpose and the functions of the new system.

- 2 This question focused on the defined, by the owner, user requirements that related to the outputs from the system. Many candidates were able to correctly describe that reports were one output but many failed to describe the daily automatically generated

report. Some candidates incorrectly provided answers which related to the outputs defined by the administration staff.

- 3 Part (a) of the question asked candidates to describe a functional requirement which had been defined by the administration staff.

Many candidates were able to describe that the customer details were to be accessible through the use of a unique customer number. However, some candidates failed to link their answers to the administration staff and so failed to access the marks available for this part of the question.

The focus of part (b) of this question was on the defined hardware non-functional requirements. Some candidates failed to access the marks available by providing answers which were too vague. To access the marks candidates had to provide the number of computers which were either currently being used in Head Office and the warehouse or were required in each location.

- 4 Part (a): Many candidates were able to answer software constraints that had been defined by Island Fly. Many candidates simply provided the generic response of 'standardisation of software'. This strategy gained no marks. Some candidates were able to identify that there was some relationship with the Operating System/applications software being used at A Clean House but were unable to access allocated marks as they did not explain that the vendor was to stay the same rather than the software itself.

Part (b) of this question then required candidates to identify and describe a further constraint that had been defined by A Clean House. Despite the question stating that hardware and budget should be excluded in the answer given a high proportion of candidates provided answers relating to these. If candidates failed to identify the required process constraint – time – then they were unable to access the marks allocated to this part of the question.

- 5 Candidates were required to describe the problems caused by the current system which were having an impact on the customers. Most candidates were able to access all the allocated marks for this question.
- 6 This question assessed the candidates' quality of written communication.

The question asked candidates to explain how the Computer Misuse Act (CMA) could be used by A Clean House if security was breached.

Many candidates were able to describe how A Clean House should protect itself from threats but they were unable to then explain how the CMA could be used if there was a breach in security.

The question asked candidates to relate their answers to A Clean House. Those candidates who did this gave some excellent and insightful answers.

There were a number of candidates who confused the CMA with the Data Protection Act.

- 7 Many candidates were able to provide good descriptions of the advantages and disadvantages of using interviews as an investigation method.

They did not, however, go further with their answers and apply these to the Cleaning manager of A Clean House.

- 8 Many candidates were able to explain how user manuals could be used by the staff at A Clean House.

Section B

As stated previously in this report it was obvious that some centres had not fully covered the requirements of the unit specification and had simply concentrated on the requirements of the pre-release tasks and the case study. This strategy led to candidates being unable to gain marks on Section B of the paper.

- 9 This question focused on the components of the hardware specification that comprise a physical design specification.

Very few candidates scored marks on this question. A list of the component parts of the different types of specifications is given in the unit specification.

- 10 Part (a) of this question required candidates to explain the function of a L0 DFD. Many candidates were able to describe a L0 DFD, gaining the marks allocated, but many failed to take their answers further to explain the function.

Part (b) of this question required the drawing and labelling of two components of a flowchart. Candidates had to provide a symbol and matching label to access the marks allocated. Many candidates failed to clearly draw and correctly label two components and so failed to gain the 4 marks allocated to this part of the question. Many candidates confused the components of a DFD with a flowchart.

- 11 Some candidates were able to gain marks on this question providing excellent descriptions of the pilot implementation method. However, many of the candidates, again, had confused the pilot method with the phased method of implementation.

- 12 This question focused on the use of the e-learning training method.

Many candidates were able to provide a reasonable description of this training method so accessing a maximum of 2 marks.

However, most candidates were unable to provide an evaluation (advantages and disadvantages) of the use of this type of training method.

G055: Networking solutions

General

Tasks were separated and clearly labelled. Notes were completed but in many cases were not related to the case study. Candidates will raise their performance in the examination if they have solid knowledge of the case study scenario to which they are able to refer. Questions about security and health and safety were generally well answered whereas questions requiring technical knowledge and the use of technical language tended to be poorly answered.

Task 2

Many candidates had produced a correct star topology diagram with an accurate number of computers attached, appropriate wireless access and a connection to the internet. Candidates lost marks if the topology was not obviously a star or if it was not obvious that components were actually connected to the network.

Most tables identified appropriate connecting equipment. In some cases this equipment did not appear in the diagram or may not have been labelled so that it was clear what the component was. Justifications for inclusion of components rarely related to the case study.

Candidates generally evaluated methods used to carry out Task 2 well. Some candidates evaluated their solution or their own performance rather than the methods used.

Task 3

Most candidates gained marks in the middle mark band. These candidates were able to describe advantages and disadvantages of different methods for connecting to the internet but rarely related these to the case study. Consequently, they were unable to evaluate the use of any method.

Question 1 Part a

Candidates were generally able to identify the ways that information might be shared on a network and could often describe how this might happen. Very few candidates gained the final marks because they were unable to describe how RGC might use these methods.

Question 1 Part b

Candidates lost marks because they described the advantages of sharing the resources rather than how they would be shared.

Question 2

This question was poorly answered. Answers often related to use of the internet and WWW rather than use of e-commerce.

Question 3

Candidates were often able to identify an advantage and a disadvantage but were rarely able to explain why these were advantages or disadvantages for RGC.

Question 4 part a

This part of the question was reasonably well answered. However, candidates often lacked the technical knowledge required to describe the terms fully. The question required a fairly standard definition of intranets and extranets which candidates should be able to easily access.

Question 4 Part b

Candidates were able to describe the benefits of intranets and extranets and also to describe the associated security and maintenance issues. Most candidates gained marks in the middle mark band. To gain access to the higher band candidates should prepare notes for task 1 that allow them to understand the implications of these technologies for a company such as RGC. They should be able to refer to the size of the company and the function of staff such as sales staff, these people may need to work at a different location. Answers were most often general in nature.

Question 5

A relatively well answered question.

Question 6

Candidates often described purposes of file servers rather than functions in their answers to part a. This led to a repetition of points in the answer to part b.

Question 7

This question was poorly answered. Some candidates named specific internet protocols and gained no marks as the question asked for protocols for communicating within the RGC network. Very few candidates gained full marks for this question mainly lacking the technical language required to explain the protocol operation.

Question 8

A number of candidates lost marks here because they described problem logs rather than communication logs.

Question 9

Responses often gave some indication that the candidate realised the reasons for documenting the setting but was unable to convey this in a meaningful way. This question was not well answered.

Question 10

This question was generally well answered although a number of candidates simply wrote about safety issues in general rather than focusing on back strain.

Question 11

Candidates were able to describe methods for securing a network that is connected to the internet and were often able to identify benefits of these methods and, sometimes, limitations. Very few candidates were able to identify that a number of methods are required and that no method is effective on its own. Most candidates gained marks in the middle band.

G048: Working to a brief

General Comments

This report should be read in connection with all previous reports pertaining to this unit.

As with the 2010 sessions, this session was assessed against the specification for use from September 2009 onwards.

As was the case in previous sessions, some centres appear to have failed to take account of the changes in assessment for some tasks. This is particularly the case with the diary tasks, some of which have been changed quite substantially.

The accuracy of assessment by centres still causes concern, with some centres apparently misjudging the quality of work that is required for high marks in an A2 unit. It is not simply a case of candidates not producing enough work – in many cases, centres are submitting reams of sheets – but rather that the quality of this work is not sufficient for the marks awarded. As an example, the requirement for candidates to critically analyse is common throughout many tasks and yet, in many cases, this requirement is not being applied here.

Centres are reminded that the work should be submitted in a format that is appropriate for assessment to occur. In a number of cases, candidates' work had been printed in a font that made reading extremely difficult. As a recommendation, a minimum font size of 8 is recommended, with font size of at least 10 being preferred. Where it was impossible to read, work was returned to centres for reprinting. Whilst this did not overly delay the awarding process on this occasion, there is no guarantee that the need to return work under these circumstances would not delay the award of final marks to individual centres in the future.

Centres are also reminded that there is no requirement for them to submit the associated task completed alongside this unit. Very few centres do now submit the associated task, but it is worth restating for those few centres that do.

Comments on Individual Questions

Task A

This task remains one for which centres are misjudging the complexity required for MB3. In order for marks to be awarded from this mark range, candidates need to research into the theoretical aspects of the task, as well as the more practical aspects of the work. As an example, candidates may be asked to create a website. Candidates would therefore be required to research into similar websites, which would give the "real world" feel, as well as into the theory behind website design and structure. The focus for this could be what a website is, how web pages combine together text and graphics and how a website could be used to achieve a business objective, for example.

In many cases, centres have given students a general scenario. This is good practice and should be encouraged. However, if candidates then produce a report into aspects of the business that have no relevance to the task – such as the organisational structure, or the absence of a working server, for example – marks are limited to MB1 at best.

Task B (i)

The majority of candidates now include at least one formal planning technique in their work and therefore access marks from MB2. For those candidates who include two or more formal planning techniques, marks from MB3 are available. The vast majority of centres now award this task correctly.

Centres are advised to refer to the syllabus for this qualification for a list of acceptable formal planning techniques. This session has seen the advent of diary software as an attempt to complete this task. Printouts of diaries are not considered to show the use of formal planning techniques.

Task B (ii)

The accuracy of marking of this task has improved over previous sessions and centres are now differentiating marks for this task by the amount of detail appertaining to the production of the product. Where candidates are planning to produce the product in one go (sometimes with totally unrealistic time scales) this would be MB1. Once candidates start to plan to create individual, but still “large” elements, such as individual pages, this should be MB2 and, finally, where candidates are planning to create individual parts of pages – such as graphics or videos, this should be MB3. This, of course, assumes that the level of planning is repeated throughout all tasks.

It should be stressed that the planning of tasks only need to cover the period from the completion of the current working practice through to the completion of the main task and support materials. There is no requirement for candidates to plan the completion of the reflective reports (E, F and G).

Task C (i)

The diary should cover the same time period as the planning produced for tasks B(i) and (ii).

As with previous occasions, some centres are correct in their assessment of this task and are well able to cope with the concept of “initiative”, whilst others still seem to struggle. As a starting point, it is worth remembering that the diary is a major part of this unit. The completion of the diary allows the candidate to claim (the stress here being on the word claim, but more of this later) for the completion of tasks.

Task C (ii)

This task has been amended and the criteria narrowed. Candidates are no longer required to show that they have applied skills learnt in other aspects of the course.

For this task, candidates need to provide evidence that they have used both informal and formal techniques in order to produce the solution. This evidence may be limited to comments made within the diary, but in the best cases, candidates included examples of emails sent and received, formal agenda for and minutes of meetings held, as well as transcripts of conversations held with advisors or other recognised experts.

Candidates also need to show that the quality of their work will affect others. This is generally evidenced through comments in the diary.

This task is generally well awarded by centres. Where centres provide minutes, agenda or emails, it would be helpful if these could be specifically referenced on the URS form and reference made to formal meetings in the diary.

Task C (iii)

This task is assessed via the complexity of the tasks completed, as evidenced in the diary. In many cases, the marks awarded for this task do not reflect the evidence in the diary. It would seem sensible to conclude that centres are therefore awarding on the basis of what they have seen candidates do, rather than the evidence they have provided in their diary. As mentioned above, the diary is the student's opportunity to claim evidence of what they have done. Centres are advised to make this requirement clear to candidates and to impress upon them the need for all issues to be identified within the diary. In the best cases, candidates include an explicit comment about issues that have been dealt with during each session. Without such clear evidence, it is difficult to accept even that issues have been dealt with, let alone assess the complexity of such issues.

For MB2 and MB3, candidates **MUST** be justifying the actions they have taken. Without this justification, marks must be limited to MB1. In too many cases, candidates are not justifying the decisions they have taken, and yet are being awarded highly. This is an important criteria for this task and must be adhered to.

Task D

There were some excellent examples of work for this session from this strand. Candidates are now presenting clear user guides that reflect real understanding from across this qualification. Technically, many of the pieces produced are hugely impressive, whilst the information included shows that candidates are very much on top of their understanding of the technical aspects of this task.

Tasks E, F and G

All three tasks require the candidate to analyse their work. Where the candidate merely gives a commentary, without analysis, marks from MB1 are appropriate. Reports that generally read like a conversation are to be avoided if candidates wish to access marks beyond mark band one.

It is also worth stressing that a very small number of centres continue to complete these tasks as one overarching report. Whilst it is theoretically possible for such a structure to be successful, it is, in practice, unlikely. Similarly, candidates need to be focused in their reports (a degree of planning before writing would be beneficial in some cases). In too many cases, there is a degree of cross over between Report E and Report F. Each report must stick to the intended focus and awarding for Report E, for example, should not be based on evidence in Report F.

For Report G, the criteria for mark band one, two and three differ on the source of the comments. Where the candidate, in the report, bases their analysis solely on their own opinion and not the opinion of others, this should be mark band one. Where the candidate bases their report both on their own opinion and that of others, this should be awarded mark band two. Finally, where the candidate uses and refers to the thoughts of others alone, and accepts that the clients' views are paramount, this should be awarded a mark from mark band three. Centres should note that it is not sufficient for the candidate to merely carry out research into the thoughts of others, but must include the results of this research in their written report.

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

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.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

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Registered Company Number: 3484466
OCR is an exempt Charity



OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553