

Applied ICT

Advanced GCE AS H515

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H115/H315

Report on the Units

June 2010

H115/H315/R/10

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

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

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Advanced Subsidiary GCE ICT (H115)

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Chief Examiner's Report

This was the first summer session using the revised specifications for both the externally and internally assessed units. There was no change to the specification for G041 and the performance was similar to previous sessions, although slightly weaker than last June. Some changes were made to G054 and G055 to incorporate stretch and challenge. These changes did not seem to have a significant effect on candidates' performance on either paper, although lack of application to the case study in section A reduced the performance slightly in G055.

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 a particular issue this session for both the examined and the moderated units. In the case of 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.

Report on the Units taken in June 2010

There are significant differences in the way G048 is assessed compared with previous sessions, with the total now being out of 50, rather than 100. This reduced some of the inaccuracies in marking that used to occur but, disappointingly, many centres' marks still needed to be adjusted. Centres must ensure that the quality of the work assessed is of an appropriate standard for an A2 qualification. Candidates also need to be taught the required analytical skills.

Most coursework units were submitted with the correct version of the unit recording sheet attached. However, many centres did not appear to have taken sufficient notice of the changes or to have appreciated their significance, as the amount of scaling applied testifies.

Whilst some 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. As with G048, candidates need to be taught the analytical skills needed for A2 units in particular.

As indicated above, there has been a worrying increase over the last few sessions of instances of plagiarism in coursework portfolios, be this copying and pasting material from websites or copying printed material word-for-word. Candidates need to be taught the difference between using material from websites and other sources to inform their responses and simply copying it. They also need to be taught how to quote existing sources and how to reference them properly. Providing a reference should not be seen as a means of making it acceptable to copy large amounts of material and teachers need to ensure that marks awarded reflect the candidates' own work.

This session it was the volcanic ash cloud, rather than snow, that 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 and responses to other correspondence such as clerical error letters 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.

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 GCE Applied ICT

General

This session was the first where a substantial volume of work was assessed and moderated under the revised specification. Although some correctly assessed work was seen, the majority of centres had assessed far too leniently, taking insufficient account of the changes made to the assessment grids or failing to appreciate their significance. This has led to a significant amount of scaling – up to 80% of the centres moderated for several units – up to 50% of the scaling applied was by more than double the allowed tolerance, with some of quite a high magnitude.

As this was the first summer session of the revised specification a higher percentage than normal of accredited centres were sampled and, worryingly, a significant proportion of these centres had their marks adjusted. It is vital that the named staff from accredited centres attend INSET annually to keep up to date with the application of marking criteria and the standards required.

Another significant change this year was the introduction of the OCR repository for submitting work to the moderator. The main effect of this change that caught a number of centres out was the change in the component codes. The component code 01 is now for units submitted via the OCR repository, while 02 is for postal submission. Of those centres that entered candidates using the 01 component code, only a very small number actually intended to submit work via the repository, with the vast majority of the work arriving with the moderator by post. Please ensure that you use the correct component code for all future sessions. This session OCR has not charged centres for changes to entries due to entering the wrong component code; this may not be the case in future sessions, so centres using the wrong code may find they have made an expensive error.

Due to the fact that this qualification was written and amended with paper based evidence in mind, centres need to think carefully before selecting to submit work via the repository. It should simply 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. 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 the moderator can select and request an appropriate sample. 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. While snow caused problems in January, this session it was the volcanic ash cloud. 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.

Report on the Units taken in June 2010

It is vital that the moderator can read the marks awarded on the MS1 to select a representative sample. Changes made on the top copy are not always readable on the moderator's copy, resulting in delays while these are clarified. When centres use electronic methods to submit marks to OCR, a printed copy of the marks submitted must be sent to the moderator. Even if the centre has selected to use the OCR repository for submission of work, a hard copy of the marks must be posted to the moderator, either on a MS1 or as a printout from Interchange or EDI.

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 – the Request for sample (CWL1) letter assumes that the CCS160 has not already been sent. 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. Centres also need to ensure that the mark for each task is clearly shown and that the final total is accurate. Where inaccurate marks had been submitted, centres did not always respond to Notification of clerical error (CWL3) letters and Amendment to coursework marks (CWAMEND) forms appropriately. Please ensure that copies of unit recording sheets are kept at the centre for your records, so that errors can be corrected appropriately.

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 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.

Other areas of concern relate consortia, where it is difficult to contact the correct person in order to resolve a problem. 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. Where OCR has received notification, the consortium as a whole will be moderated as one centre with the same decisions being applied to all centres involved. It is, therefore, vital that internal moderation takes place between all teachers involved so that invalid order of merit issues are avoided.

There were several instances of plagiarism again this session, with some candidates simply copying material from books, websites or other sources, or copying from each other. Candidates need to be taught how to use information to inform their own work, when it is appropriate to quote a source and to what extent and how to cite and reference the sources they use. They also need to recognise that, even if they have referenced the source, producing work that is substantially copied from books and websites does not demonstrate their understanding and is unlikely to gain marks. Centres should make the consequences of plagiarism clear to candidates and be vigilant in ensuring that instances of plagiarism by candidates are identified. Centres also need to ensure that there is enough scope in the assignments provided to candidates for the work produced to be individual. If the assignment brief is too tightly defined, it becomes inevitable that the work produced by all candidates will be very similar. Centres must take steps to ensure that candidates can create their own individual evidence of practical work carried out. It is not acceptable for candidates to be provided with identical screen shots to annotate. However, a **detailed** observation record clearly stating **exactly** what each candidate did would provide acceptable evidence for those tasks where candidates are unable to provide their own screen print evidence.

Comments on Individual Units

G040 – Using ICT to communicate

There was considerable variation in the quality of the work seen. Some was of a very high standard, while some was little better than would be expected at GCSE level.

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 formal 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. For mark band 3 candidates need to ensure the reports produced critically analyse the documents and that presentation style, writing style and house style are compared. It is also essential that improvements suggested are relevant, fully justified and related back to the purpose of the document. An example could be a letter requiring a debt to be paid which is written using friendly language – this obviously does not meet the purpose of the letter as people probably would ignore it. A valid improvement would be for the letter to use a lot sterner language to put fear into the debtors and ensure the monies due are paid.

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. **One of the six** communications should describe different methods of communication and the technologies which can be used to support them. Too frequently this session 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. The requirements for planning and drafting had been misunderstood by many. 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. The next stage is to produce an electronic copy of the **complete** communication to **match the design**. Candidates should then annotate this first draft to indicate changes that they will make to improve it prior to implementing these changes to produce a second draft. This draft too may be annotated with proposed changes before, hopefully, the final version is produced. A hand-drawn exact copy of the final communication is not detailed planning and suggests that this was produced retrospectively. Similarly, providing printouts of the communication at different stages of completion indicating what will be added next, does not meet the requirement for annotating drafts to show development. For mark band 3 for task bi 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. It was pleasing to see that the bibliographies produced by more candidates than usual 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.

In the majority of cases, communications lacked the quality required for mark band 3 of task bii. Communications need to be of a high standard with borders and shading used appropriately. Presentations should have simple bullet points and not paragraphs of text in a small font which, on a screen, would be very difficult to read from the back of a room. Documents printed in black and white should have font and background colours chosen carefully to aid viewing. There also needs to be some evidence of how information from existing sources has been adapted – the emphasis should be on the word some as it is not necessary to include reams of screens shots showing step by step what has been done. A few selected screen shots showing the original material and the outcome after manipulation is sufficient – for example a picture may have been cropped, re-coloured and merged with other images to create a logo. Prints of the original images and the final logo should provide adequate evidence in this case. 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.

Many centres have failed to notice the change to the assessment grid and thought that including a template or two gave access to mark band 3 of task biii. Mark band 3 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. Overt evidence should be included to prove automation has been used. It should also be noted that some candidates are unsure of what a template is. Templates are the base of a standard communication which can then be populated with content to ensure a consistent style is achieved. It is not, therefore, appropriate for candidates to simply save final communications with content in them and claim it is a template, nor is it appropriate to include mail merge fields within a template – a letter template's purpose is to write a letter to anybody about any issue from anybody within the organisation, it cannot be assumed that every letter will be a mail-shot to all customers. A template will contain all the common elements and graphics and then have placeholders prompting the user to add content in the correct locations.

Task biv is improving with many candidates showing on-going evaluation through annotation and reflection on their 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. There was also very little on how they would approach a similar task in future in some cases. Evaluation of their own performance was forgotten about by many candidates and others mainly dwelt on the fact that they didn't work hard enough and ran out of time. Centres could encourage candidates to write a final evaluation at the end focusing on how they worked during the whole unit rather than scrutinising individual communications, which should have already been done if the communication cycle is being followed.

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. 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 – ICT solutions for individuals and society

This unit had among the highest percentage of centres scaled and the largest proportion with scaling more than double the allowed tolerance. 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 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.

The screenshot shows a search engine's advanced search interface. The 'Find web pages that have...' section contains four input fields: 'all these words:' with the text 'children's nursing courses in birmingham', 'this exact wording or phrase:' with 'nursing courses in birmingham', 'one or more of these words:' with an empty field and an 'OR' button, and 'But don't show pages that have...' with an empty field. The 'any of these unwanted words:' field is also empty.

INCORRECT The same words have been used in both boxes.

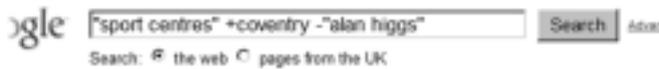
The screenshot shows a search engine's advanced search interface. The search string at the top is '"childrens nursing courses" birmingham OR "west midlands" -adult'. The 'Find web pages that have...' section contains four input fields: 'all these words:' with an empty field, 'this exact wording or phrase:' with 'childrens nursing courses', 'one or more of these words:' with 'birmingham' and 'west midlands' separated by an 'OR' button, and 'But don't show pages that have...' with 'adult'.

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”**.

The screenshot shows a search engine's search bar with the text 'coventry sport centres - alan higgs'. Below the search bar are buttons for 'Google Search' and 'I'm Feeling Lucky'. To the right of the search bar are links for 'Advanced Search' and 'Language Tools'.

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



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.

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. 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.



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 engine is not appropriate for mark band 3 of this task, as frequently they don't actually work.

Report on the Units taken in June 2010

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 well executed by many of the centres moderated. The emphasis is to report on the findings of the investigation and not “tell a story” of what has been done. Findings should be clearly shown in a coherent report which for mark band 3 is well structured and contains a detailed bibliography using similar techniques to those required for G040, task bi, mark band 3. 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. 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.

Task f on the whole was reasonably well evidenced, although some centres focused only on search methods rather than the techniques used to both search and present the 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 generated with a wizard, so the information displayed was easier to understand.

Task g caused problems again this year with candidates either focusing on generic benefits of the internet or talking about how their friends and family use it. For mark band 2, candidates need to research the issues related to electronic information being available outside their daily life. At the very least, this may include looking for a house to buy and how electronic information has sped this process up, although for higher marks wider issues should be considered such as early warning systems and political restrictions. Page 159 of the specification suggests other 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 – System specification and design

Tasks a and b are two separate stages of the specification process and cannot be interwoven. Task a requires candidates to investigate and describe in detail what the user wants to do with the system they will specify. This should include detailed descriptions of all tasks together with details of what data will be input and how the output will be presented. Candidates should then consider the **types** of input and output devices and the software required. For example, they might suggest the need for a scanner or word processing software, rather than specifying the specific version of each, which should appear in task b. For maximum marks in task a, all types of input and required output should be included in detailed descriptions of all the required tasks and types of hardware and software should also be identified to meet all of the required tasks. This task was often leniently assessed. It is vital that the user requirements are clearly understood, so that candidates can evaluate how well their specification meets these requirements, as required by task g.

In task b, candidates should use these detailed requirements to specify a system that can carry them out. The hardware specification should be complete – a processor without a motherboard or tower unit is not much use – up-to-date and include full details of each component being recommended. However, candidates should be discouraged from simply copying and pasting the technical specification from a website. Rather, they should indicate the size, speed etc and why this particular component meets the user requirements. As well as specifying the hardware and software required, candidates must include the specification of any required configuration and designs of toolbars, templates, menus and macros. All of this should form a stand-alone document that could be presented to the user for their approval. For mark band 3 the specification must fully meet the defined user requirements and include detailed designs that fully meet user needs and that would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the user. Too often high marks were awarded when the specification lacked detail, the configuration requirements had been omitted or the designs did not demonstrably improve efficiency or effectiveness.

Photographic and/or screen print evidence backed up by a detailed, signed and dated observation record would improve the evidence for the practical tasks in task c. However, to be of value, observation records need to include individual comments on the tasks each candidate has performed and need to reflect the mark awarded. The evidence must include configuration as well as installation of both an operating system and applications software. Whilst it is recognised that practical activities may be limited by the equipment available in the centre and, consequently, may not match the system specified in task b, candidates still need to create a working system that matches the user requirements as closely as possible. Candidates must include a test specification as well as evidence of testing to go beyond mark band 1. To achieve mark band 3, the testing must be thorough and there should be clear evidence of how candidates overcame problems found as a result of testing. Testing seen often lacked the detail required for the marks awarded.

Similarly, candidates need to include clear evidence of creating templates, toolbars, menus and macros such as annotated screen prints or printouts. Any screen prints must be large enough for the content to be read. At least one each of all four items must be evidenced to go beyond mark band 1, including evidence of testing. For mark band 3, more than one of each item must be installed and tested; the installed templates, toolbars, menus and macros must be those designed by the candidate and must demonstrably improve the efficiency of the user. An explanation of how the user's efficiency would be improved would be helpful here. In several cases, mark band 3 was awarded when only one of each item had been installed and tested.

Task e is best evidenced by a report or handbook for the user on health and safety and security issues. It should cover the content of the Safety and security section on page 39 of the unit specification. While most ergonomic issues were covered, management issues were rarely covered in sufficient detail. Insufficient account was taken of poor spelling, grammar and punctuation when awarding marks for this task.

More centres are correctly addressing task f, although a little more detail is required. Centres should refer to the Basics of software development section on page 39 of the unit specification. However, some candidates are still including descriptions of the stages of the Systems Life Cycle. This is not acceptable.

Evaluation was weak for task g. Candidates must evaluate both their specifications and the methods they used for installation, configuration and testing. It might help if these were treated as two separate evaluations. The first could appear immediately after the specification and consider how well it meets the needs of the user as identified in task a. For mark band 3, candidates need to show that they have identified strengths and weaknesses in their initial specification and refined it to meet the user's needs more closely. Too often, candidates evaluated the method used to produce and present the specification, rather than how well it met the user's needs. This may have been because these needs had not been defined sufficiently clearly in task a. The second evaluation could be produced immediately after completing the practical tasks and consider how the candidate went about them, any problems that arose, how these were overcome and, for mark band 3, how they might approach a similar task in the future.

G044 – Problem solving using ICT

The entry for this unit was comparatively small, resulting in only a small number of Centres being moderated. Some candidates had made a reasonable attempt at producing the evidence required, although there were also some serious misconceptions. The majority of Centres used one of the scenarios issued by OCR or based their own scenario on one of them. In some cases, the solution related too specifically to hardware and networking, without considering the software aspects.

Where candidates gained low marks it was often because they simply regurgitated theory, rather than applying it to the scenario provided. This approach also increases the possibility of plagiarism. Although weaker candidates had clearly only used the information provided in the AS text book, more able candidates had carried out thorough research on types of information, types of software and quality procedures and had applied this to the scenario. There were good examples of system diagrams, although explanations of the system boundaries and environment lacked detail. Also, some diagrams were incorrect, for example showing the internet within the system boundary. Evaluation was also a weak area. Candidates must detail the goals, aims and objectives of their solution in task b, so that they can evaluate, in task g, whether these have been met.

G045 – Software development – design

Evidence submitted for this unit was generally of a good standard, although there were some Centres who had assessed it somewhat leniently. Despite the title of this unit, some candidates described alternative hardware, rather than software, solutions.

There are two parts to the assessment evidence for this unit. Tasks a, b and c are theoretical, identifying and describing the tools and techniques available. Task d to g relate to the solution of a given problem. Where Centres had attempted to combine these two aspects, candidates rarely covered the requirements of tasks a to c sufficiently.

Tasks a, b and c

To achieve mark band 3 for these tasks, candidates need to research the tools and techniques available so that they can describe a wide range, possibly going beyond those listed in the unit specification. Although there is overlap between the stages, candidates were often confused as to which tools are used for analysis, which are used for design and which are used for investigation. It may help to consider the Structured analysis section of the unit specification, as far as the first bullet list on page 48, in relation to task a. Although they can form part of analysis, decision tables, flowcharts and structured English are often part of system design, so task b should include these and the content of the Design of forms and layouts section. Task c should include the content of The investigation stage section on Page 46. To gain mark band 3, candidates should explain the advantages and disadvantages of each tool or technique and how it might be used – examples for the given problem can be included here.

Task d

The report for this task should include both feasibility and design. The feasibility report is assessed in task di and the designs in task dii. As indicated above, the alternative solutions considered in the feasibility report should relate to software rather than hardware, although some consideration of hardware should be included. While some excellent reports were produced with detailed alternative solutions and full consideration of technical, economic, legal, operational and social feasibility, others provided very limited alternatives with only a passing consideration of costs and benefits. The number of marks available for this task should be taken as a guide to the depth of evidence required. As with task e in G043, insufficient account was taken of poor spelling, grammar and punctuation when awarding marks for this task. Candidates must include designs for input screens, output screens and reports for task dii. The latter should include consideration of any calculations required to produce the output. Standard design concepts, such as font styles and sizes and the colours to be used need to be considered to progress beyond mark band 1 in task dii.

Task e

Most candidates attempted to produce DFDs using formal graphical representation with varying degrees of success. Both level 0 and level 1 DFDs are required for mark band 3. These need to use consistent symbols. The flows/entities represented on the Level 0 must be matched by those expanded in the Level 1, showing a full and complete representation of the current system. Level 1 diagrams did not always match the level 0 diagram. All external entities, data stores and processes must be shown with the links between them being correct. Mark band 3 was often not achieved because the documentation lacked the detail required – processes were often omitted. All entities, processes, stores and data flows need to be described in detail to achieve mark band 3. Also, in some cases, there were clear errors in the diagrams produced, such as no indication of the direction of data flows or diagrams with entities and processes but no data stores.

Task f

Again, although some good ERDs were seen, the documentation limited the mark awarded. A detailed data dictionary should accompany the ERD to reach mark band 3. A number of ERDs were seen that contained obvious errors, such as entities with several relationships between them, foreign keys turning into primary keys and strange circular relationships, or where many-to-many relationships had not been resolved. Such diagrams are not acceptable for mark band 3 or even, in some cases, mark band 2. Similarly, errors were seen in data dictionaries such as incorrect relationships given or the wrong end of the relationship being identified.

Task g

This task requires candidates to evaluate both the solution and their own performance. Whilst there was sometimes good evidence of one or the other aspect, there was rarely good evidence of both.

G046 – Communicating using computers

Although the work submitted for this unit was generally appropriate, there was some lenient assessment, with the majority of centres moderated being scaled.

Suitable organisations had been investigated for task a, although candidates did better when they investigated a real organisation, such as their school/college, rather than using case study material. However, whilst it is clearly convenient to base this task on the centre's use of the internet and intranet, candidates should be given the opportunity to investigate other organisations' use of these facilities where possible. The organisations' objectives were rarely stated overtly. Candidates must describe advantages and disadvantages of both internet and intranet use, as well as suggesting several improvements to both to achieve mark band 2. To achieve mark band 3 candidates must justify the improvements they suggest, this was rarely seen. Some candidates had confused an intranet with a shared network drive, particularly when describing their own centre's use. The two are not synonymous and candidates must be taught the distinction between them. It should also be noted that it is the **use** of the internet and intranet that is to be evaluated, not the organisation's website and the structure and layout of its intranet.

Centres should refer to the Internet websites section on page 54 of the specification to identify what is meant by internet technologies for tasks bi and di. Discussion of HTML is not sufficient. Mark band 2 of task bi now requires candidates to describe the use of at least two internet technologies in the nominated website. They must identify where in the website these are used, rather than simply providing a generic description. In mark band 3 as well as explaining the use of the two internet technologies, candidates must analyse how well the purpose of the website is met. This was often overlooked when awarding marks. In task bii, marks were awarded somewhat leniently. Candidates need to do more than simply identify that a particular section of code produces a table or a hyperlink to reach mark band 3. They should explain how the various tags are used and how they translate into the features seen in the browser. Candidates do not need to include the entire code for a number of pages. They could include a screen print of the page as shown in the browser along with **a number** of relevant sections of the code that they can then explain in relation to the browser image. However, care is needed that a sufficient range of different features have been explained. The web pages annotated should be part of the website discussed in task bi, rather than an entirely different site or one they have created.

Task c, was often the least well evidenced. Candidates tended only to consider the costs of hosting the site online. Frequently, bandwidth was given little consideration and candidates failed to describe a range of connection methods, hardware and software. The hardware and software should be that required to produce the website and host it locally. This will include a web server and software, as well as web design software. For mark band 3 we would expect to see some calculation of the likely bandwidth requirements and justification of the chosen ISP in relation to technical requirements. As in other units, insufficient account was taken of poor

spelling, punctuation and grammar. This task should be a single coherent report, rather than a number of disparate sections including material downloaded from websites.

More marks are now available for the design and creation of a web page in task di. This should not simply be the creation of a single web page in isolation. Whilst they are only required to design and create a single page, candidates should plan the website it will be part of, at least in outline. At mark band 1, candidates must demonstrate the use of at least one internet technology and they must identify at least two different internet technologies they have used in their web page to achieve mark band 2. Evidence that the site has been uploaded is required for mark band 3, together with a high quality web page and explanation of the internet technologies used in it. Where marking was lenient it was because there was insufficient evidence of the internet technologies used or the same technology had been used twice. Task dii is about evaluating how candidates approached the development and uploading of the web page, rather than the web page produced. This was accurately assessed in most cases.

It is not possible to cross reference the descriptions of hardware, software etc for task e to those for task c, as task c relates to hosting a website, while this task relates to simply accessing the internet and sending and receiving emails. Candidates are now only required to install one piece of communication software. However, this is a requirement for all mark bands. Differentiation between the mark bands is in how well the installation is documented. For mark band 3, candidates should be producing detailed documentation that would enable someone else to install and configure the software. This should be separate from the evidence that they actually carried out the installation. A detailed witness statement is helpful to confirm the installation and configuration tasks. Care is needed as to what is considered communications software. Compression software, for example, is not communications software, although it may be beneficial to reduce the file size of attachments. Likewise, virus checking software, while essential on any computer connected to the internet, is not communications software. Also, simply configuring an email client that already exists on the system is not installation. There are many freely downloadable browsers, email clients and instant messaging applications that can be installed for this task. As with the installation, the differentiation in the browser configuration is in how well the process is explained and illustrated. The email part of the task requires increasingly complex handling of received emails, with the use of filters required at mark band 3. It was evident that much of the work seen this session had been produced in response to the previous assessment evidence grid, consequently there was more evidence required for some aspects with other aspects missing.

G047 – Introduction to programming

As with G046, much of the work seen for this unit appeared to have been originally produced based on the previous assessment evidence grid and adapted to meet the revised specification.

In task a, centres need to ensure that the program listing provided for candidates includes sufficient techniques for candidates to identify. Centres need to differentiate between the two parts of the task. Task ai requires candidates to identify the techniques, eg they should indicate where different constructs, such as selection or repetition, have been used, while task aii requires candidates to explain what these constructs do in relation to the program. For example, in the case of modularity, candidates should explain what a subroutine, function or procedure is designed to do, how it is defined and how and when it is called elsewhere in the program.

Task b now requires centres to provide candidates with designs for the programs that they will implement. There was no evidence of designs having been provided in any of the work seen. Centres may wish to look at the sample assignments provided on the OCR website to see what they should provide for candidates. Despite the lack of designs, most candidates had produced suitable programs for task b. However, all three sections of this task were often leniently assessed. In task bi, for the award of mark band 3, all of the techniques listed in the Program structure section on page 56 of the unit specification must have been used across the programs

created, including those to improve the readability and maintainability of the programs. Techniques to improve readability and maintainability in particular were poorly evidenced. Similarly, in task bii, the purpose of the programming language used was rarely addressed and there was limited description of local and global variables. For task biii, some evidence of testing that the program works as intended would improve the evidence, as would some discussion of the techniques used to improve the efficiency of the coding. Without some evidence of the briefs/designs given to candidates it is difficult for moderators to confirm that the programs meet these briefs/designs.

Most candidates had produced separate reports for tasks ci and cii. However, task ci should discuss a range of programming languages other than the two candidates have used. Care is needed that this is not simply copied from Wikipedia or a similar source. Task cii was often leniently assessed. Apart from discussing the appropriateness of the languages used and analysing their experiences, for mark band 2, candidates need to suggest at least one improvement to each program and, for mark band 3, they need to give a valid reason for each improvement. There was limited evidence in the work seen.

H515/715: GCE Applied ICT (A2 units)

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, these must incorporate consideration of user requirements, data sources, processing to be carried out and output to be generated. 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. 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; marks were adjusted accordingly. Some centres failed to recognise that function 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 surmounted. 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.

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.

Report on the Units taken in June 2010

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 evaluation 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.

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.

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. 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.

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;

Report on the Units taken in June 2010

- 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 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 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.

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.

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. 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.

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.

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.

In task a, some candidates had only briefly identified input, processing and output; however, this could have been more detailed and would have helped to develop the specification.

In task b a clear description of design work is required; addressing processes, input, output, validation, verification, data structures and file structures. A small number of Centres failed to ensure that candidates addressed all of these.

Candidates must include evidence in task c to show that they have produced a fully working program. Some candidates provided little evidence of development of skills within this task.

Explicit evidence of testing is required in task d. Evidence presented by some candidates was minimal. Sometimes, whilst a test plan had been produced, there was no clear evidence of boundary data being tested.

To achieve mark band 3 in task e the evaluation must be critical; often the evaluations produced by candidates identified some strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement with some user feedback, but often lacked depth and critical content.

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.

Report on the Units taken in June 2010

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.

There is no requirement in this unit for candidates to build a system from components.

Task a requires candidates to plan questions to ask each user. They must use their responses to establish the user's requirements. To achieve mark band 2 in task a, candidates should include detailed questions. Mark band 3 in task a requires more detailed analysis of the user requirements. Candidates must also include supplementary questions.

Report on the Units taken in June 2010

Candidates need to ensure that they use non-technical language in their reports to users for task b. To achieve mark band 2 in task b, candidates should justify their choice of each component. Mark band 3 in task b requires candidates to provide a detailed explanation of the impact on their recommended system of the compatibility of the components and other factors such as cost etc.

Mark band 3 in task c, requires candidates to upgrade a system where additional components and/or reconfiguration are required, as well as an upgrade that requires the BIOS to be reset.

For mark band 1 in task d, candidates should upgrade a system by replacing one component with another that is compatible with the existing system. For mark band 2 in task d, candidates should upgrade a system where the upgrade of one component requires the replacement of another. For mark band 3 in task d, candidates should upgrade a system where the upgrade of one component requires the replacement of another and that requires the BIOS to be changed or upgraded.

A witness statement can provide supporting evidence for task d; however, it must include details of the activities undertaken by the candidate.

For mark band 3 in task e, it is expected that candidates will index their work so as to allow easy reference in the future. This task becomes difficult to award without clear page numbering and the ability to link a problem with a solution.

Task f requires candidates to consider the accuracy, currency and relevance of the information sources used.

For task g candidates should produce a report which contains comments on how their specifications met the needs of their users and the approach they took to specifying, upgrading and repairing ICT systems. Reports that are descriptive in nature will restrict candidates to a maximum mark in mark band 2.

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.

Report on the Units taken in June 2010

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 somewhat weaker than June 2009 with very few marks 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. For example, whilst legislation has formed part of task 1 in previous years, this is not part of the requirements of the task this year. Candidates should not, therefore, have included notes on legislation within task 1 or taken them into the examination. 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. Centres are also reminded that **all three** tasks must be submitted to the Examiner with the examination paper.

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 this session 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, please discourage the use of paper larger than A4 for producing the diagram. Also, please discourage candidates from colouring in the boxes containing the entities. Apart from being a waste of colour toner, it makes the diagrams physically difficult to mark. Where colour is used to link labels to arrows, please ensure that the colours used are readable – yellow text on white paper, for example, is not easy to read.

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.

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. Although most centres had secured the work with a treasury tag as requested, there were still some who used plastic pockets to hold the pre-released tasks. 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 once again has a pre-punched hole to attach the tasks.

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. There were, again, a number of instances of identical information flow diagrams this session. Candidates should also 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. For example, many candidates only made 3 points in question 2, even though there were 5 marks available.

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 content of the What You Need To Learn section of the unit must be taught before candidates sit the examination. Questions in section B can be 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.

Where candidates run out of space when answering a question, they should be encouraged to ask for a supplementary sheet, rather than writing the answer elsewhere on the paper. If they do use a supplementary sheet, 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 January, this task was not as well answered as the corresponding task in previous sessions with fewer candidates gaining full marks, although most gained more than half marks. Most candidates gained the five marks for the boxes, although a significant number lost marks for identifying client or customer, rather than business or company, as the source of the order. 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 'place order', rather than just 'order' or 'order details'. 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. Some labels were too vague, such as 'top copy' or 'name and address', without stating what it was the top copy of or whose name and address. There were some instances of having arrows going in the wrong direction and a number of instances of ambiguous labelling. A common error was to show an arrow going from the cashier to the sandwich maker labelled 'bottom copy of order' when this information should have originated from the administration assistant. 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 'posts invoice' may be acceptable, 'creates and posts invoice' is not. If candidates get into the habit of writing 'invoice – post', 'order – telephone' and so on, they are less likely to fall into the habit of describing processes.

There was, again, some misunderstanding of communication methods by a few candidates. Verbal and written are types of information, not methods of communication. Verbal information can be communicated face-to-face or by telephone, for example, while written information can be passed by hand, by email or by post. Page 27 of the unit specification lists communication methods.

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 relate the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and subsequent regulations such as the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations (1992) to the **use of ICT** within SandwichesPlus. It also required candidates to discuss the impact of this on the **staff** in Head Office. 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 discussion of health and safety in general with little or no consideration of ICT use. Such candidates included discussion of food hygiene, safe use of knives or wearing hairnets and gained few, if any, marks. Although applied to the case study, such references were not related to relevant points and were, therefore, not credited. Other candidates discussed in detail the risks associated with using computers, such as RSI and eye-strain, but failed to explain how the HASAW Act related to these risks, again resulting in few marks being awarded.

Where candidates had discussed the Act in relation to ICT and included suitable case study references, they failed to discuss the positive and/or negative impacts on the head office staff in order to gain more than the lowest marks in the middle mark band. Where impacts were discussed, they tended to relate to the organisation, rather than the staff.

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 This question was somewhat different from the first question on previous papers, as it asked for job roles and tasks, rather than functions. Although some weaker candidates were caught out by this and tried to answer in the same way as previous questions, the vast majority coped well and gained full marks. Where candidates lost marks, it was usually due to lack of detail in the description of the tasks carried out, for example failing to indicate that waiting staff take orders from **eat-in** customers.

2 Many candidates limited the number of marks that they could gain by only providing the tasks carried out by the catering manager that were described on the first page of the case study. Candidates need to be encouraged to study the case study in depth so that they can gain an understanding of the roles of significant individuals within the organisation, rather than rely on the overview provided initially. Candidates also need to be careful how they express their answers; 'a catering event' is very different from 'providing catering for an event'. Better candidates were able to look elsewhere in the case study and provide answers relating to the catering manager's role in the booking process, such as maintaining a folder of standard menus, writing down clients' exact requirements or entering details into the database.

3 This question was generally well answered, with most candidates gaining marks. A few gave answers relating to the kitchen at the head office site or mixed up the procedures used at the different sites.

Marks were sometimes lost in part a because candidates said where the information was obtained, rather than just stating what the information was. Part b was quite well answered with most gaining 2 or more marks and many gaining full marks. Where marks were lost it was due to a lack of precision in the response or saying where information was obtained from but not how it was used. Part c related to **one** supplier. Too many candidates provided information about both the wholesale grocer and the wholesale baker but did not provide sufficient detail about either to gain the second mark, for example they failed to indicate the frequency of placing orders as well as the method.

4 Providing candidates realised that parts ai and aii related to entering details into the spreadsheet, both were answered well. However, some candidates gave the paper order pad and the spreadsheet as methods in ai, which meant they could not gain marks for aii. Part aiii was poorly answered with candidates not understanding what the source of the information referred to in relation to the data entry into the spreadsheet. Whilst the customer might be the original source of the order, the information that is hand-written on the 2-part carbonised order pad is the source used for data entry.

While most gained a mark for 'receipt' in part bi, some lost marks for describing the process of printing it or gave answers the suggested that the thermal printer was the output. Candidates need to be taught that, if they are asked to identify an output, they should do just that, rather than providing a description of a process.

Marks were often gained in part bii because candidates copied a whole section from the case study which included the required responses at the end. Candidates need to understand that it is the processing and calculations carried out by the system that is required in this type of question, rather than what is done by the personnel involved. Marks were sometimes lost for failing to include the looking up of item prices and for making a general statement that the change due was calculated, rather than explaining how. A few added the bread and filling, rather than their prices – perhaps making the sandwich rather than calculating its cost!

- 5 Although some candidates were able to gain full marks on this question, a number limited the mark they could gain to 9 because they failed to score any marks in one section. Candidates lost marks because they do not know the difference between software and hardware and between input and output devices and data. Some candidates failed to read the question and described the system used in the sandwich bar, rather than the one used by the catering department in head office.

The hardware section was poorly answered. Some included telephones as part of their answer, while many thought the electronic diary was hardware. Where marks were gained in this section it was usually for identifying the mono laser printer and the router providing broadband connection to the internet. Very few identified that there was a workstation **on each desk**.

Most candidates were able to gain at least one mark for software, usually for identifying one or more types of general office applications or for identifying the database. Few went on to gain a second mark for a description. The electronic diary was also identified by some, including some who had included it as hardware, but descriptions were too vague to gain a second mark.

Similarly, answers for software lacked the detail required to gain the second marks, although a number of different inputs were often identified. Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that they give the input data first, rather than as the second part of a sentence, for example, 'details of client meeting entered by catering assistant', rather than 'the catering assistant enters details of the client meeting'.

The majority of candidates gaining marks for output gained just one for identifying the quotation. Few went on to indicate that it gave the exact cost of the catering services required or that it was emailed to the catering assistant. The other answer on the mark scheme was rarely seen.

Unusually, many candidates gained the largest number of marks for processes, although others described the actions of personnel, rather than the system. Where marks were lost, it was because aspects were omitted, for example failing to include the number of staff in the calculation to find the price for staff or failing to calculate VAT before adding it to the sub-total.

- 6 This question was answered slightly better than similar questions on previous papers, perhaps because many candidates have experience of eating in, if not working in, fast food outlets that use electronic systems for taking orders. Having said that, too many thought that the 2-part paper order was a strength of the current system in part a. Where candidates did mention the use of spreadsheet as a strength, their reason was more likely to be speed than accuracy. In part b, many of those who had not identified it as a strength recognised that the paper-based system was a weakness either due to errors as a result of poor handwriting or due to the ease with which bits of paper can be lost or destroyed. However, the answers given were not always well expressed. Many candidates made valid suggestions for improvement in part c, usually relating to hand-held devices, concept keypads or touch screens. However, these lacked technical detail and candidates failed to develop their answer, with most only gaining one or 2 marks. Weaker candidates tended to give non-ICT answers or general answers relating to backup. Answers to part cii rarely went beyond training and setup costs, with very few gaining more than one mark.

7 Part a required a fairly precise statement of what the Computer Misuse Act (1990) makes illegal. The majority gave very general answers related to hacking, which gained no marks. Others wrote about personal information, rather than computer material or confused the Computer Misuse Act with the Data Protection Act or the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act. In part b, too many candidates believe that the legislation **stops** people hacking or spreading viruses. It does not. Other candidates gave answers for which they would have gained marks in part a and many discussed firewalls, encryption and other protection methods. Where marks were awarded, it was usually for candidates recognising that hackers could now be prosecuted but such answers rarely gained more than one or 2 marks.

8 All parts of this question were poorly answered by all but the most able candidates. In part ai, many candidates simply gave 'barcode' as an answer without recognising that this represents a number, which is the item of information that identifies the part. Few candidates were then able to describe how this information is used in a stock control system for part aii. Despite the fact that the stem of the question described a production system, many wrote about items being sold. Candidates must relate their answers to the information given in the question. In part aiii, candidates rarely gained more than one mark, usually for quantity or cost, with common incorrect responses being size, weight, colour etc.

In part b, descriptions tended to be too general to gain marks. While some recognised that a stock reaching a pre-set level would trigger an order, they could not describe the processing and calculations involved. Where calculations were described, they tended to be in relation to cost, which was not required.

In part c, candidates seemed to not recall that this was a system in a warehouse for stock control and re-ordering. There were a number of interesting, but incorrect responses demonstrating that candidates have some strange ideas about the use of a robotic system in a warehouse. Indeed many candidates displayed little knowledge of what actually happens in a warehouse. Many responses were mainly to do with a robotic production or manufacturing process so gained very few marks, while others suggested stock control would be more accurate, not realising that the robotic system would only be used for storing and retrieving parts. Many wrote about the improved quality of the product, jobs will be lost and robots can work 24/7. Some candidates tended to see the term 'robotics' and explain 'disaster scenarios' of mass redundancies and plummeting motivation. Where marks were awarded it was usually for answers relating to fewer workers being needed so the wages bill would be lower. Some recognised that there may be job losses, rather than this being a certainty, or that initial costs would be high.

Candidates must be taught about the systems listed in the unit content and how to apply their knowledge to a range of situations.

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 Hideaway Sheds, and are not theoretical. 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, yet again, 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 1 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 January 2010 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 L0 DFD with the start point being given as a customer contacting Hideaway Sheds and ending when the final receipt is 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 L1 DFD rather than a L0 DFD. There were some instances of candidates producing L1 DFD's in response to the task.

Many candidates failed to identify the administration office as the central node in the L0 DFD using, instead, the generic label of Hideaway Sheds. This strategy limited the accessibility of the candidates to the full range of marks allocated for this task/ The central node in a L0 DFD is the specific department with which the external entities, in this case the customer and warehouse, interact.

A minority of candidates failed to label the flows of data between the entities with the direction of flow. This strategy, again, limited the accessibility of marks by the candidates.

Those candidates who produced a L0 DFD used symbols consistently. It is appreciated that there are many different sets of symbols that can be used to develop DFD's but which set is used is irrelevant as long as the set of symbols used is consistently.

Many candidates failed to achieve any marks for AO4, as they had made no attempt to evaluate the methods used to produce the L0 DFD. The focus of the evaluation is the methods used and not, as some candidates produced, a step-by-step guide as to how the task was completed.

Task 3 This task required candidates to produce a flowchart to show the procedures for calculating discounts and the postal charges to be applied when accessories are ordered. The specific details of the discounts available and the postal charges were shown in the tables in the case study.

To access all marks available for this task, candidates had to clearly identify, at the beginning of the flowchart, if the customer was ordering accessories with or without a shed. Some candidates failed to provide a clear indication of this, so limiting the marks they could achieve. Some candidates provided extra detail relating to the delivery charges that are applied by Hideaway Sheds. It is important that candidates produce work that relates to the requirements of the task.

A minority of candidates failed to identify the start and end of the flowchart – this again limited accessibility of all marks available for the task.

Candidates need to be aware of the importance of labelling the flows which come out of a decision box in a flowchart. If candidates fail to annotate the flows then marks for the process attached to each decision are invalid.

Task 4 Candidates were required to design a report showing stock levels. The emphasis of this task was on the design of the report and not the implementation of the design.

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. There were, however, still 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** The focus of this question related to the importance of defining the user requirements during the feasibility study. Candidates need to understand that if user requirements are not clearly defined then this could lead to a system being created which does not meet the clients needs. User requirements should also be referred to at all stages during the systems life-cycle and form part of the review criteria during the final stages of the life-cycle.
- 3** This question focussed on the functional and non-functional requirements of the new system that have been defined.

Part (a) of this question focussed on the functional requirement of the new system that has been defined by the staff who work in the administration department. This question was related to a very precise requirement which had been clearly defined in the case study. Many candidates did not link their answer to the administration department. and so failed to access the marks available for this part of the question.

Part (b) of the question was specifically related to the non-functional requirement defined by the owner of Hideaway Sheds. Many candidates were able to access the marks allocated for this part of the question.
- 4** The focus of part (a) of this question was on the defined hardware constraint which had been defined by the warehouse staff. If candidates failed to provide a response that identified the monitors then they were unable to access any further marks allocated to this part of the question. Most candidates were able to provide answers detailing that the monitors should be upgraded to widescreen TFT monitors.

Part (b) of this question then required candidates to identify and describe a further constraint that had been defined by Hideaway Sheds. Despite the question stating that hardware and time should be excluded in the response given, a high proportion of candidates provided responses relating to these. If candidates failed to identify the correct process constraint then they were unable to access the marks allocated to this question.
- 5** Many candidates were able to access full marks for this question.

- 6** This question assessed the candidates' quality of written communication and was marked using a banded response mark scheme.

The question asked candidates to explain the advantages and disadvantages to Hideaway Sheds of creating the system using off-the-shelf software.

Those candidates who provided examples gave some excellent and insightful answers. Most made generic comments about the advantages and/or disadvantages of using off-the-shelf software but failed to apply these to Hideaway Sheds. In addition, some candidates failed to address the advantages and disadvantages of using off-the shelf software. These strategies restricted the marks that could be gained to the lowest mark band.

It was rare to find a candidate who linked the advantages and disadvantages closely to Hideaway Sheds.

Centres should note that when determining the mark to be awarded in each mark band the spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of technical terms are considered. Candidates should use technical terms appropriately and correctly to maximise the marks awarded.

- 7** Candidates had to identify the relevant Act before they could be awarded the 3 marks allocated for the implications of this act to Hideaway Sheds.

A surprising majority of candidates were unable to provide the correct response to part (i) - the Data Protection Act. The response given to part (ii) of the question were, in most cases, very generic. Responses relating to the 8 principles of the Act failed to access the marks allocated for this part of the question. Candidates needed to explain the implications of the Act rather than simply quoting the principles.

Part (iii) of this question relating to the identification and justification of the type of software that could be used to hold customer records. A worrying number of candidates felt that spreadsheet software could be used. Candidates had to provide the correct type of software before they were able to access the marks allocated for the justification.

- 8** To achieve the marks allocated to this question candidates had to correctly identify the device that would be needed before they could access the further 2 marks for the question. Many candidates were able to access all marks allocated to this question.

- 9** To achieve the marks allocated to this question candidates had to correctly identify the maintenance strategy which would be used to solve the issues identified in the stem of the question before they could access the marks allocated for the description. A worrying number of candidates failed to identify the correct maintenance strategy and so were unable to access any marks.

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 access all marks available on Section B of the paper.

- 10** The focus of this question was on the use of interviews as an investigation method. Candidates were required to describe two benefits and one limitation of this type of investigation method. Many candidates failed to gain marks for this question.

There are a number of standard answers to this question but few candidates seemed to be aware of these. Most candidates seemed to think that people were less likely to tell the truth in interviews.

- 11** Part (a) of this question required candidates to explain the term verification. There appeared to be many candidates who were either unsure as to what verification is or who confused it with validation.

Verification does not ensure that the correct data is input into the system.

Part (b) of this question required candidates to identify one method of verification. This part of the question was, generally, poorly answered. This tended to stem from the general lack of knowledge about the process of verification demonstrated in part (a) of the question.

- 12** This question focussed on data dictionaries which are created during the systems life cycle.

Many were unable to correctly identify two components of a data dictionary. The majority of candidates also poorly answered part a of this question - the explanation of the function of a data dictionary.

- 13** This question focussed on the evaluation of the use of formal methods of modelling data flows. The question was marked using a banded response mark scheme and assessed the candidates' quality of written communication including the use of technical terms.

Many candidates were able to provide a reasonable description of the formal modelling methods so accessing the lowest mark band.

However, to access the middle or higher mark bands candidates had to provide an evaluation, including the advantages and disadvantages, of the use of formal methods. In addition, the technical terms used in the response had to be used correctly and appropriately.

As the keyword used in the question was 'evaluate' a conclusion should have been provided by the candidates relating to the use of formal methods. Candidates must be encouraged to provide responses that are well structured and, in the case of the requirements of the highest mark bands, coherent.

G055: Networking solutions

Pre-release tasks

These were well presented, generally properly labelled and identified to make them easy to find.

Task 2

Physical network diagrams generally showed one or two networks correctly connected. When marks were lost, it was because candidates had created a separate network for each room, rather than a single network that spanned both. In some diagrams the cabling was not positioned appropriately. Candidates lost a mark if they had created a separate network for each room, rather than a single network that spanned both and lost a further mark if they failed to show a sensible positioning of the cabling.

Candidates were asked to include in the table only those components that were on the diagram. Most did this and gave some justification for including those components. Those candidates who were able to justify selection in relation to NWS gained higher marks.

Most candidates had made an attempt at an evaluation. Where this part of the task was missing it tended to be for all candidates at one centre. Some candidates evaluated their solution, rather than the methods they used to complete the task. Again, this tended to be evident in the work of all candidates from a centre. Where a full evaluation of the task was submitted, few candidates were able to successfully evaluate, most just described their methods.

Task 3

Candidates gained higher marks when they identified an issue and then explained how this issue might be dealt with. Candidates in the lower mark band tended to describe a method of dealing with a range of issues but often failed to identify what the security issue was.

Section A

Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that they fully understand the issues relating to the case study and the described network. Answers were often too general and made little reference to the case study.

Question 1

Many candidates did not answer the question. Instead they gave a standard answer relating to the advantages and disadvantages of having a network. This question was poorly answered.

Question 2

This question was answered well. Many candidates were able to identify the connectors and were able to give a valid reason why each cable might be used in the centre's network.

Question 3

Candidates tended to describe hubs rather than wireless hubs and therefore only gained half the available marks for this part. Many candidates described a modem as an analogue to digital converter without describing what was being converted. Descriptions of the functions of a firewall tended often to be descriptions of the purpose.

Question 4

Part a – many candidates did not recognise that the NOS manages network operations. Answers tended to be quite vague, concentrating on the purpose rather than the function of the NOS.

Part b – descriptions of print server software could often be mistaken for descriptions of the functions of a print server referring to making a connection between all computers on the network and at least one printer. Explanations of the function of the software were often limited to managing a print queue.

This question was poorly answered.

Question 5

Part a – most candidates were able to draw a correct diagram of a logical mesh network and could label workstations and cables. A good number also indicated that data flows both ways between individual nodes on the network. Some candidates included one switch or a set of hubs, indicating that they, perhaps, hadn't fully understood the concept of the mesh.

Part b – this part was poorly answered mainly because candidates tended to describe features of a mesh topology such as direct connections between nodes, self-healing properties but didn't answer the question about how data is transmitted from a device on the first floor to a device on the fourth floor through the mesh network.

Part c – candidates were generally able to describe a relevant advantage of the topology and some were able to describe a relevant disadvantage. In general, candidates didn't indicate whether they considered the points they made to be advantages or disadvantages and they didn't relate their points to the case study.

Question 6

Part a – questions ranged from an explanation of what a peer-to-peer network is (mostly correct) to an explanation of the purpose and feature of a peer-to-peer network (again mostly correct). References to the management of this type of network were generally confined to identifying that a network manager may not be needed.

Part b – Many candidates stated that this type of network is cheaper without explaining why. Many candidates stated that if security is compromised on one computer the whole network is affected without referring to how the network must be configured to stop this happening. Again, answers rarely referred to the case study.

This question as a whole was poorly answered.

Question 7

Part a – most candidates were able to give an example of a valid IP address, although some used addresses that looked more like subnet masks and a few included octets over 255.

Part b – where candidates were able to identify a relevant IP address class they were able to accurately state why it was appropriate. Many candidates, however, were unable to identify an address class.

Part c – this question was answered well by over half the candidates. Those who could carry out the conversion invariably gave a correct answer.

Question 8

Most candidates gave answers that fell in the middle mark band. These candidates were able, on the whole, to identify internet services for direct communication and to give a short explanation of the purpose. Most were unable to give a valid use for NWS and therefore did not access the higher marks. Some candidates provided a qualified list of all internet services, having not fully understood the question.

Section B

This section was poorly answered in comparison to Section A. Candidates often lacked the technical knowledge required for the questions in this section.

Question 9

Where candidates related their answer to human safety rather than data security or health, they were able to gain at least half the available marks.

Question 10

The majority of candidates were unable to identify SMTP as the protocol for sending and receiving emails between mail servers. Of those who correctly identified the protocol, a small number were able to describe its function without simply repeating the question. Where knowledge of the protocol was evident, candidates gained all three marks. The question was poorly answered.

Question 11

Part a - Candidates who were able to identify that a switch was required for a VLAN were often also able to describe how it segments the network and commonly gained two marks. A full description was rare and a large number of candidates gained no marks because they were unable to identify the switch.

Part b – a significant number of candidates referred to users accessing the network from home using the internet. These candidates had, in general, not gained the marks for part a and had not understood the meaning of VLAN.

This question was poorly answered.

Question 12

Part a – candidates were often able to recognise the recurrence of a user problem in the admin department.

Part b – answers to this question tended often to be descriptions of the purpose of access rights rather than how they would be used in this situation. Only a few candidates were able to identify that technical support (or administrator) staff would have full access or that staff other than these should have no access or read only access at best.

Question 13

Part a – This question was quite well answered.

Part b – Again, quite well answered. Common mistakes were referring to students accessing the intranet from home.

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 January session, this session was assessed against the specifications for use from September 2009 onwards.

Whilst some centres have coped well with the change in specifications for this unit, others seem to have failed to address the changes. Whilst the content of some strands within this unit have not changed, others have undergone a fundamental restructuring and centres are advised to review their teaching plans accordingly, as well as consider how they award marks for these tasks.

The accuracy of marking still causes concern, with some centres apparently misjudging the high 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 qualifications and yet, in many cases, this requirement is not being applied here. Centres are reminded that there is no requirement for them to submit the associated task completed alongside this unit.

Comments on Individual Assessment Objectives

- a) This report requires candidates to research into the issues of which they need to take account when they are working on the final product. These issues should cover the planning and creation of the tasks. This report should be seen as the opportunity for candidates to research into all requirements of their solution. As a simple rule of thumb, candidates should be encouraged to produce a report that does not assume any knowledge on the part of the candidate and which, when completed, becomes the central point of reference for all design and content questions pertaining either to the general or specific focus of the task to be completed.

The focus of the current working practice is dependant on the choice of project. However, the content should, in all cases, allow the candidate to gain a clear understanding of what needs to be completed. As a general guide, candidates need to consider the general area of focus – such as how general websites may be designed and created to suit a purpose – as well as the specific focus given by the scenario. In order to research into the focus of the scenario, candidates may consider any materials that give them access to further understanding of the intended focus of their work. For example, a scenario that requires candidates to produce a specific multimedia product may benefit from research into other multimedia or non-multimedia materials that intended to meet a similar purpose. These non-multimedia materials may include, for example, written materials.

Centres are generally accurate with the assessment of this task, although there is a tendency for centres to award full marks when a candidate has produced a single strand answer. For example, the candidate may have produced a report into the specific focus area – such as how culinary traditions are expressed in different forms of media – but not have covered general issues, such as what should be included in any website, irrespective of focus.

- 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. Print outs of diaries are not considered to show the use of formal planning techniques.

- b) (ii)** As with all other previous sessions, this marking point is the one which has caused greatest problems for centres. The extent to which previous documents in this series have referred to this issue, combined with the fact that the over marking of this task continues to exist, raise a question as to the validity of these documents.

However, in simple terms, for Mark Band Three, the detail included in those documents that are taken as being formal planning techniques must be sufficient for a third party, with no further information, to work on and create a product that would be recognised by the author of the planning document as being produced at the correct time and at least close to the document planned. Where candidates have shown that they will produce the main report for page one of a published document on the afternoon of the 20th of May, this is detail. Where they have indicated that they will produce the website during the month of April, this is not.

Candidates at Mark Band Two will be planning to create the final product in somewhat more general terms – such as page one, page two and page three. Where the whole product is planned to be produced over one huge period of time, candidates should be awarded Mark Band One.

Similarly, as with previous sessions, some candidates continue to complete a plan for the whole of the GO48 unit – including, in some cases, planning to complete the planning. Leaving such logical conundrums aside, this is not the intended focus period for the plan, which should cover the creation of the product and associated support materials.

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

No changes were made to the criteria for this task. As before, candidates are expected to show that they have both developed and extended their skills and understanding whilst producing their solution to the brief. For mark band 3, candidates must show that they have used initiative in order to make this progress. However, candidates must have shown that they have both developed and extended skills before they may be awarded marks from MB3.

Candidates are advised that it should be clear from their diaries whether the new skill they have learnt is a development of a new skill within a piece of software with which they have previously had experience (development) or a skill within a piece of software which is wholly new to them. As such, the diary is a document for claiming marks, and so the onus is on the candidate to ensure that the claim is totally clear.

Centres are aware of the criteria for awarding Mark Band Three for this task, but seem increasingly flexible about what they accept as achieving the criteria. In order to be awarded Mark Band Three, candidates need to show initiative in developing and extending their skills. Therefore, evidence in the diary must explicitly show how the candidate has used their own initiative to achieve this development or extension.

Centres are increasingly awarding irrelevant initiative. As an example, a number of centres attempted to award candidates for attempting to come to school, despite disruption from snow. Such behaviour is undoubtedly laudable, but is not the focus of this award.

- 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.

- 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.

- d)** There has been a major change in the criteria for this task. Candidates are now awarded on the extent to which they have used skills learnt in this and other units within this qualification. Typically, this would be skills learnt within the G040 unit. For marks within MB3 to be awarded, candidates are therefore expected to be producing support materials of near professional standard.

Support materials should be seen as those resources, other than the product itself, that may be passed to the client at the end of the process. This would therefore exclude, for example, test plans and reports.

Where centres have noted the change in criteria, these were generally applied well. However, centres are advised that for Mark Band 3, the work submitted should be a high quality document which includes evidence that the candidate has gained a good deal of understanding from completing the unit. In this context, a high quality document should be seen as one that would attract marks from Mark Band Three in unit G040. Where candidates produce either a high quality document with little relevant and/or technical content or produce a poor quality document with a good

deal of relevant and/or technical content, this should be awarded a mark from Mark Band Two.

**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 focussed 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.

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