

Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)

ICT Professional Competence

Level 2 Diploma in ICT Professional Competence (PROCOM) **08737**

Level 3 Diploma in ICT Professional Competence (PROCOM) **10262**

Level 2 Award in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Practitioners (PROCOM) **08730**

Level 2 Certificate in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Practitioners (PROCOM) **04816**

Level 2 Diploma in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Practitioners (PROCOM) **08732**

Level 2 Award in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Professionals (PROCOM-Technical) **04818**

Level 3 Certificate in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Professionals (PROCOM-Technical) **04819**

Level 3 Award in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Professionals (PROCOM) **08733**

Level 3 Certificate in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Professionals (PROCOM) **04817**

Level 3 Diploma in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Professionals (PROCOM) **08735**

Level 3 Extended Diploma in ICT Systems and Principles for IT Professionals (PROCOM) **08736**

Level 4 Diploma in Professional Competence for IT and Telecom Professionals **10351**

OCR Report to Centres: 2014 – 2015

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

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

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

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

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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ICT Professional Competence Levels 2 – 4

1. Overview:

Overall, there has been an improvement in the evidence submitted by Centres for the level 2 and level 3 qualifications and it is clear that they have implemented the feedback provided by the moderator. The weaknesses are still in relation to learners addressing the command verbs with respect to, for example, describe, explain, resulting in insufficiency of evidence. Centres are also reminded that learners must not copy from source. Their description and explanations must be their own words. They can refer to sources of information, but their source must be clearly referenced and they must not copy large amounts of text from the source.

There has been an increase in the number of centres offering apprenticeships using the level 2 and level 3 PROCOM competence and technical qualifications. Higher apprenticeships are now being registered with learners undertaking the level 4 PROCOM, which is a verified qualification, using the Level 4 Cambridge Technicals in IT for the technical certificate.

A number of centres are now electing to submit their evidence electronically either through providing access to their e-portfolio system, emailing to the moderator inbox or posting disks and USB drives to their moderator. Centres are reminded to check any evidence that they are transmitting electronically to ensure that there is no corruption. There have been occasions when results have been delayed whilst the moderator (via OCR) contacts the centre to explain that evidence is corrupt and it needs to be re-submitted.

Some centres continue to wait until a learner or entire cohort has completed the full qualification prior to submitting evidence for moderation. It is perfectly acceptable for a centre to submit evidence as units are completed, thereby receiving feedback earlier. This enables centres to address any issues with their learners whilst they are still on programme as in some cases, the learner in question has no longer been available.

It has also been noted that there are still centres that had not reviewed the information from OCR as to who their current moderator is or when that moderator is unavailable. This has resulted in delays in results due to evidence being sent by centres to the incorrect moderator and either being returned to the centre or redirected to the correct moderator. This information will go to the named person within each organisation, which in schools and colleges would be the exams officer.

Where learners are on apprenticeship programmes, they have used evidence from the workplace where permissible. It is accepted that there are occasions when evidence may be commercially sensitive and cannot be included in the portfolio of evidence. In these situations it is important that assessors use observations, questioning and witness testimonies to provide evidence of the context in which the learner is working.

2. General Comments

The following comments are relevant to all levels of PROCOM:

There are still some centre assessors not providing evidence of assessment or justification for their assessment decisions. It is important that the moderator can see that there is assessor feedback and the basis of the decisions made.

Evidence checklists must be completed for every unit. They must be completed in full and clearly identify exactly where the evidence can be found. Some centres are allowing learners to

purely enter report 1 which may be a large number of pages. The referencing must be more specific.

Every learner submission must be accompanied with a candidate submission sheet. Without this, the work cannot be moderated.

Level 2 PROCOM

Overall, the achievements for the level 2 qualifications have continued to improve with learners providing some very good evidence. Learners are still taking the opportunity to use vendor qualifications offered by CISCO and CompTIA as part of their overall achievement. Learner reports now provide more detail including the context of the activity in question, what they are doing, why they are doing it as well as how they are doing it. Many learners are including photographs with some learners presenting video evidence. These are particularly good forms of evidence as long as the quality of the images and sound are good.

Level 3 PROCOM

The overall achievement for level 3 has also improved this year with learners providing some very good evidence of working in complex technical IT roles. Where there have been weaknesses, this has been due to the learner not being in an appropriate job role or working environment and therefore unable to meet the demands of the level 3 units. It has been noted that the vast majority of the evidence has been for the IT technical strand of the qualification with some learners including web development, although evidence for software developers is now starting to appear.

Level 4 PROCOM

The level 4 PROCOM is a verified qualification and therefore approved centres are required to have qualified assessors and IQAs. The learners working towards the level 4 PROCOM are on higher apprenticeship programmes and clearly in high level IT roles, which is clearly reflected in the quality of their evidence. The evidence includes detailed reports, sample product evidence, detailed observations and witness testimonies. The assessors and IQAs are clearly occupationally competent not only with respect to the IT and assessing and carrying out IQA, but also with respect to their knowledge of the sector and industry as a whole.

As a verified model, the EQA has the opportunity to meet the learners and visit their working environment. This has obviously aided the situation where evidence is commercially sensitive and has to remain 'in situ'.

3. Comments on Individual Units

Level 2 – Unit 3 – Organisation and planning of own workload

The following are issues identified by moderators whilst sampling learner evidence:

LO1 – Be able to plan and manage workload.

Learners should not be presenting evidence of working towards their qualification for this unit. It is about the work that they carry out whilst in their working environment and how they prioritise and manage the tasks they have been given. Learners should be providing evidence of their work plan for assessment criteria 1.4 and 1.5, which they could then annotate or include with a report to provide evidence for assessment criteria 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. Learners who have done this well have provided detailed work plans with clear evidence of reviewing the work with specific customers and their colleagues. They have explained the decisions they have made on

their work plans to meet the requirements for assessment criteria 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. This approach works well for learners and keeps the learning outcome in context.

LO2 – Be able to improve performance.

Learners tend to focus on their own performance with respect to customer support. Whilst this is acceptable, they could consider the customer support provision as a whole of which they are a part and identify potential areas of improvement.

LO3 – Know how to identify legislation and regulations that affect your role.

Learners are not required to quote for example the eight points of the Data Protection Act. They are required to identify the legislation and regulation that apply to them when supporting their customer and describe the limitations of their responsibility under these regulations/legislation and who they would refer to and why.

Level 2 - Unit 9 – Hardware Installation

The main issues that occur with this particular unit are related to the following learning outcomes:

LO2 – Be able to plan the installation of an ICT system.

Learners are required to prepare a system diagram for the identified installation of an ICT system; identify and describe the hard components to be installed; plan the installation of different types of hardware components; and describe the constraints affecting the installation. The weaknesses lie in the preparation of the installation diagram and the planning of the installation. Learners evidence should reflect the requirements of industry and be produced so that a third party could carry out the activities in the manner they were intended.

The guide in the third column of the unit specification can provide useful guidance to the learners and assessors as to what is required. Installation plans in particular should be detailed and include the rationale for:

- carrying out the installation
- the location of the installation
- timescales and allocations of tasks
- health and safety considerations (in preparing for the installation during the installation and after the installation has taken place).

Some learners provided very basic job sheets as evidence, which is insufficient.

Level 3 – Unit 4 – Management and prioritisation of own schedule

LO2 – Understand how to identify opportunities for professional development

Assessment criterion 2.4 – create and justify a personal development plan

Assessment criterion 2.5 – describe opportunities for training and development and explain the relevance of these choices

Some assessors and their learners submit the learners' individual training plan as evidence for these two assessment criteria. The value of this document very much depends on how well they are completed and the involvement the learner has in their completion and updating. Not all learners are in a working environment that has a formal training programme in place for the employees and therefore learners should be assisted in developing their skills with respect to the completion and review of a personal development plan.

Learners need to carry out a SWOT analysis and consider the personal development that they need to undertake. The personal development plan should have SMART targets, which are both long term and short term with clear timescales for achievement, information on how the learner is going to work towards these targets and a rationale as to the benefits of these development activities. Based on the development needs identified in the development plan, learners should then describe the different training and development opportunities available to them to assist in their professional development and how these opportunities are relevant to their plan.

Many learners provide very detailed personal development plans with evidence of reviewing their progress and adjusting their plans accordingly. This is good practice and important for learners to consider their own development needs.

LO3 – Understand the implications of legislation and regulations on tasks

Learners tend to regurgitate the wording of the different legislation or regulations as opposed to describing the key aspects of each. The learners are required to identify the legislation/regulations that apply when supporting customer types (assessment criterion 3.1), describe the key aspects (assessment criterion 3.2) and explain how these legislation/regulation may affect customer service (assessment criterion 3.3). Learners should be encouraged to provide specific examples, which would help them with their explanations and put the subject matter in context.

Level 3 – Unit 32 – Web Development

A number of learners who are in smaller companies clearly multi-task within their job roles are often required to develop websites for either their own organisation or clients. Learners who have developed websites have provide good evidence confirming their knowledge and understanding of web architecture and components as well as the technologies required to build and operate a website. The evidence for LO3 – Develop a website specification and LO4 – Implement elements of a website have been evidence through detailed development documentation and the actual working website which in many cases has 'gone live'.

Level 4 PROCOM

The number of units actually being submitted at the moment is low due to the qualification still being relatively new and the small number of learners on programme.

Centres are being cautious and ensuring that the learners are in an appropriate working environments and selecting units which reflect their overall job roles. In addition, many centres are considering a more holistic approach and looking at units which are mutually supportive of each other. Examples of such units are unit 225 – Technical advice and guidance and unit 226 – Technical fault diagnosis, these units are mutually supportive but could easily link to evidence for unit 200 – Working with ICT hardware and equipment and unit 224 – Remote support for ICT products or services. Learners should be encouraged to look at the range of tasks they carry out and how these tasks draw on the knowledge, skills and understanding within the units identified. Careful planning of the presentation of evidence can result in much smarter assessment. Personal statements supported by photographs and/ or video, assessor observations and witness testimonies are excellent forms of evidence and can reduce the amount of evidence that a learner needs to present through endless repetition.

4. Sector Update

The new Trailblazer Apprenticeships are the new apprenticeship programmes based on standards that have been designed by employers for employers. The standards will replace the existing standards from 2017. OCR will be offering the new standards at level 4 in Network

Engineering and Software Developer. The assessment for these particular qualifications will be different from the current assessment strategy. For the Technical Knowledge and Understanding aspect, learners will have to achieve at least on internationally recognised vendor or professional qualification. Other areas of knowledge will be evidence through the Knowledge Modules. In the final few months of their apprenticeship, an apprentice will be ready for summative assessment and grading. The summative assessment will consist of a summative portfolio, a synoptic project and an employee reference and an interview. These particular apprenticeships will be graded as pass, merit or distinction. There will be one holistic grade awarding by the independent assessor. This is given to the apprentice after all elements of the summative assessment has been formally assessed.

The following standards are due to be released over the next few months:

- Infrastructure Technicians
- Digital Marketers
- Software Testers
- Cyber Intrusion Analysts
- Data Analysts
- Unified Communications Trouble-shooters

Standards which are due to be developed in the following year or so include:

- IT Support – level 2
- Digital Business Admin – level 2
- Software Development Technician – level 3
- IT Services and Sales Technician – level 3
- Telecoms and Unified Comms – level 3
- Digital Business – level 3
- Business Analyst – level 4
- Information and Cyber Security – level 4

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