Cambridge Nationals

ICT

Level 1/2 Cambridge National Award in ICT **J800**

Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in ICT **J810**

Level 1/2 Cambridge National Diploma in ICT **J820**

OCR Report to Centres January 2016

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

External Examination (R001)

General Comments

Centres are reminded that they should cover the specification for the unit and then, having done so, spend some time preparing for the examination by using the areas for suggested study given in the pre-release materials. Hopefully, in doing so, centres will then allow candidates the opportunity to answer the whole of the paper with sufficient understanding and depth.

Centres are also reminded of the importance of context within the answers given. Candidates must provide answers which fit the scenario and should not give answers of a generic nature where little credit can be given.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1 posed the usual straight-forward questions intended to settle candidates into the exam. The question was well answered by most candidates, although some gave answers that suggested that the paper would be the ultimate store of the information provided, which did not fit the scenario.

Questions 2a and b were equally well answered. However, questions 2c and d were targeted at the more able candidates and the answers provided bore this out. Of the four marks available for these two questions, some candidates did indeed achieve full marks, whilst others did not fare so well. In many cases, candidates achieved one mark for each question, often with quite weak answers that suggested only marginal understanding of databases.

Questions 3a and b offered something of a contrast to Question 2. Whilst, to some extent these were equally technical, candidates were more able to cope and gave answers that often achieved 3 out of a possible 5 marks.

Question 4a was again technical. However, answers here better fitted the pattern established by question 2. It seems that many candidates understood the backup process but failed to understand why it was conducted at night. Many candidates felt that it was to do with how long the process would take, rather than the fact that the surgery was largely closed at night. Question 4b was answered really well by many candidates with the modal mark being 5. However, candidates need to be reminded to answer the whole question. In many cases, candidates did not answer in context or did not even mention backup as part of their answer. Whilst nearly all were able to compare the two possible methods, this lack of context did restrict marks.

Question 5 was heavily reliant both on context and exam technique. Where candidates are asked to identify advantages of a method, they cannot simply identify 'things about', but must think about an advantage over and above other competing methods - in this case, methods of communication. Many candidates gave answers of the nature of 'you can send information'. This is not an advantage, it is a description of the purpose.

Strangely, many candidates were able to give good disadvantages.

Question 6a also stretched some candidates, with few fully able to identify the purpose of an operating system, whilst question 6b provided far better success. For question 6a, many candidates gave answers that suggested that they had confused the operating system with applications software. Question 6c showed a good understanding of the nature of strong passwords, although some candidates gave vague answers (such as 'make sure it's long'),

which were not awarded. Finally, question 6d was surprisingly well answered for what was intended to be a taxing question, with a fair number of candidates achieving full marks.

Question 7 gave candidates an opportunity to show more technical skills. Of these, question 7c proved the most taxing. Question 7ci was not answered well by more than a very few candidates, whilst many candidates scored poorly in question 7cii, often due to exam technique as much as a lack of technical understanding - many candidates repeating 'defragmentation' as their answer.

Question 8 proved rich pickings for many candidates, or at least it did for those candidates who did not think a radio button was a method of listening to instructions. Many candidates achieved at least 7 marks for this question as a whole.

Moderated Units (R002 – R011)

Most of the issues identified by moderators were similar to those seen in previous series and centres. Unit-specific comments are provided below for those units where there were sufficient entries to make generalisations possible. For further guidance and commonly occurring issues centres are recommended to refer to previous Chief Examiner's reports.

Whilst most centres submitted their marks to OCR by the required deadline, many did not send the moderator copies and Centre Authentication Form (CCS160) at the same time. This process is explained in Section 8.6 of the 2014-15 Admin Guide and Entry Codes document for Cambridge Nationals qualifications. Centres are requested not to wait until the sample is requested before sending this information to the moderator. Centres are reminded that where there are 15 or fewer candidates, the work of all candidates should be sent to the moderator, without waiting for a sample request email.

Most centres chose to submit their evidence by post or through the OCR repository but those centres that chose visiting moderation appreciated the opportunity to meet the moderator and to ensure electronic files were seen on the centre's equipment.

Centres making repository entries are reminded that, when loading files for multiple candidates, these must be named using the following format: 4-digit candidate number followed by an underscore, followed by any other text. For example: 1001_specification. This is so the system can 'map' the file to the correct candidate. Some centres experienced difficulties uploading files to the repository because they exceeded the 20Mb limit. In such cases a postal entry should be made and files submitted on DVD/memory stick.

Some centres presented wholly printed evidence which, whilst acceptable, may not be the most effective way of presenting evidence of the products created by candidates. In some cases candidates presented weighty portfolios full of annotated screenshots which could have been effectively replaced by the electronic file of the product.

Most centres correctly completed an OCR Unit Recording Sheet (URS) for each candidate to show the marks allocated. Where evidence is submitted electronically these should be presented within candidate folders rather than separately. Where centre staff added comments to show why each mark had been awarded and where specific evidence could be found this helped the moderator agree with centre marking and provide more detailed and relevant feedback. Regrettably, many centre comments were less helpful as they tended to restate or reword the assessment criteria rather than explaining why it was felt that these criteria had been met. Moderators are increasingly having problems locating evidence where centres submit electronic files with no referencing to indicate which files need to be opened, in which order, to support each assessment criterion. Moderators cannot be expected to search for evidence and may not always find everything. In extreme cases some centres were asked to provide additional information before moderation could proceed.

Some candidates demonstrated a good range of software skills and creative thinking, especially in the optional units, although the documentation produced by candidates did not always match the quality of their final products, with specifications and testing often being weaker areas.

There was concern that candidates from some centres had been provided with additional materials and guidance, over and above that which is permitted. Whilst formative assessment should be an integral part of any teaching programme, formal assessment for this qualification must be summative, ie it must take place once the candidates have completed their learning and been assessed as ready to undertake the assignment independently. Candidates should be provided with the OCR Model assignment and a copy of the marking criteria for the unit when

completing the assessment and teachers may explain the marking criteria to them. Centre staff may give candidates support and guidance that focuses on checking that they understand what is expected of them and giving general feedback that enables them to take the initiative in making improvements, rather than detailing what amendments should be made. Writing frames and specific design guidance must not be provided. Centres are referred to the recent document, 'Guide to generating evidence', which has been sent to them and can be downloaded from the 'Key documents' section of this qualification's area of the OCR website.

Some printed evidence, most particularly where this was contained within screenshots, PowerPoint slides and/or spreadsheets, could not be read by the moderator because it was too small or because of insufficient colour contrast and/or draft printing. Centres should ensure all evidence sent to the moderator can be easily and clearly read. In some cases this can be achieved by supplementing printed evidence with electronic files. Some centres submitting electronic evidence included scans of hand-drawn designs which were of insufficient quality for details to be read. Centres are reminded that they must send to the moderator the same evidence that has been used within the centre for assessment purposes. In some cases the fact that evidence submitted was unreadable suggested that this was not the case.

It was disappointing to note that many candidates, even those achieving at the higher levels, documented their work using slide-show software, which is inappropriate for the task, when considered within a vocational context. When studying R002 it is expected that candidates will learn to choose the most appropriate software for different tasks and outcomes and that they will transfer this knowledge to other units. Many readability problems were exacerbated where candidates had used inappropriate software for documentation.

Problems were encountered with electronic evidence submitted by some centres where the guidance in Appendix C of the specification had not been followed. Some files could not be opened by moderators, usually because the file format was not appropriate. Some files required non-standard fonts and so could not be opened as needed. Where candidates had been taught to export documents into generic formats such as PDF, html, jpg and png this generally solved any compatibility issues. Additional problems were encountered from some centres, where files had not been exported with their components and so could not be viewed as the candidates had seen them. This was particularly true for R005. It is essential that centres check files on a stand-alone computer before sending them to the moderator.

Some centres submitting electronic evidence found generating the requested sample an onerous task, as files were still in individual candidate user areas. Choosing to provide evidence electronically does not take away the need for candidates to produce and hand in for marking a distinct portfolio of work, which should then be kept securely by the centre until after the moderation process.

Many centres are now relying on electronic files for evidence, in postal submissions as well as those using the OCR repository. Some centres submitting work electronically by post also included printed copies of the URS for each candidate in the sample, which was much appreciated by moderators. Centres are reminded that postal submissions allow a mixture of paper-based and electronic evidence, so there is no need to scan hand-drawn designs, so long as any hard-copy materials are clearly labelled to show which candidate they belong to and what evidence they include.

Some centres' marking was found to be over-generous at the higher levels because key words such as 'most', 'thorough' and 'detailed' had been misinterpreted. The glossary in Appendix D of the specification document provides useful guidelines in the interpretation of key words used in the assessment criteria for the units.

Some centres' marks could not be confirmed where it appeared that criteria other than those in the specification grids had been applied. This was mostly where centres were assessing

documentation and explanations where these formed no part of the assessment criteria. This often led to inconsistencies in centre marks and in a number of cases centres were asked to remark the cohort before moderation could take place.

Some centres appeared confused about the purpose of witness statements. These can be used to describe specific actions/outcomes that have been witnessed, for which no other evidence is available. They are not needed if other evidence is clear and must not be used where coursework has been lost, for which the OCR lost coursework procedure must be followed. Some centres included witness statements that did not describe what had been seen for each individual candidate but merely stated that specific assessment criteria had been met. These statements had no value and centres are directed to Appendix A of the specification.

Specific comments on the units submitted.

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

Unit R002

As the only mandatory unit for both Award and Certificate, this unit comprised the majority of entries this session.

Both OCR assignments - 'JB Clothing Emporium' ('Tailored Tops') and 'MStreamIT' continue to be acceptable. Both assignments provide a vocational scenario within which the work should be carried out. Where candidates remained aware of this throughout their work they generally produced more appropriate outcomes.

Moderators could not always agree centre assessment of file structures, sometimes because evidence was not provided to show all (or any) file names and locations and sometimes because the systems evidenced were not suitable for the vocational setting of the assignment. Filing systems based around assignment tasks, rather than considering where files might be located by the business, with regard to future tasks, fit best within the two lower mark bands.

Many candidates chose to use standard source tables to show their sources of information and were often disadvantaged by this choice, as the headings on a standard table are unlikely to fully match the specific requirements of an assignment. In most cases candidates using such generic tables identified the URL and whether or not the item was copyrighted but did not identify any details of the copyright holder, which is what the assignment and marking criteria require. Since it is not permissible for a centre to provide specific writing frames for an assignment and a standard source table is unlikely to fully meet requirements, centres are recommended to advise candidates not to use standard source tables but to create their own documents from scratch – this would have the added advantage that if they chose to create a table they would be demonstrating additional capability within Learning Outcome 3. Some candidates were over-generously credited with understanding copyright when they provided details from third-party websites rather than copyright holders.

Some centres awarded marks over-generously in Learning Outcome 2 when candidates had completed all the data handling tasks but not obtained accurate results. Centres are advised to work through the tasks themselves, to enable them to check the accuracy of candidates' results. Where candidates showed their results in spreadsheet printouts but did not provide any evidence that these had been obtained by appropriate data handling using spreadsheet tools, or where electronic files showed that results had simply been calculated and entered manually, they did not demonstrate achievement of the assessment criteria.

Although candidates from some centres using the MStreamIT assignment created a range of different products for the item of publicity required in Task 2, most submissions were limited to one style of item, often a simple page of text and graphics, sometimes with no obvious function. This demonstrated little creative thought on the part of the candidates and often limited the range of file types produced. It is expected that candidates will have been taught the range of software tools listed in the specification, allowing them to select the type of promotional item they think will be most effective. A significant number created a top-up card, which did not meet the stated requirements.

Candidates using the JB Clothing Emporium assignment generally created some creative PowerPoint slideshows, although some merely copied the instructions rather than creating their own text that met the client's requirements. The best submissions came from candidates who had applied appropriate transitions and animations, appropriately timed for automatic progression.

There are some generally agreed standards for a business letter and many candidates were over-generously assessed when their letters would not have been acceptable in a business environment. Common problems included an inappropriate font face and/or size, lack of or wrongly positioned company and/or recipient addresses, also incorrect salutations and/or valedictions.

Marks in the highest mark band of Learning Outcome 4 were sometimes over-generously awarded by centres when candidates had used only a limited number of formatting tools and, whilst what they had done had enhanced the readability of the work, much more could have been done to make it more appropriate. The specification provides a list of formatting techniques that candidates should be taught and it is expected that a wide range of techniques will be evident in the work of candidates scoring highly in this area. Where candidates had used formatting to improve some, but not all, of their work, full marks in mark band 2 were sometimes over-generously awarded by the centre.

The level of independence when formatting work is assessed in Learning Outcome 4. Many centres provided no evidence for this. Where centres made a comment on the unit recording sheet that clarified any support given, this was helpful and appropriate.

Unit R003

Most centres appropriately provided the electronic spreadsheet file as part of the evidence for this assignment. Where this was not provided it was not always possible to clearly ascertain the overall structure created by candidates, nor the consistency and appropriateness with which some tools, eg validation, comments and conditional formatting, had been used. The overall appropriateness of the final product is key to assessment, rather than simply evidence of using different tools. When sending electronic files, centres are requested to inform the moderator of the version of software used, as some features such as drop-down lists may not work on earlier versions than that used by the candidates.

Many candidates produced effective solutions that met many of the requirements in the model assignment, although few considered the issue of enabling new customers and new products to be added. Where consideration had been given this was generally limited to providing space for them, without thinking of validation or the implications of new entries on invoice requirements. Where macros were included these were largely for fairly generic purposes such as navigation between sheets and simple routines such as saving and printing. Some created macros for routines such as printing for which there is already a software button, in which case they added little if any functionality to the solution.

A few candidates had given a lot of thought to ways in which their solutions could be made user friendly, but most solutions could have been significantly improved in this area and marks in

band 3 of Learning Outcome 1 were often over-generously awarded by centres. Whilst most candidates were able to apply formatting to emphasise headings etc in their spreadsheets, few used it well to help users understand how to use the spreadsheet, eg to identify clearly those cells where data needed to be entered and those which contained formulae and so would be automatically updated. Use of comments and input/error messages was often limited and few candidates added any instructions/explanations for the user. The best solutions ensured that the invoice would fit onto a sheet of paper when printed, with some candidates adding appropriate headers/footers.

Learning Outcome 2 is separated into two parts – the first assesses the appropriateness and efficiency of formulae used whilst the second assesses candidates' reasons for choosing them. Some centres failed to distinguish adequately between these, in some cases being over-harsh in the first section, where formulae were appropriate and in others over-generously awarding marks in the second section where no explanations were given. Centres also often over-generously awarded marks in the second section where candidates had described what their formulae did rather than explaining why these methods/tools had been used. An efficient solution is one where the user is not expected to enter any more data than is necessary and is not required ever to edit formulae, also where functions are used correctly and where future changes, eg VAT rate, discount policies and delivery policies, can be made easily by the user. Candidates who had used LOOKUP functions in their invoice but had no method of avoiding errors if lines were blank were sometimes over-generously assessed by centres.

The first part of Learning Outcome 3 – sorting, filtering and creating graphs – was generally completed very well by candidates and assessed accurately by centres, although some candidates did not provide clear evidence of the outcome of their sorting and filtering. Most candidates attempted some of the modelling scenarios, although few provided a range of solutions where these were required. Where candidates did provide a range of solutions they rarely considered how to present this information to the customer, although some did use the scenario manager tool, which summarised the results, albeit usually requiring a little additional explanation to enable them to be fully understood. Marks in this last section of Learning Outcome 3 were often limited by a lack of explanation of the results and of the tools used. Many candidates appropriately used the goal-seek tool, but candidates from some centres were over-generously assessed when they had not made any use of advanced modelling tools such as this.

Unit R005

Candidates completed this unit using a range of approaches, including websites, mobile apps and stand-alone products created using MS PowerPoint and Matchware Mediator. Both OCR assignments – 'Out and Up' and 'Wind and Waves' were used successfully by centres. Some centres had amended the assignment to provide an alternative scenario which they thought would be more appropriate for their candidates. Where these were of an equivalent complexity to the original assignment this was appropriate, but centres are requested to ensure a copy of any amended assignment is provided for the moderator. In some cases the replacement scenario did not provide an equivalent level of complexity, restricting the extent to which candidates could analyse the brief and demonstrate a thorough understanding of it. In some cases the user requirements were too specific, stating, for example, the type of product to be created, the number of pages/slides to be included and/or the focus of each page. These scenarios prevented candidates gaining credit for determining these for themselves from a more open brief. Where scenarios asked candidates to choose focus for themselves these lacked vocational realism and were not appropriate.

Most centres provided electronic evidence of the final products, which is appropriate. However, some problems were encountered when these products had not been checked on a standalone computer to ensure all features, including sound, video and hyperlinks, worked. If it is found that a product does not work fully on a standalone system then some means of providing more

complete evidence to the moderator needs to be found. Sometimes this can be achieved by exporting the final product in another format (eg PowerPoint exported to CD) and sometimes additional evidence can be provided by, for example, video, screen capture software and/or witness statements confirming the features that work when the product is viewed in the candidate's user area.

Candidates from some centres made use of online web-creation tools. Where these are used well they can allow candidates to design and create suitable solutions but when assessing the outcomes it is important that centres take into consideration the tools that candidates have used and the extent to which the outcome is a result of their own design ideas and efforts rather than provided by the tool being used. Whilst the type of product to be created and the software used for the task must remain the independent choice of each candidate, centres should make sure that candidates understand that the use of pre-populated templates is not acceptable.

Many candidates produced very extensive products, beyond the expectations for this unit, perhaps limiting the amount of time they had to complete documentary evidence. Whilst for the highest marks in Learning Outcome 2 there needs to be sufficient pages to allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to create a clear and coherent navigation structure, making use of drop-down/sub-menus according to the type of product being created, candidates should be discouraged from creating many more pages than they need. However, the assignments do not specify the number of pages needed and it is not permissible for centres to do so – the structure of their product must be each candidate's own decision.

A significant number of centres awarded marks over-generously in Learning Outcome 1 where candidates' specifications were over-brief and general. To be considered 'sound' it would be expected that specifications will address all aspects of user requirements given in the assignment brief and that clear and measurable success criteria that are specific to the user requirements will be clearly identified. Many candidates' success criteria resembled design ideas rather than criteria by which the final product could be assessed whilst others provided lists of criteria which were not inappropriate but were not specific and could equally well have applied to any other design brief. Such specifications were sometimes over-generously assessed by centres.

Candidates from some centres made very effective use of planning techniques such as spider diagrams and mood boards but some candidates appeared to have created one or more of these items in isolation, rather as part of their planning. Other candidates' planning was limited to a storyboard and in these cases centre marks were often over-generous. Site plans are a key element in the planning of an interactive multimedia product. In some cases candidates had created both page plans and a site plan but where these did not correspond with each other the planning could not be considered 'sound'.

There was evidence that many candidates had been taught about areas of legislation such as photo permissions and privacy but, as in previous sessions, there were many centres where simple comments about basic copyright were over-generously assessed.

As in R002, candidates from many centres chose to list their components using a generic source table and this may have discouraged them from providing clear explanations and justification for their choice. In some cases centres over-generously assessed explanations that did not go beyond simple identification of the subject of each image or a statement of where it would be used.

Most candidates were able to produce a working interactive system with at least some choice of pathways. However, to fully meet the mark band 2 requirements of being a 'sound' navigation system it must be robust and allow a user to move easily between pages in whatever order is required. Where candidates have used MS PowerPoint and not removed the 'advance on click' option, a user could easily bypass any navigation system and click through and out of the

presentation. Where candidates have produced applications which operate in full-screen mode with no obvious 'exit' these would cause an ordinary user problems. A website or other product with an inconsistent or inappropriately sized and/or labelled navigation bar would be considered to have poor usability. In none of these cases could the navigation system be considered fully 'sound'. Those candidates who had put more thought into their navigation systems, providing both internal and external links in a logical and structured way, considering where a user might want to go from each page as well as providing all other options were able to access the highest mark band.

Although most candidates' products were well organised many had limited multimedia components and the page layouts were often very simple. Where candidates had used MS PowerPoint they had fewer options for interactive features. Although extremely effective interactive multimedia products can be created using this software this is only possible when its more advanced features, eg a range of trigger effects, are fully utilised. Some centres' marking in the second part of Learning Outcome 2 was over-generous in the absence of any interactive features other than the basic navigation system, which is assessed in the first part of this Learning Outcome.

A number of candidates chose to use on-line web- and app-creation tools. Whilst these can be appropriate, where candidates did not start with a blank template they were sometimes over-generously credited with using advanced tools and techniques when all they had actually done was replaced page names and/or inserted content into ready-arranged places. As for any other unit, if the final product does not clearly show which tools/techniques have been used then candidates need to provide their own separate evidence.

Evidence of testing was not always clear. Whilst extensive screenshot evidence of testing is not required there must be clear evidence what the candidates have actually done. Vague claims such as 'test all hyperlinks' do not show what has been done. Some candidates added dates to suggest that some testing had been carried out as the product was being created, but these did not always match the type of test being carried out, which in some cases could only be done on a completed product. Where tests are only documented after the product is completed it is likely that most, if not all, of the genuine testing that takes place as components and features are added, and all error correction, has already been completed. Where candidates provided documentation to show what they had done at different stages of the creation of their product, including testing features as they were added and making amendments as necessary, however minor, this evidence was much clearer and acceptable. Some candidates were over-generously assessed as having tested during the creation of their products when all they had done was document the development, with no evidence that anything had been tested.

To be considered 'thorough', tests must be clearly identified for all areas of the product, identifying specific areas of the product that need to be tested. Test tables that included only generic areas to be testing cannot be considered to demonstrate a high level of achievement. Where products had only very limited interactivity then the range of appropriate tests was more limited.

The appropriateness of the feedback obtained is an important element of the assessment criteria for the final section of Learning Outcome 3. Factors to be considered include the questions to be asked and the people to be asked, including consideration of how many people to ask. Where candidates' initial success criteria were not clear, it was more difficult for them to achieve high marks here. Some candidates carried out their own evaluation against their success criteria rather than analysing the results of their feedback. This did not meet the assessment criteria.

Unit R006

Candidates submitted work using both OCR assignments - 'The Camera Never Lies', and 'Keep Pets', with a few centres providing their own scenario. 'The Camera Never Lies' requires candidates to create a competition entry that matches the title 'the camera never lies' and which promotes their local area. Although some candidates included both aspects of this scenario within their specifications many concentrated on only one and so did not demonstrate a sound understanding of the client brief. Where candidates had used 'Keep Pets', many interpreted the brief as requiring only the production of a logo, ignoring the more open, supplementary requirement for 'artwork… … to be used in the shop and on the company's website', resulting in simple outcomes that generally did not demonstrate a good range of techniques. Where centres had replaced the brief with their own scenario they did not always provide the moderator with a copy and in some cases this was not of equivalent complexity, which disadvantaged candidates, as in R005 above.

Consistent with R005 and R007, some candidates did not demonstrate a good understanding of what success criteria are, providing lists of design ideas rather than clear, measurable criteria that would allow them to assess the success of their work.

Candidates from some centres made good use of a range of research methods, including spider diagrams, interviews/questionnaires and 'competitor' research but in some cases marks were awarded over-generously where candidates had included examples of some or all of the above, without any coherent thread or evidence that this was part of the planning of their solution.

To be considered 'clear and detailed', candidates' design plans must be sufficient for a third party to implement with little or no additional instruction. Many candidates' designs were limited to a few written ideas rather than a design plan. It is expected that a clear design plan will lead logically to a search for appropriate components. Many candidates did not include evidence of a design/plan for their graphic(s), thereby not fully meeting the requirements of the second part of Learning Outcome 1 at any level. Conversely, other candidates provided two or three alternative (sets of) designs, which were not required by either assignment task or assessment criteria.

Comments in R005 above relating to lists of components, reasons for choice and legislation constraints also apply to this unit.

In some cases marks were awarded in this unit where no evidence could be found for setting image size and resolution and/or storage of digital files and/or the size, resolution, output medium and colour of the image to be presented to the client. Even when digital files were provided for moderation, often the working files were not included, so there was no evidence of the appropriate storage of both working files and final output.

In the first part of Learning Outcome 2, candidates are expected to set both image size and resolution if this is appropriate and possible within the software being used. The 'and/or' in the specification is intended to provide flexibility in the type of image and software chosen. For example, resolution would be irrelevant for a purely vector-based image. Where it is possible/appropriate (which is most likely when the scenario is based around photographs) it is expected that both will be set. The marking criteria assess candidates' reasons for their choices and many centres were over-generous in their marking where candidates had stated what they had done but not provided any reasons. In some cases candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding by setting canvas size and then importing an image for the background which was not of an appropriate size, resulting in a poor resolution final image.

Some candidates provided good evidence of the use of a range of techniques to produce complex images but in some cases the final product was assessed over-generously when it did not communicate the intended message. The final image alone often does not effectively evidence all the techniques that have been used and candidates should be advised to ensure

assessors and moderators can clearly see the range of tools and techniques that have been used.

Where candidates provided evidence of their folder structures these were often weaker than those seen in R002. Centres are recommended to ensure that candidates are taught the benefit of saving intermediary versions of their final product, in editable form, and of the use of folders to clearly separate source files, working files and final products.

The assignment asks candidates to present their image for the competition. It is important that they make their own decision about the method they wish to use and that their choice is made clear within their portfolio. In some cases where centres had made repository entries it appeared that candidates had limited themselves to electronic submission of their competition entries. Had they chosen other methods, this could have been evidenced using an electronic format by the centre.

Unit R007

Although this unit allows candidates to create solutions using audio, video or animation the majority of products presented for this unit were video clips. Most centres provided evidence of the final products electronically, which is the most effective method of demonstrating the quality and effectiveness of the products, although additional evidence of the range of techniques used is generally needed.

Evidence was submitted from both OCR Assignments – promoting the local area and the 'Shoulderpads' assignment, which worked equally well.

Many well-designed, creative solutions were seen this session but in some cases relatively simple slide-shows of images or collections of clips with no real coherence or logical progression were over-generously assessed by centres.

The level of independence when defining the specification is assessed in Learning Outcome 1. Many centres provided no evidence for this. Where centres made a comment on the unit recording sheet that clarified any support given, this was helpful and appropriate.

In order to assess the level of complexity, originality and creativity of the proposed solution within the first part of Learning Outcome 1 it is necessary to assess the candidates' design plans, eg timeline storyboards. These need to be detailed before the required aspects can be clearly assessed. Some candidates did not provide any documentary evidence of their designs. Screenshots/printouts from completed or partially-completed products cannot be credited as designs.

Comments in R005 above relating to success criteria, lists of components, reasons for choice and legislation constraints also apply to this unit.

In some cases it was not possible to find any evidence for the second part of Learning Outcome 2. Although many centres provided the final exported files for moderation, evidence of how the product had been saved in raw editable file format was not always provided. To demonstrate understanding of advantages and disadvantages of different file types some documentary evidence, either from the candidate or in the form of a detailed witness statement documenting verbal explanations, is needed. Centre assessors are asked to be vigilant when marking this section to ensure that only candidates' own work is credited. Where plagiarism is detected the procedures outlined in sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the JCQ Instructions for the Conduct of Coursework should be followed.

Many candidates provided detailed test plans, showing both functionality and qualitative tests carried out, although some test plans were assessed over-generously where they did not clearly identified the tests to be carried out (ie how the item was to be tested) and/or expected outcomes.

To be credited, there must be some clear evidence of testing during completion, not simply a candidate statement saying that this had been done or a date implying this. In many cases tests that were claimed to have been carried out during completion would not have been appropriate or possible until the product was completed, eg testing the length of the final clip or qualitative assessments of the product. If candidates were encouraged to complete an implementation log, this would more easily and effectively demonstrate the genuine tests that are carried out as pages and features are completed/added.

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