

Cambridge Technicals

IT

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

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

OCR Report to Centres September 2017

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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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Cambridge Technical IT Level 2 and 3 - 05340-05358

1. Overview:

Centres have continued to perform well at level 2 and level 3 for the 2012 specification for the Cambridge Technicals in IT. There were a few issues with centres meeting the deadline for the UCAS points (30th June 2017). Centres are reminded that during May and June of the academic year, moderators are in high demand and therefore it is important that moderator visits are booked as promptly as possible.

As this is the fifth year of delivery for many centres, confidence has increased with more centres opting for the more technical units using a wide range of scenarios reflecting industry requirements. The project approach for delivery combining two or more units has also increased within centres providing learners with larger projects to work on e.g. combining digital graphics, web design and e-commerce.

There is a lot of variation in the presentation of the evidence for moderation at all levels. Although more centres are accessing and assessing the learners' evidence electronically, many centres continue to print out the evidence rather than arranging access for the OCR moderator. Centres are therefore reminded that moderators will review all evidence electronically and the Unit Recording Sheets can be used to hyperlink the relevant sections of the evidence.

In relation to the Unit Recording Sheets, it was noted that the degree to which they are effectively completed is mixed within and across centres. It is important that the Unit Recording Sheets are completed in detail with assessors justifying their assessment decisions and therefore the grades they are awarding. This also applies to the referencing of the evidence. References should indicate the exact location of the evidence and not just reference for example, Document 1 or Report 1.

Some centres who are part of a consortium did not understand that the number of free moderation visits do not increase. To clarify, it is two free visits for a consortium regardless of the number of centres involved. It is therefore important that there is one identified co-ordinator who arranges the visit with the OCR moderator. The location of the visit is to be agreed within the consortium and all portfolios for that visit brought to the one location.

At levels 2 and 3, there are still some centres who are not adhering to the demands of the command verbs for the assessment criteria. Examples are as follows:

- if the command verb states 'use', 'demonstrate', 'create', then this requires the learner to provide evidence of their performance. Therefore, if the assessment requires the learner to demonstrate the use of advanced features, then the performance evidence will be seen within the product that they are creating.
- 'evaluate', 'review' and 'compare and contrast' continue to cause problems within some centres. If learners are required to, for example compare and contrast current interactive websites for performance and security, then they are required to compare and contrast them against each other and form some sort of conclusion. Moderators are still seeing evidence presented in a table where the learners are describing each of the websites individually with no comparison taking place at all. The same applies to a review. Learners should be able to review all aspects of what they have produced, how they have produced it, how it meets the requirements of the end user and so on and conclude what was effective and what was not effective.

There are still centres who are not meeting the requirements with respect to internal standardisation. This is a mandatory requirement in order to deliver the qualification and the moderators ask for documentary evidence that this has taken place. There is a useful guide on the OCR website providing guidance on how this can be implemented:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/286460-internal-standardisation-generic-guide.pdf> Failure to comply with internal standardisation will result in action points being implemented by the moderator. Internal standardisation should cover all assessors for all units for all grades with documented feedback on assessment practice.

There have been several centres who have asked moderators to withdraw claims due to errors with the submission. It is important that centres carefully check their claims before pressing the submit button as an error invariably results in the entire claim being withdrawn and having to be re-entered correctly. This is very time consuming for the OCR moderators as well as centre staff.

Centres have made effective use of the OCR community, Customer Contact Centre, subject expert advisory telephone calls and webinars in order to obtain clarification relating to the interpretation of the unit specifications.

2. General Comments

Level 2

This academic year has continued to see an increase in the number of Centres delivering the level 2 Cambridge Technicals in IT qualifications. More centres have taken on an integrated approach this year and created projects which combine multiple units. This has achieved a realistic flow of work that represents the way work would be conducted in industry. There has also been an increase in the number of centres who have also attempted the more technical units such as installing computer hardware and installing computer software.

Some centres are unaware that the OCR Level 2 Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in IT and the OCR Level 2 Cambridge Technical Diploma in IT are on the 2018 performance tables ref: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543275/16-19_Technical_Certificates_2018.pdf. Centres who are aware of the inclusion on the performance tables have used these qualifications as a mechanism to develop the weaker learners prior to moving them on to the level 3 qualification.

Many centres offering the level 2 Cambridge Technicals have use the OCR assignment checking service to have their assignments checked prior to using them with their learners. Moderators have seen some very good evidence from learners as a result and as centres have continued to adapt to the delivery of vocational qualifications.

Centre assessors continue to use a wider range of valid assessment methods but in many centres witness statements are still very weak. Witness statements must be individual to each learner and written in context, with the witness setting the scene, explaining what competent performance the learner has demonstrated and why they are deemed competent.

Level 3

There has been an increase in the number of centres offering the more technical units which indicates an increase in confidence with respect to delivery and assessment of the qualification as well as the interpretation of the unit specifications.

There has continued to be an increase in the number of centres delivering a project approach for the achievement of a combination of units through a clearly defined project. Centres have confirmed that learners have enjoyed working on the units in this way and that it has enhanced their understanding.

The quality of the evidence presented by the learners continues to improve with some excellent evidence being seen by the OCR moderators. Centre assessors and learners have adapted well to the vocational style of the qualification with a much wider range of assessment methods for evidence collection now used. These include video recordings of presentations, design documentation and actual work products.

It has been noted that there are still old versions of software being used to deliver the qualification when there is increasingly free open sourced software available which is up-to-date and viable. In addition, learners are citing old examples e.g. of virus issues from 2012 as opposed to researching more current examples.

3. Comments on Individual Units

Level 2

Unit 1 – Communicating in the IT industry

Centres have few problems with this unit and have been able to devise tasks that can combine evidence across the assessment criteria within the unit itself as well as from other units. Examples of where this has been successful includes combining P2 with P1 from unit 14 (computer systems). For P3 learners are creating leaflets and reference guides for non-technical audiences which also meet the requirements for P2 from unit 14.

Unit 2 – Working in the IT Industry

Most centres delivering this unit have taken on board the guidance provided and evidence has vastly improved. There are still some weaknesses in the following areas which need addressing.

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

LO1/M1 – learners are required to explain the main job role categories within the IT industry. The purpose of this AC is for learners to look at the different categories and the different job roles involved as well as whether the job roles are frequently advertised, if so which location are they in and what potential salary could be expected.

Level 3

Unit 1 – Communication and Employability Skills for IT

The evidence presented by learners continues to improve but there are still some centres making the learners provide evidence for all the teaching content, for example when presenting evidence for P1. Centres are reminded that the teaching content is the minimum of what should be taught and not a tick list for assessment purposes. Learners should be selecting 4 or 5 attributes to explain in depth including why these particular attributes would be valued by employers.

For P4, learners are required to demonstrate a range of effective interpersonal skills. The emphasis remains on learners presenting to the class as opposed to looking for situations where the learner is more likely to demonstrate good interpersonal skills. Some very good examples of peer assessment have been seen by moderators.

Unit 1 provides centres with an ideal opportunity to use evidence from other units but there are still some centres getting their learners to produce evidence which is stand alone, especially for LO3 where they are required to communicate technical information to different audiences. Centre should review the other units they are delivering and consider whether the same evidence could be used between the two units. There are still occasions where learners discuss how others use IT to aid communication rather than demonstrating their own use.

The personal development plans (PDPs) (P7 and P8) still cause issues within some centres with a lack of SMART targets being linked to long and short-term goals and evidence of following the plan and reviewing progress. Where this is being done well, learners are providing strong evidence and achieving higher grades. For M3, letters and CVs have been presented where a centre is using the previous version of the specification as opposed to reading the requirements of the assessment criterion.

Unit 2 – Information Systems

This unit causes the most concern to centres, with some not even aiming for the higher grades and focusing their efforts elsewhere. There are still some learners looking at very large national and/or international organisations which are far too complex for the learner to work with.

There is a vast range in the evidence being presented for P1 with some learners covering every item in the teaching content, whilst others only focus on items mentioned in the guidance. Learners are required to explain how organisations use information. The evidence presented can range from one or two pages to some learners presenting 10 – 15 pages which is excessive.

D1 has also caused some confusion within centres resulting in a misunderstanding of what should be compared. The learners will have explained the issues relating to the use of information for P3. They should have explained the legal, ethical, and operational issues. All that the learners need to do is compare what they have written for P3 with what the issues are for a different type of organisation. For example, if the organisation used for P3 is a private organisation, they would then look at the legal, ethical, and operational issues of a public or not-for profit organisation and compare the two.

The focus for P5 is often wrong with learners describing different information systems and how they may be used by an organisation as opposed to describing the information systems used by an identified organisation.

More centres are taking the opportunity to link LO4 with unit 19, spreadsheet modelling. This works well if there is a clear scenario making it clear what management information the organisation requires. Where this has been misunderstood it has resulted in learners explaining how tools can be used to produce management information as opposed to developing their own.

There is an increase in centres combining units such as 14, 16 and 18, units 12 and 27 with good use being made of Adobe and Serif software. Units 42 and 43 have become increasingly popular although the evidence for unit 43 tends to be better than the evidence for unit 42. Not all centres are aware of the link between units 29 and 30 which are also part of the Cambridge Technicals in Business. This has caused some confusion where learners are working towards both qualifications and have been awarded a full qualification certificate when a centre has not been expecting it.

Centres with games software and subject staff specialising in this area have been able to build up a high-class qualification featuring units that make the most of these facilities and subject expertise. Similarly, centres with access to network facilities, hardware and software have selected and delivered groups of units that enable an IT technician route to be developed. This has meant that centres have been able to tailor specialist courses to offer learners.

For units where learners are required to ‘produce annotated design documentation.....’ to achieve the higher grades, Centres are reminded that the annotation should contain sufficient detail to enable a third party to develop the website, game, animation etc as intended by the originator.

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

4. Sector Update

From September 2016, the new level 3 Cambridge Technicals in IT was available for first teaching. To meet the requirements for inclusion on the performance tables in England, these revised standards now include examinations. The level 2 is available for first teaching from September 2018 and includes examinations. Centres in Northern Ireland, Wales and those not requiring performance points can continue with the 2012 specification.

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