Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level (IAL)
In Information and Communication Technology

WIT02: The Digital Economy
Paper 01

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General comments

Much of the work seen was appropriate and gave the students good opportunities to meet the requirements of the specification. Work was seen that covered the full range of marks available.

The aim is to produce a portfolio of work that reflects the digital economy and how it works today.

Many students produced an index page which helped navigation though this was not needed. Others simply presented each strand as a single or series of PDFs.

Most assessors made appropriate comments on the e-record sheets which were helpful, and showed how the marks were awarded, this often helps the moderator to agree the marks awarded by the centre. However, in some cases these were minimal whilst in others the comments made did not reflect the marks awarded: this did not help the moderation process or the students.

Strand A
Transactional websites:

Centres are reminded to use the specification to teach the topics required for this strand. At times there was evidence of students spending a lot of time describing the theory of transactional websites which is not needed. Some learners looked at several transactional websites and compared them. Again, this was not necessary and meant marks awarded could be agreed. This meant that at times the marks awarded by the centre could not be supported.

Good students produced very detailed descriptions describing all the elements of a transactional website with some very good examples.   Most candidates had chosen different websites within the centres, Amazon and Ebay were popular.

Very few candidates gave detailed descriptions of the site design. When describing the effectiveness of the site candidates did not talk about both strengths and weaknesses, but just gave some general comments. Better work seen evaluated the features of the website in situ.

The best work showed sensible improvements to the website based on objective reasoning rather than subjective opinion. Most gave justifications about how this would help customers and the business.

There were times, however, in this strand that students did not fully understand the verb 'evaluate' and this led to too generous assessment. A few centres' candidates did not go beyond looking at the obvious features of the sites; not all candidates evaluated the shopping experience.

It should be noted that QWC should be taken into consideration in this strand and it is expected that the Assessor comments on this in the e-record.

Strand B
Back-0ffice Processes:

This strand is about how back-office processes that occur leading up to, and following, an online process. The strand requires diagrams with information flow only. The diagrams must be created by the student.

However, not all candidates were able to fully appreciate the main events that take place in the process of an online purchase, as well as what happens after the purchase is made.

The diagrams do not have to be related to the transactional website chosen in Strand A: only a limited number of the candidates related this strand to the transactional website they had investigated.

Most candidates provided more than 1 diagram.   Those who were in Mark Band 1 lacked detail about what information was flowing but were still able to access marks.

The best work showed a full range of processes, for example payments and delivery, with clear details of what information was flowing, or where a Yes/ No decision was needed and its impact.

Strand C
Security:

In the main this strand held few problems. Most students were aware of the three elements and assessment was, on the whole, accurate. Most candidates identified threats and considered their impact with clear identification of protective measures that could be put in place. Legislation was generally mentioned but some candidates did not discuss the legislation.

As with Strand A there were sometimes issues with marks being awarded at the top of Mark Band 2 when there was no evaluation of the effectiveness of the security measures. In these instances, the work tended to be descriptive rather than evaluative.

Some candidates linked the threats to the selected website, occasionally this was not done successfully as the requirements of this strand were missed out.

Strand D
The database:

This strand continues to be a problem with students and centres not fully understanding what is needed. In general, the marks were too generous, often a complete mark band adrift and this put pressure on tolerance.

A few centres created a database without reference to a given dataset. Datasets are provided by Pearson and one of these is to be used. Without a large dataset trends cannot be elicited

nor can meaningful information be collected. This prevents access to marks in the higher marks bands.

Most candidates produced two or more tables with suitable one to many relationships, although candidates showed evidence of testing after the data was imported only about half tested them before importing data.

Most candidates evidenced validation well but there were a few candidates who did not provide any evidence of testing even though the validation setup was evident.

Candidates did not always produce relevant queries and failed to use more than one table with advanced sort criteria. The need to have sorted on multiple fields and to do multiple field / multi table searches was not always evidenced in many centres. Some centres had a very prescriptive/led approach to queries which failed to show independence from candidates.
The best work showed good understanding and evidence of testing, combined with complex queries which yielded USEFUL information that a business could use to make strategic marketing decisions. Collecting information simply for the sake of it does not fulfil the requirements of the higher mark bands. Trends and recommendations, when present, were often brief and repetitive.

A lot of time was wasted by showing pages of evidence of how data were imported when what is needed are screenshots of correct data in correct tables.   Similarly, a lot of effort was wasted in showing every step of creating a query when the need was for the query to be seen in design view, run, then the results shown, possibly interpreted.

Strand E
Evaluation:

This strand was not well addressed and, in general assessment was too generous.

In the most cases students did not evaluate the PEFORMANCE of the database or their own performance but simply described what they had done to achieve the database and how they had used their time efficiently.

There was very little evidence of how well the database worked or from the feedback obtained how it could be improved for the future. Very rarely were any realistic improvements of the database seen in the samples.

General Administration

The sample should be sent to the moderator on a single CD for each unit, the CD should contain all the students in the sample, the work of the highest and lowest scoring students should also be included as extras if not already in the sample selected.

Generally, most centres provided commentaries for each aspect of the unit on the assessor record sheets. Occasionally some centres made very few comments on where the marks were awarded.

The majority of the work arrived on time and securely packaged.

Centres on the whole provided the correct sample of work.

Quite a few candidates produced e-books for the evidence which often slowed the process down having to move on to the next page as the amount of text on each page was minimal. Others produced e-portfolios with links going to PDF documents for each section of each strand e.g. each aspect of 2.3 in strand A had a link to open a document.

A few candidates had used inappropriate text colours and backgrounds in the e-books making reading difficult.