



# **National Qualifications 2008**

## **Internal Assessment Report**

**Subject: Information Systems**

**Assessment Panel: Computing and Information Systems**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification which has taken place within National Qualifications in this subject.

## COMPONENT / COURSEWORK IN NATIONAL COURSES

### COMPONENT/COURSEWORK VERIFIED

*Information Systems: Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher*

### FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

*Insert details relating to specific guidance which should be offered to centres based on the verification of centres. Include:*

- *General comments*
- *Areas of good practice*
- *Areas for further development*

### General comments:

This is the third year of the new format for the coursework task and it appears that centres are becoming more comfortable and familiar with the delivery of the task. The marking of the task continues to improve and this is clearly reflected in the results of this year's central verification event.

At Int2 and Higher, there was a considerable reduction in the number of centres not accepted. Of the 90 centres verified, there were 76 accepted centres and 14 not accepted which equates to approximately 16% of centres not accepted. This trend continues to be encouraging as 28% were not accepted in 2007.

Verifiers noted that the level of candidate response was better this year and centres, in general, marked the coursework task in line with the national standard. The main problems came from candidates not relating their answers to the scenario or task stated.

Verifiers also made the point that it would aid the verification process enormously if candidate scripts were annotated and detailed comments provided in the marking grid to explain why marks have been awarded or deducted or in fact as a guide to the amount of help provided.

Visiting verification for Advanced Higher continues to be very successful indeed. Centres truly appreciate the visit and gain a great deal from the feedback and discussions with the visiting verifier. All AH centres were accepted this year.

## Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

### Int2

#### Part 1: Using Information

Task 1 was generally well done, although in some cases marks were awarded for the table in the advert where there were more than 2 errors. In task 2 (b) some centres were lenient in accepting statements of operations applied to objects without describing them. Similarly very vague statements about HCI were accepted in task 2 (c) which made no attempt at evaluation and failed to relate to the creation of the advert.

In task 2 (d), responses relating to who should be concerned about SAR should have identified a type of user, responses relating to shops and manufacturers were not appropriate. Also responses on guidelines to users of mobile phones had to relate to minimising the effects of SAR and not to general mobile phone use.

#### Part 2: Databases

In general, this section was accurately and fairly marked by centres. There were, however, a number of points that centres should take into consideration in marking future coursework.

In Task 3, some candidates did not have sufficient evidence available to show the design of the database table. Marks cannot be awarded if the data type, etc is not shown. Candidates were also awarded marks for setting up the table using the Currency field type instead of Number for three of the six fields. This denies them the opportunity to attribute marks for setting Format to Currency later in Task 8. The point of this task was to test the candidate's ability to set up a field type and then change the format of this field to currency later on. If candidates set these three fields to currency at the outset, then they cannot get the mark for setting the format of the field to currency as the field type is already in currency.

In general, the verification team felt they were being quite lenient in what they decided they were willing to accept and a tolerance factor of 2 out of a total mark of 30 was agreed which was in line with Int 2 Computing.

### Higher

#### Part 1: Relational Databases

In task 2 (a), incorrect validation rules were marked correct by some centres. The chosen implementation platform requires conditions to be joined using a logical operator. For example, ">=1<=100" is invalid whereas ">=1 AND <=100" is valid. When validating lookup lists, centres need to be aware that this is only validation if the "Limit to list" option is set to yes or a validation rule is entered.

In task 4, marks were leniently awarded for macros/scripts even although there was no evidence of the "close form" which was required by the task.

## **Part 2: Using Information**

In task 6 (a), candidates should only have been awarded the marks if they showed the original values as a separate scenario. The evidence required for goal seeking in task 6 (b) should have been the initial dialogue box rather than the result dialogues box. In task 6 (c), candidates were awarded marks where they had errors in the range boundaries of the IF statement. In task 7, the information on privacy of data had to relate to the data privacy of the campers. Not all aspects of the Data Protection Act are relevant to this particular scenario regarding privacy of data. The security measures could have been explained more fully in certain cases. In the presentation, some candidates did not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the logo was part of the background; that the title/heading was on every screen and that the house style was used consistently across all screens. In addition, care should have been taken to ensure that the graph was fully labelled and that the data used was the top five activities in the table and the graph.

A tolerance of 4 out of a total mark of 60 was agreed for the Higher coursework task which, again, was in line with Higher Computing.

### **Advanced Higher**

Centres continue to appreciate the visiting verification model used for Advanced Higher. It gives the centres the opportunity to discuss and agree on how marks should be awarded to the project. Teachers receive invaluable advice and support on what is expected as the national standard for the project which in turn will help them significantly in the marking of projects of future candidates.

However, the following advice should continue to be adhered to by centres presenting Advanced Higher:

1. Ensure there is evidence for every requirement of the marking scheme.
2. Ensure complexity of the task, particularly relating to the processes involved in the task and the design of the user interface, is at AH level.
3. Ensure that the candidates' system design documentation i.e. data modelling, data flow and entity modelling matches the functional requirements in the specification.
4. Ensure that the process of normalisation from UNF to 3NF is included and has been carried out correctly.
5. Check E/R diagram reflects the normalised data model.
6. The design in relation to normalisation and E/R diagrams should reflect the whole database system and not individual sub systems which have been normalised and E/R diagrams created independently of the other entities.
7. Ensure the design of the user interface is carried out prior to implementation and not screen shots of the interface which has already been implemented.

8. Time allocation should be a plan of how long is to be spent on each activity, not a progress diary of how long was spent on each activity.

9. Candidates must supply evidence of a complete working solution which has been systematically tested to match the original functional requirements.

A tolerance of 6 out of a total mark of 80 was agreed for the Advanced Higher coursework task which, again, was in line with Advanced Higher Computing.

### **Recommendations**

The Coursework Task is intended to give candidates the opportunity to apply their Knowledge and Understanding to a complex context. Centres should only award full marks where candidates have related their answers to the context of the task.

The sample Coursework tasks, which are contained in the Course Assessment Packs for each level, include sample solutions which indicate suitable levels of response.

