



National Qualifications 2006

Senior Moderator Report

Subject: Computing

Assessment Panel: Computing and Information Technology

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

COMPONENT / COURSEWORK IN NATIONAL COURSES

COMPONENT/COURSEWORK MODERATED

The following Coursework items were moderated:

Advanced Higher Computing – Coursework Project
Higher Computing – Coursework 2005/2006
Intermediate 2 Computing – Coursework 2005/2006
Intermediate 1 Computing Studies – Coursework 2005/2006

The assessment criteria for these items were described in the following Guidance Documents:

Advanced Higher Computing Arrangements – valid 2005/2006
Advanced Higher Computing Course Assessment Pack – valid 2005/2006
Advanced Higher Computing Coursework Pack – valid from session 2005/2006 (*)
Higher Computing Arrangements Documents from 2004/2005
Higher Computing Course Assessment Pack from 2004/2005
Higher Computing Coursework Task – valid for session 2005/2006 only (*)
Intermediate 2 Computing Arrangements Documents from 2004/2005
Intermediate 2 Computing Course Assessment Pack from 2004/2005
Intermediate 2 Computing Coursework Task – valid for session 2005/2006 only (*)
Intermediate 1 Computing Studies Arrangements Documents from 2004/2005
Intermediate 1 Computing Studies Course Assessment Pack from 2004/2005
Intermediate 1 Computing Studies Coursework Task – valid for session 2005/2006 only (*)

Apart from those marked (*) the above documents are all available from the SQA website at www.sqa.org.uk
The actual Coursework Tasks for a particular session are available from the SQA Secure site from about October each year.

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

Centre staff delivering any of the courses listed above should ensure that they are fully conversant with the relevant Arrangements documents and all other support materials available for the course(s) they are teaching.

All Coursework should be carried out under controlled conditions to ensure that it is the candidate's own work.

Those responsible for completing the official paperwork for centres being moderated should ensure that they have read and understood what is required and that marks are recorded on all documentation in the expected format.

Teachers/lecturers should ensure that all materials submitted for moderation are marked according to the set guidelines and that, where possible, the marking is suitable annotated to clearly convey the marker's thoughts to the moderator. In some cases this was done very well and made the process of moderation very much easier.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

Advanced Higher

- Centres must try to advise candidates more carefully about the level of difficulty expected at AH. Simple websites consisting of nothing but text, graphics, sounds and video gathered from the Internet with hyperlinks could be created by Intermediate 1/2 pupils. Guidance documents already issued make it clear that websites submitted at this level must include elements of interactivity, scripting and the like.
- Candidates' evaluations should link back to the actual project at every opportunity.
- In this first year of the revised Arrangements, the tolerance was set at ± 8 out of the possible 80 marks.

Higher

- Moderators accepted that, in the Software Development exercise, some centres chose to swap steps 4 and 5 in the algorithm.
- There was much discussion as to how candidates should demonstrate that programming errors had been corrected. If possible, centres should encourage an early listing to be taken that can then be annotated to show errors. However, it was accepted that in many cases candidates would have proceeded to correct the errors without doing this and in such cases a statement from the teacher indicating any help given would be appreciated.
- Centres should be alert to the fact that candidates have access to Internet forums where specimen code is readily available.
- In the Computer Systems exercise, Centres should take care only to award marks for correct, valid justifications. Marks should not be awarded just because the candidate has written 'something'. Many responses did not demonstrate the depth of answer needed at Higher Grade.
- The tolerance for this year was set at ± 5 out of the possible 60 marks.

Intermediate 2

- In the Computer Systems exercise candidates were expected to produce a report to prove they could source and collate information from websites and magazine adverts. Moderators did not accept annotated printouts from web pages as an alternative.
- Moderators should not be left to guess where material had been extracted from. The tasks indicated that copies of the source evidence should have been included to allow moderators to see clearly where answers had been taken from.
- It was agreed that the recommendations for a suitable computer system should be justified in terms of two of processor speed, memory and cost. No marks were awarded for making a recommendation without justification.
- *Centres should be alert to amendments to coursework tasks being sent via SQA Coordinators after the initial release.*
- The tolerance for this year was set at ± 2 out of the possible 30 marks.

Intermediate 1

- Coursework should be done under controlled conditions. If the coursework mark is to be a valid part of the award, centres **must** ensure that this is the case.
- Work at this level should all be done in the classroom under supervision, not taken home or done collaboratively.
- Teachers must also record all help given if the final mark is to be a true reflection of each candidate's effort and ability.
- This year's specification asks for each candidate to take a photograph using a digital camera. There was evidence that in several centres one photograph had been taken and used by all candidates although everyone had been given the 4 marks for taking the photograph and transferring it from camera to computer.
- The tolerance for this year was set at ± 2 out of the possible 40 marks.