

UNIT 1: PRESENTING INFORMATION (INTERMEDIATE)

Intermediate GNVQ Information and Communication Technology

This unit is about recognising that documents have distinct purposes and that the form a document takes is very important to achieving its purpose. Creating documents for this unit should be made as realistic and purposeful as possible. For example, a letter requesting information from an organisation could be sent to a person in the organisation; an advertisement for something could be displayed; and an invitation could be designed for an actual event.

The focus of this unit is on composing documents suited to different purposes. This involves students in considering several aspects of the document. Each of these aspects can be worked on separately.

Styles of writing

Choosing and using a suitable writing style helps to ensure that a document gives a clear and appropriate message. Students will need to consider different styles and know how to choose a style that creates the right tone, for example, a letter written to an employer asking for work would be written in a style that makes the reader give the application serious consideration. It might not be an appropriate place to make a joke or to use casual phrases that are often used in conversation. A letter that starts with 'Dear Sir, I am writing to you to apply for work in your organisation' is likely to create a different impression to a letter that begins with, 'Hi, I'd really love a job with you lot!'

A writing style can be: formal (job application letter, letter of complaint, company report); informal (letter to a friend, party invitation, note for the milkman); intended to create an impact or be noticed (advertisement, direction sign); or suited to the age of the reader (children's book, newspaper).

Students should understand how formal styles of writing are more commonly used in business. Formal documents may also be very structured (this document, invoice, income tax form, report) where rules apply to things such as the size and position of headings, fonts to be used and the use of graphics.

Types of information

Making information easy to understand depends partly on how it is organised and presented on the page, and on what form it takes.

Students should consider when to use a diagram to present information that would require many words to describe. Number information is sometimes best displayed in the form of a table where the structure of rows and columns helps

the reader to understand the numbers. In other cases number information is best displayed in the form of a chart or graph. These can immediately show trends in the numbers, which may not be easy to see when the numbers are shown in a list or table. In tables and graphs, using colour, borders and shading can help to make information easier to read and understand

Document layout and presentation

Students need to be aware that all pages in a document have a structure. The simplest and most common structure is a rectangle that contains all the text content, apart from header and footer information. The position and size of the rectangle is set by the top, bottom and side page margins.

Once students understand the use of margins they need to be aware that pages in magazines and similar documents often place graphics so that they run over the margins, or have part of the graphic off the page. This can often enhance the impact of a picture and can make the page more vibrant.

Students should also learn about more complicated page structures that divide the area within the margins into two or more columns, like a newspaper or magazine page. Graphics, tables and charts placed within the columns will often be positioned and sized exactly to span one or more columns. This helps to create a sense of order on the page.

Students could investigate the house styles of different companies and find out the rules that control the size and position on the page of logos, titles and so on.

This unit is assessed through an external assessment.

Grading in the external assessment is based on the following general qualities that distinguish between the three grades:

- increasing depth and breadth of understanding
- increasing coherence, evaluation and analysis
- increasing independence and originality
- increasing skill in the effective application of ICT.

Pass

To achieve a pass, students' evidence should cover all the requirements stated in the pass criteria. It may be, however, that a student has demonstrated considerable effort and skill in some areas at the expense of precise detail in another. You should use your professional judgement to decide what is a reasonable expectation of the student and whether the stated quality and sufficiency requirements have, on balance, been met.

The student must produce documents that are clearly matched to purpose and use writing styles and layouts that work effectively to serve that purpose.

Students' documents must be accompanied by a set of notes that clearly relate the design features of the documents to their purposes. The notes should state

why particular choices of font, format and so on were made, making it clear why the student considered one option to be superior to another. The notes must also compare two of the documents with similar documents used by organisations.

Documents must contain a variety of information types, including graphics and tables. These elements should be combined in an ordered manner. Students should demonstrate elementary typographical skills in their choice and use of fonts and in formatting text. Documents should show clear differentiation in writing styles, with each style being matched to purpose. The student should be expected to make effective use of spell-checkers and other aids, together with careful proof-reading, to achieve a good standard of accuracy of content. The student must work safely at all times and should retain backup copies of their files.

Merit

To achieve a merit, students' documents should be of good quality with layout and content well matched to purpose.

The descriptive notes for the documents should cover all documents and the student should show more than a superficial understanding of the functions and design features of the different documents produced. Comparisons between their own document styles and those of organisations should cover all the differences between them and give plausible reasons for the differences. The student should be able to make good use of document creation software and be able to accomplish ordinary tasks without support and help. The student should also be able to find and use options for formatting, creating tables and importing graphics.

The requirement for students to work independently does not mean that they should work without your intervention or assistance; rather they should not display undue dependence.

A note should be kept of where students have worked independently and produced work to agreed deadlines. The agreed deadline may be one that has been renegotiated to meet unforeseen circumstances.

Distinction

To achieve a distinction, students should provide comprehensive notes describing the makeup of their documents, showing a good understanding of the function and purpose of the main features of different documents.

The student's documents will be accurate, well written and fairly comprehensive. The choice of fonts for body text, headings and so on will be well matched to the purposes of the documents, and elements will be carefully and consistently positioned. Documents should give an overall impression of having been designed for a purpose.

For this unit students will need access to either a word-processing program capable of incorporating graphic elements and creating tables, or to a desktop-publishing program.