

Professional Projects – August 18 submission

Examiners' Comments

Statistics

- 95 project proposals were received and processed, nearly all for projects at the PGD level.
- In this cycle, 80 projects were submitted for assessment, of which four were at the Diploma level.
- Following moderation, results were as follows. (Last cycle's figures are in parentheses.)

	Fail	Pass	Credit	Distinction	Total
PGD	41(39)	32(54)	3(9)	0(0)	76(102)
Diploma	4(5)	0(3)	0(0)	0(1)	4(9)

Comments on Project Proposals

Comments made on previous occasions again apply to the current cycle. Candidates and Centres are urged to read these comments to improve their submission. The most important comments are repeated below.

- Good proposals describe
 - **briefly**, the objectives of the system
 - the different classes of users of the system
 - what the system allows each class of user to do
 - how the system will be shown to be fit for its intended purposes (tested)
 - **briefly**, the hardware/software/environment of the system
 - **briefly**, the timescale for the project work.
- Where the proposed authenticator has not been a BCS member, a CV has been submitted. **Examiners are looking for about five years' experience in a managerial or supervisory role**, not just technical expertise, and not all CVs have included details of this experience. To obtain relevant advice and avoid wasted work and time, candidates should choose their authenticator carefully and ask them to provide details of their managerial/supervisory experience.
- Candidates should note that the only acceptable file formats are Word and PDF, and that we expect word processed documents where we can access the text, and **not** image scans.

Comments on Projects Submitted

Again, comments made on previous occasions still apply to the current cycle. Candidates and Centres are urged to read these comments to improve their submission. In addition, the following comments apply.

- The use of software generators continues to cause some problems. While the use of Framework-based software (for example, Bootstrap or Wordpress for website authoring) may form a proper part of project implementation, it is not a substitute for demonstration of competence at the level selected for the project work. The "value added" nature of the content managed by such systems is evaluated by the Examiners, not merely the outcomes. If using such systems, candidates will be judged on the parameters they **designed** and input, to define the system generated. **Without sufficient "value added" content, properly described and explained in the report, such projects will fail.**
- The use of template-based skeleton project reports continues to cause problems for some candidates. By slavishly using such skeleton reports some candidates are failing to demonstrate their own expertise in their presentation skills. This typically occurs when those **candidates rely too heavily on pre-specified outlines**, which may have been presented to them either as part of their lecture notes or retrieved from

the Internet. Such outlines are often not appropriate to the specific project, and candidates lose marks by using them.

- The use of screen shots from working projects is not always being well managed from a presentation point of view. For example, such screen shots, when containing text from some applications, are difficult to read when in colour on a black background. It is not clear to the Examiners why such information is not retrieved as a text file and included in the report as suitably formatted text. This applies particularly to samples of coding.
- Examiners have noticed that in many cases, **candidates have ignored feedback from Project Proposals, and this frequently leads to failure.**
 - This includes consideration of **evidence** of testing, for which statements of compliance alone are insufficient, but should be supported by – for instance – content of databases before and after specified testing transactions, and the transactions themselves.
 - The explicit consideration of legal, ethical, social and professional issues should be undertaken as appropriate to the Candidate's work in the project.
- Other common reasons for failure include
 - Inadequate sample coding in projects involving software development. For such projects, candidates must include sufficient coding to demonstrate their practical competence in this aspect of their project, usually by submitting coding samples rather than the whole thing (which is often too large to include). Inadequate annotation of the coding is another common cause for failure.
 - Inadequate evidence of testing, as mentioned above. Often, there is little evidence of testing of non-functional requirements.
- Some candidates produce reports which are well in excess of the required length, usually including irrelevant material and demonstrating poor professional communication skills. Candidates are reminded to consult the guidelines for the appropriate report size, and to use appendices for design diagrams, sample coding, screenshots, etc.
- Candidates are reminded that project work previously submitted for another qualification, e.g. an MSc dissertation, **cannot** be re-used as a BCS Project. In many cases, such project work is inappropriate and does not satisfy BCS Project regulations.

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