

# Chief examiner's report

**T Level Technical Qualification  
in Digital Support Services (Level 3)  
(603/6901/2)**

**Summer 2023 – Occupational  
specialism (Digital Infrastructure)**

## Chief examiner's report

### Summer 2023 – Occupational specialism (Digital Infrastructure)

Assessment dates: **12 June – 11 July 2023**

Paper numbers: **P001653, P001654 and P001655**

This report contains information in relation to the externally assessed component provided by the chief examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of student work within this assessment.

The report is written for providers, with the aim of highlighting how students have performed generally, as well as any areas where further development or guidance which may be required to support preparation for future opportunities.

#### Key points:

- grade boundaries
- standard of student work
- evidence creation
- responses to the external assessment tasks
- administering the external assessment

It is important to note that students should not sit this external assessment until they have received the relevant teaching of the qualification in relation to this component.

#### Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for the series are:

	Overall
Max	217
Distinction	175
Merit	125
Pass	75

Grade boundaries are the lowest mark with which a grade is achieved.

For further detail on how raw marks are scaled and the aggregation of the occupational specialist element, please refer to the qualification specification.

## Standard of student work

Overall student achievement was impressive for assignments 1 and 3, however, achievement for assignment 2 varied due to the technical understanding shown within the evidence. There was a higher variance of marks awarded for assignment 2 overall compared to more consistent marks being awarded for assignments 1 and 3.

Many students presented excellent Gantt charts for assignment 1 and met multiple marks against the mark scheme, they were also observed to be what would be expected in industry. Assignment 2 saw a high range of questions not answered by the students, it is recommended that providers focus more on the use of domain management and the systems and tools which are used for this.

Most providers uploaded sufficient evidence against the provided work booklets, however, there were some submissions which did not link to the workbooks provided, which proved to be difficult to assign marks against the mark scheme.

## Evidence creation

For assignment 1 we saw a range of evidence, and we were pleased to see the use of print screens of Gantt charts as this allowed the examiner to validate the marks awarded. It was observed that some students submitted more written project plans/Gantt charts, and this significantly reduced the marks due to not being able to evidence against the mark scheme.

Students submitted multiple print screens to evidence their research and combined these with the links to the websites. It was observed some students time and date stamped these links, which although would not grant any further marks, did show good practice for the industry.

Assignment 2 did see a range of images used for task 2, the main challenge received was the lack of storytelling from these images, and the excessive use of trimming the image in question. Some students trimmed their print screen so much so, it cut out valid evidence to validate the submission. In addition, in areas where we need to confirm whether a certain user account has or does not have access, many students did not evidence the user account in question meaning multiple marks were lost.

## Responses to the external assessment tasks

### Assignment 1

#### Task 1

Most students submitted excellent Gantt charts, which included the images of the project overview. On occasions, some students only provided a written overview of the project, and this impacted the marks awarded overall. It was typical that students first submitted their Gantt charts, and then threats and countermeasures. Most learners covered a minimum of one countermeasure to each threat identified, some students identified multiple countermeasures which supported a higher band of marking.

There was a range of submission styles for the annotated floor plan, students who marked higher for this task produced a key to identify their annotations and applied attention to detail for their floor plan. Within task 1 the highest variance of change was for the floor plan, and some students neglected this element of the task which impacted their overall marks.

## **Task 2**

The highest variance in marks awarded for task two related to the fact some students related their work to the scenario, and others more general. There was a good achievement rate for this task overall, however, ensuring students focus on the scenario, compared to just sharing technical understanding will lead to higher marks being awarded.

Many marks were lost overall where students failed to provide adequate critical thinking when producing evidence of their research. This was a challenge throughout the window, as many students had clearly conducted excellent research, and found servers relevant to the task, but did not evaluate the reasons for their research and links used.

## **Task 3**

Most students achieved high on task 3, however, most students also did not cover the use of WPA Enterprise. WPA Enterprise is found within the mark scheme and something that most students did not include and as a result missed out on marks awarded.

Students approached this task by researching common routers and access points and included the security protocols that are embedded within the equipment. Many students included one overarching print screen of their search history, which further validated their individual research links.

## **Assignment 1 – overall summation**

Overall students performed very well for assignment 1 and there were high marks seen across all examiners within this window. I recommend the same approach to the next window is taken, with the recommendation students conduct more critical thinking for task 2 to support higher marks being awarded.

## **Assignment 2**

### **Task 1**

There was a very high success rate for task 1, many students achieved all marks for this task. Although an array of images was provided by students, some showing a step-by-step process, a minimum of three photos would be required to meet all the mandatory requirements for full marks. This task has low marks awarded; I would recommend providers do not focus excessive time on this task overall.

## **Task 2**

There was a high proportion of missed marks for this task, this was due to the following reasons:

- students not completing all the questions, and a high proportion of the task being left blank
- students not submitting all the evidence required, and over redacting the evidence; for example, where evidence requires a screenshot, we were presented with a window or application, and we could not validate the evidence submitted
- students not providing the evidence relating to user groups, and potentially assuming they have accessed a certain user's account, but as this cannot be evidenced, many marks were dropped
- some students found the latter elements of this task challenging, this could be either due to running out of time or due to the technical elements required

## **Assignment 2 – overall summation**

Overall students performed very well for task 1, however, there was a high range of responses and marks awarded for task 2. It is recommended that students receive more training on time management for the task and more exposure to user groups and access control. It was observed that many students spent excessive time on task 1, which limited their time on the higher and more challenging task 2.

## **Assignment 3**

### **Task 1**

Students approached this task by focusing heavily on GDPR and data protection, which although part of the mark scheme, did not focus on other important elements or risks. Overall students did achieve well on this task, and most marks were dropped due to insufficient evidence of both physical and virtual risks, and the heavy linking to data loss, compared to other risks which are available to include.

As seen in assignment 1 task 1, there was an array of floor plans submitted. Although not high for mark allocation, many students did not take care and consideration of this task and annotated the floor plan without consideration of their risk management plan.

### **Task 2**

Students generally achieved very high for this task, they submitted written communication around certain company policies and the higher marked plans included legislations. My recommendation for this task is to ensure students are aware of ISO27001, GDPR, and the Computer Misuse Act, most students did not include these within their answers, and this would significantly increase marks overall.

Most students highlighted policies well but did not relate them to legislation and laws.

### Task 3

As above, most students achieved very highly on this task. They approached this task linking predominantly to virtual methods and backups of data, marks were generally dropped due to students not covering physical measures of disaster recovery and business continuity. Some students did not link this particular task to the scenario and did not take into account the specifics of the scenario which would support writing the two documents. It was excellent to see virtual recovery methods and back-ups covered, however, the physical elements such as servers, and hot and cold sites were generally never included in students' submissions.

### Task 4

Student achievement for this task varied, but still generally was high compared to other tasks within the assignments. Most students submitted over 10 actions which allowed for higher marks to be awarded, some students did submit less, and this did impact their scores overall. Although generally marked high, marks were dropped due to lacking the explanation of the action, and the importance of this action against the scenario. Many students were too generalised about the action being implemented and did not relate this to the scenario itself, which would mean they have not fully shown their understanding as to why this company need this action to be implemented.

### Assignment 3 – overall summation

Assignment 3 saw the highest marks allocated overall, and this was excellent to see. The main recommendation to providers is to focus on task 4 and elaborate on the actions against the scenario. Most students showed excellent technical understanding, but as the scenario is specific, we would need to evidence the action explanation relating to the scenario – and with this critical thinking skills to be evidenced.

Students evidently hold the technical knowledge required for this assignment, and I would recommend providers focus training around more physical aspects of business recovery and follow critical thinking of why they have recommended what they have against the tasks.

### Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our [Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment](#). Students may require additional pre-release material to complete the tasks. These must be provided to students in line with our regulations.

Students must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the [Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery \(QSID\)](#).