

# **Chief examiner's report**

**T Level Technical Qualification  
in Digital Business Services  
603/6902/4**

**Autumn 2023 – Employer Set Project  
Data Technician**

## Chief Examiner's Report

### 603/6902/4 – Employer Set Project Data Technician

Assessment Dates: 6 November 2023 – 17 November 2023

Paper Number: P002248

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

Raw mark grade boundaries for the series are:

	Overall
Max	80
A*	71
A	62
B	53
C	45
D	37
E	29

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

For further detail on how raw marks are converted to uniform marks (UMS), and the aggregation of the core component, please see refer to the qualification specification.

#### Standard of student work

This is fourth series that students have been able to undertake the employer set project (ESP) for this qualification. The ESP is a core skill assessment that students undertake in the first year of their T-Level qualification, alongside the core examinations. The majority of students who undertook the ESP this series will be students in the second year of their qualification who are either sitting the paper for the first time or

having a second attempt at the ESP to improve their performance.

The ESP consists of a pre-release task given to students approximately a month prior to the assessment which is then used when providing evidence for 5 tasks. These tasks are set over a 2-week timetable assessment period.

In the first week of assessment, students undertake tasks 1, 2a and 2b, with tasks 3 and 4 being completed in the second week.

The scenario for this assessment was for EWJR Services, a group of solicitors dealing with motor injury claims within the UK. The business has 220 employees and operates from 5 locations across the UK. EWJR are looking to expand their customer base through online referrals. In addition to the project brief, students were also provided with a range of EWJR's internal data and external secondary statistics.

There was performance across the grade range within the assessment for this series. The quality of student work varied; however, there were only a limited number of scripts available to review this series. As with the previous series, it has been noted that in some tasks there has been continued improvements in the evidence which students are presenting with their ESP. There is also evidence of improved English and digital skills amongst students this series.

At times there were some excellent quality responses to tasks that demonstrated that the students have a developed knowledge of digital business and that their soft skills are of a level which support them to deliver evidence which would be of the quality expected of a digital data technician in the workplace. These students demonstrated that they had a very good understanding of the requirements of the project that EWJR were asking them to engage with and this was evident in the contextualised answers provided throughout their ESP evidence and that any recommendations they were making were relevant and within the constraints of the project.

Where students performed to a good or reasonable standard, they demonstrate that they had a range of underpinning knowledge of the digital business sector. These students were able to demonstrate a range of soft skills within their evidence which were on the most part of a good standard and this supported the students to provide reasonable/good quality evidence. These students were able to provide some good answers within their evidence, but this was often not as developed as students who were achieving higher mark bands. The differentiator between good performing students and reasonably performing students tended to be how contextualised the evidence they were producing is. Good students were able to consider what types of data solicitors dealing with motor vehicles might need and how they can increase their customers. Reasonable students were able to provide some contextualised answers, but they tended to be more generic in nature.

Where students provided limited quality evidence this was due to a range of factors. These students were able to demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the digital business sector but there were some misconceptions or omissions in their work. These students were able to demonstrate a range of soft skills throughout their ESP; however, these were often not fully developed.

This series task 3 the presentation continued to be of a good standard with a wide range of digital skills being demonstrated. Students continue to use a range of tools and techniques within their presentations such as slide transitions, use of charts and graphs, using images and speakers' notes.

Another task that students performed well was task 1 the project management tool. This is the third series where students have been asked to create a Gantt Chart and they continue to improve in the detail that students are included and their quality. Some students, however, continue to use a waterfall approach as they do not realise there are predecessor tasks. Students should be encouraged to review the brief, before starting to create their Gantt Charts to make sure that they understand the requirements of the task.

One area that students have found more challenging this series is the context. Whilst the level of information and context provided this series is comparable to previous series the business activities of EWJR may not be something which students have real world experience of, and this has impacted on the amount of context that students have included in their work. It would be beneficial for students to make sure that they research the sector and understand what the activities of the business are to enable them to include the level of context required. It should be remembered that the purpose of the ESP is that it is a task which students could be expected to be asked to undertake by their employer. Students should be ensuring that every element of the work they are completing for each task is directly linked to the project brief, the aims of the business and linked to the specific project the business is asking them to advise on. Students should be encouraged to include context in every part of their evidence.

Task 2b continues to be the most challenging task of the ESP once again this series. Most students attempted a Data Flow Diagram (DFD), but many struggled to complete the task and this had a knock on effect of how well they could then explain their actions in the email. In addition, it has been noted in the Summer and Autumn 2023 series that some students are identifying the errors within the action 1 dataset but they do not then go on to resolve the issues and cleanse the data. It has also been noted that some students are deleting columns to cleanse their dataset rather than using tools to cleanse the data. Students must cleanse the dataset they are provided. They need to make sure that they are resolving the issues, not just identifying them and that they are not deleting columns from the dataset as this may affect the mark they can achieve.

The other tasks in the ESP have performed in line with previous series from the limited evidence that was available for this series.

As with previous series, students continue to treat each task of the ESP as being independent tasks. The ESP is designed to enable students to use the knowledge and data they have collected or generated in each task to support their decision making for subsequent tasks. Students should be encouraged to refer to evidence previously within subsequent tasks, either implicitly by reusing/restating information or explicitly by referring to the task by name. There is a small improvement in students utilising the information from previous tasks in their ESP, particularly task 2b and Task 3 but overall, students are still completing many tasks in isolation.

On the whole performance this series has shown some improvement from the previous series and that students are becoming more confident in their knowledge and skills in digital business; however, there are still areas for further development.

### Evidence creation

Providers and students should be aware that there is no set format in which students are required to produce their evidence beyond the allowed file formats. If examples of tools such as Gantt Charts or DFD's are provided in mark schemes and GSEMS' this is just one example of how evidence could be presented. This is not a definitive statement that this is how students are expected to produce their evidence. Students should be encouraged to produce their evidence using any appropriate software and any suitable format as long as it meets the evidence requirements provided in the provider guide, student guide and project tasks.

There was a range of evidence provided by students within this assessment. This series saw an improvement in the number of requests for additional evidence being needed. Examiners reported that most providers had uploaded all relevant information and that it was well organised which made it easy for them to mark the evidence.

One area for development remains students retaining the original file formats of their work. In task 3 there has been an improvement in the number of students who have mastered the skill of converting their presentations into pdf files with their speakers notes included, some students continue to save their

presentations without their speakers notes. In task 1 the Gantt Chart when students are converting this to a pdf they are often creating files where their Gantt Charts run to multiple pages which can make it very difficult to read.

Where students are producing evidence in spreadsheet, presentation or other software that they are not as familiar with in converting files to pdf it is recommended that they save their work in the original file format and pdf and the provider then uploads both files as part of their evidence. This will ensure that all student evidence is seen and marked by an examiner and that students are not disadvantaged due to issues with conversion of the files. Uploading original file format and pdf versions of all evidence is an acceptable approach for students and providers to take should they wish.

For task 1, students presented their Gantt Charts using a range of software such as project, word and spreadsheet software and then presented this in pdf format. Students were provided with a template for their email, and this has been submitted as a word document or a pdf. For task 2(a), students were provided with a template for their email, and this has been submitted as a word document or a pdf.

For task 2(b), action 1 students have presented their cleansed data and their dashboards in spreadsheet software or in a word documents. For action 2 students used a range of tools to display their data such as charts, pivot tables, graphs, and lists. Students have presented their data flow diagram (DFD) in a range of formats such as in a spreadsheet, a document and pdf. For action 3, students have presented their email in the form of a document and pdf. For task 3, students created their presentations in presentation software or exported their presentation to a pdf. For task 4, students were provided with a template for their reflection of their project which most used, and this has been submitted as a word document or pdf.

Some providers are also ensuring that within student evidence folders that all relevant documentation such as research logs and student declarations are included. There was a decrease this year in the inclusion of the research logs so for future series students should be reminded to include these in their evidence for upload and are needed as part of the marking process.

## Responses to the external assessment tasks

### Task 1 Project Management Tool

This series students were asked to create a Gantt Chart for their project management tool. Students were provided with a table of data including some predecessor tasks and were asked to create a Gantt Chart to demonstrate their approach the project.

Students largely presented their Gantt Charts in spreadsheet software or software that creates project management tools. Some students had converted their Gantt Charts to pdf, which in a small number of cases made the Gantt Chart difficult to read as it was spread across multiple pages and not easy to interpret. Whilst there is no specific approach or software that students need to use when producing their project management tools it is recommended that students are checking that their Gantt Charts are easy to understand once they have exported it to pdf.

Students were rewarded for their demonstration of knowledge, but for future series it would be beneficial for students to consider the presentation of their evidence when saving it. It would be encouraged for students to upload their original and pdf versions of their work where there are presentation differences in their evidence.

Most students presented a well-planned Gantt chart. The timescales and headings were present and well presented. Where students performed well in this task their Gantt charts were well structured. They had taken into account the predecessor tasks and had identified these in the chart, either as a column, or using the appropriate chart tools. These students had ensured that the tasks were planned to meet the timescales given by the project brief, and some had even included contingencies for the tasks.

Where students had not performed as well their Gantt charts had some errors in the basic layout such as not including the predecessor tasks or exceeding the total planned project time. Students should ensure that they are fully reading the project requirements and timescales when planning their charts. Some of these students that performed less well started all the project tasks in week 1 or opted to use a waterfall approach to the tasks as they did not take into account the predecessor tasks and the overall timescales for the project. Students need to ensure that they are fully reading the project scenario when completing the tasks.

To improve performance students should ensure that they are confident that they know the different project management tools that could be assessed for this task. Students should ensure that they refer back to the project brief throughout the task to ensure that they are fully understanding the specific requirements of the project brief and are not producing a generic project management tool. In particular they should ensure they understand the predecessor tasks, which tasks can be undertaken at the same time and that the project needs to be completed by the project deadline.

### **Task 1 Email to Line Manager**

This series, students were asked to create an email to their line manager to discuss the project plans and timescales as well as any issues that could arise from the project. In common with previous series many students did not complete all elements of the tasks tending to focus on explaining their approach to the creation of the Gantt chart and not consider risks, issues or the stakeholders.

Students that performed well on this task were able to explain why the project plan would enable the business to complete the elements of the planned project on time and they were able to link this to well to the context of the business. These students also were able to identify potential elements of the plan which could result in delays to the project or could raise issues with stakeholders and these students were able to offer how this could be mitigated.

Students that performed less well tended to focus on describing the different tasks, how long they would take and why they planned them this way. They did not tend to expand on why this order of the tasks was required or which tasks had to be completed for others to be started. Students who performed less well also tended not to have linked their justifications to the context of the business and many of their judgements were generic in nature. Students who performed less well also tended to not consider the wider impact of the project schedule. They did not consider any risks or issues that could arise from the project, and how this might impact the project plan. Where these students had considered risks, they tended to be either generic issues that could arise from any project of this nature or they did not then develop their answer further to explain what the impact would be or how it could be mitigated.

To improve performance students should ensure that they know how to write an email in the professional setting. Students can include screenshots of relevant information in their email as this would be expected in a workplace project. Students should identify all the information that they are required to include in their email and ensure that they are including all relevant information and that they are writing their email in the context of the project they are working on and not in a generic format.

### **Task 1 English Skills**

The English skills seen this series were similar to the summer series. The emails presented by students continue to be more consistent with the structure and formality that would be expected from an email. There are still some students who are not utilising paragraphs, grammar and spellchecking in their work. Students should be encouraged to make use of all relevant digital tools in their chosen software packages to support them with this.

Students are continuing to develop their understanding of how to address an email and this continues to

improve each series. Students should be encouraged to address their email to a specific person and if a name is not provided in the project brief, they are free to utilise any name for their line manager that they feel would be appropriate as this would allow them to produce a more professional formatted email than simply starting their email 'Dear Line Manager'.

### **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 Document](#) (QSID).