ASSESSMENT REPORT

ITS315118 – INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

General Comments

The 2020 paper provided a case study relevant and easy to understand in the context of a local music festival named "Tasmanian Music Festival (TMF)". Candidates may have had a prior general understanding of music festivals (such as the Falls Festival), but never-the-less, candidates would have encountered similar theoretical example case studies in mid-year and practice exams, with the format of the 2020 paper being familiar.

There was a varied range of responses to the questions, and in general, the paper was handled at a satisfactory level with only a smaller number of candidates providing exemplary answers to all questions. A number of candidates did well in parts of the paper but did not do well overall for specific criteria (i.e. they did not answer both related questions well).

Some general points to consider:

- Candidates need to be fully aware of which criterion/criteria is being assessed in each question, as this will guide their answer more appropriately. In some situations, good (for other criteria) but irrelevant answers were provided in some questions.

- Candidates need to understand the differences in "English terms" for what is required in various questions. For example: Summarise, list, describe, evaluate, explain, discuss, compare, analyse, judge, address and identify do not mean all the same thing.

- Candidates need to pay attention to the time allocation for each question and manage their time appropriately. Several candidates provided more detail than was expected for a question and did not provide enough detail for other answers. Several candidates appeared to "run out of time" and not complete all questions. Question 7 was "over answered' by some, given the 10-minute time limit.

- Candidates need to read the questions carefully and address the case study (In this case TMF) explicitly. This is important to indicate to the markers that the candidates are thinking about solutions for the case study, and not simply copying and pasting course notes.

- As per the 2019 paper, there was detail missing in some of the specific, theory-based questions. Confusion was also demonstrated between the Project Life Cycle and the Systems Development Lifecycle.

- There was confusion around the differences between social, legal and ethical issues for candidates when answering the Criterion 3 questions (Questions 3 and 8). Better answers explicitly grouped issues into the correct category (see sample answers below).

- Markers were looking for evidence of a thorough understanding in order to obtain the higher grades. For example, candidates required more depth about the State and National laws in Australia in relation to privacy. This would include details of which specific principle(s) applied for the example.

- Several candidates used online drawing editors such as draw.io to create flowcharts and other diagrams. This worked well and is encouraged. Other candidates were able to use screen shots to help in answering some questions.

- In Section B – research section, it was apparent that many candidates simply searched for a common term and reported back on the first link/system returned. It would service candidates better to take their time and look through the first three or four pages to find a system which may be a better fit.

- Searching techniques could also be improved by searching for reports in the .pdf format or searching through images, news or using other search engines apart from Google.

- Several candidates struggled with describing a unique and feasible information system, and heavily relied on what was researched only.

- To get full marks for Criterion 8, candidates had to write clearly and effectively using technical terms where required; use diagrams; incorporate tables where appropriate & display referenced URLs in the questions throughout the paper.

Sample Solutions

A range of sample answer ideas are provided here that would need to be built upon during a 3 hour exam. There are many other possible answers not included in this summary.

SECTION A – CRITERION 1, 2, 3, 5 & 8

Question 1
Criteria 2, 5 & 8 (20 minutes)

(a)   Candidates should extract from the case study, relevant information to each of the four parts of an Information System. E.g. procedures – data is manually entered into a spreadsheet "the system" by people – administration person, etc. This would be best represented in a table format.

(b)   Positives – simple system, easy to use for customers and owners, no sophisticated software/platforms required, some data collection electronically, web-based system means system is platform independent and likely mobile friendly, minimal support required.

        Negatives – data not linked means more user effort is required, time consuming, possibility of user error such as double booking, missing a booking, manually printing and posting tickets, time consuming and costly, no evidence of backup or disaster recovery, etc.

(c)   Candidates should be able to identify many ways in which the current system could be improved. It is important that they not only identify the improvement, but that they detail how they would go about making the improvement. E.g. Current system requires manual entry of information i.e. bookings come from the website, sites allocated manually in a spreadsheet, tickets then generated via mail merge, printing and posting of tickets. This data is manually transferred, ticket process is time consuming and costly. Instead, they could employ a system to handle all processes. It is important for candidates to realise here that they need to improve the current system – not invent a new one.

Question 2
Criteria 1 & 8 (20 minutes)

With this question (parts A and B), candidates need to ensure that they do not simply create templated responses i.e. just copy sections from the course notes as to what happens in each stage. Each response should be set in the context of this particular case study.

Candidates were marked down if they used other methodologies searched for on the Internet. The official course notes give definitions of both the Project Life Cycle and the Systems Development Lifecycle. These needed to be discussed in relation to the case study.

Question 3
Criteria 3 & 8 (20 Minutes)

(a)   TMF is legally responsible to protect confidential data as per the Privacy Act and its requirements (best practice model). For a higher grade, candidates need to identify the relevant National Privacy Principle/s and how these need to be applied. When communicating with ticket holders, they need to be made aware of the *Spam Act 2003* and provisions for unsubscribing to email lists, etc.

(b)   Focus needs to be on **social issues** here only. There is no need to repeat what was answered in question (a). TMF needs to consider website optimisation for different languages and different cultures of potential customers/festival goers. There should be less text as images, as this text cannot be translated. Determine how international languages are displayed on the website. Colour can have different meanings in different countries and can have cultural implications; this needs to considered. Currency selection of payment may also need to be factored in, how the payment gateway will manage this and whether there will be associated costs.

SECTION B – CRITERION 1, 2, 3, 5 & 8

Question 4
Criteria 5 & 8 (20 Minutes)

(a)   Listing of two URL's here only. Candidates were not expected to do any more in this question.

(b)   This should be a straightforward comparison of the two selected sites, best presented in a table format. It is important to address all four parts (data, equipment, people, procedures). Where information is not readily visible, candidates should be able to fill in gaps with their understanding of what would be required. E.g. Equipment – no details listed on the website, but the company would be employing a high-end webserver to host its content. This is most likely provided by a third party, given the logo at the bottom of each page and the volume of traffic I would expect this site to handle, etc.

Question 5
Criteria 5 & 8 (15 Minutes)

(a)   Self-explanatory.

(b)   Self-explanatory.

(c)   It is important that candidates pick one of the two researched systems and then justify why this is more suited to the needs of TMF.

Question 6
Criteria 2 & 8 (30 Minutes)

In this question, candidates can combine their research to produce a unique and feasible system that they think will best meet the needs of the client. It is important that they describe how each part of the system will be addressed. E.g. A new online bookings website (equipment) will be established. Clients (people) will enter bookings (procedures) via a new web interface, etc.

The types of systems suggested can vary widely, depending on the background of the student. E.g. custom-built solutions using Microsoft Access, MySQL, or other appropriate applications through to Open Source solutions which may be modified to meet client needs. Potentially engaging firms which provide Software as a Service (SaaS) could also be explored

This question provides an ideal opportunity for candidates to communicate (Criteria 8) in ways other than text and can be a useful discriminator for higher grades on this criterion. Candidates need to address all three dot points in the questions in order to gain full marks.

Question 7
Criteria 1 & 8 (10 Minutes)

(a)   It is critical that candidates relate their answer to the context of this system, not just generic test criteria. A test plan can be created, however, by simply using the two tests identified by the candidate.

Question 8
Criteria 3 & 8 (15 Minutes)

(a)   **Social**
Communication plays an important social role here in the potential cancellation of an event and systems need to be put in place to avoid any confusion. If there are not adequate channels of reaching out to customers, there could be a number of customers who may be adversely affected (i.e. turn up not knowing the festival has been cancelled). This could indeed turn to further social disconnect, as in, large amounts of people could be affected and anger could be demonstrated in person and online.

Legal
Candidates should be able to discuss whether the organisers are legally required to refund tickets in the event of a cancellation. Australian Consumer Law dictates that if an event is cancelled, tickets must be refunded "unless the government ordered the cancellation due to an outbreak of disease or other crisis" (Choice.com.au). Candidates can also discuss payment gateways (potentially international) and how the law applies to these third parties.

Ethical
Candidates should discuss the ethical issues and ramifications of the decisions that Marley and Stella make with regards to cancellations. Candidates should explain that any electronic refund needs to be swift and accurate and have a process/system in place. This process should also be tested so that any issues are resolved prior to going live and contingency plans put in place in case of a system failure. Goodwill and customer relationship management can be discussed regarding what is ethically important.