Examiners' commentaries 2016–17

CO3348 Interaction design – Zone A

General remarks

This examination aimed to test your general understanding of the syllabus, involving application of knowledge to a variety of scenarios. It is important that you read and answer questions carefully. Only three out of five questions should be answered and if you answer more, only the first three are marked.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question aimed to test your ability to demonstrate knowledge of design scenarios, prototyping techniques and evaluation methods, and apply this knowledge to a specific task.

Part a) required you to create realistic and plausible scenarios focusing on the use of the device (for example, describe how a person would interact with the system to perform tasks and achieve goals). Good marks were achieved where the scenario reflected the story of the user and activity (that is, it focused on user needs, expectations, actions and reactions). **Two** scenarios were required; where only one scenario was provided, this immediately cost half the marks available.

For Part b), good answers included well-designed mock-up sketches (for example, wireframes, storyboards, user flow diagrams) and useful descriptions and justification for the design choices. Excellent answers also detailed how the prototypes adhered to specific design principles (e.g. consistency, feedback, affordances, etc.).

Part c) required an outline of an evaluation plan including users, a timetable, methods, and metrics in the description. Good answers provided detail and realistic sequencing. The evaluation method should be appropriate for the task and the choice should be fully justified. The description of users should include the number of users, and how they would be found, together with a brief description of their characteristics. You should also mention the data to be collected, and how it would be analysed, as well as the performance measures to be used.

Question 2

This question required you to demonstrate knowledge of user-centred design methods and prototyping techniques, and how to apply them in the given design scenario.

For Part a), good answers chose appropriate prototyping methods, and described them in detail. It was desirable to highlight the iterative manner in which these methods should be applied. Excellent answers also showed how these methods should be specifically applied in the given scenario.

For Part b), good answers included well-designed mock-up sketches (e.g. wireframes, storyboards, user flow diagrams) as well as useful descriptions.

Excellent answers also described in detail how the prototypes adhere to specific design principles and in particular how these differ in the cases of websites and mobile sites.

Question 3

This question required you to demonstrate knowledge in the domain of virtual reality or augmented reality with respect to the entertainment industries. It was generally poorly answered, with the most common faults being:

- a very short essay
- incoherent argument.

Good answers were written in an appropriate essay style, with a coherent structure (for example, introduction, discussion with balanced argument and finished by drawing conclusions). Excellent answers also showed evidence of wider reading, providing the candidates with more material from which to form strong, coherent arguments.

Question 4

This question required you to demonstrate knowledge of evaluation methods and show understanding in order to be able to apply them to the given design scenario.

Part a) was generally well answered, requiring a general description of the technique, which could include a list of heuristics.

Part b) was also generally well answered, requiring a description of the actual procedure. Some candidates lost marks for confusing this part of the question with part a). Be sure to read the whole question carefully before planning your answer.

Part c) required knowledge of two specific evaluation methods. Good answers selected appropriate usability evaluation methods and described them in detail. Excellent answers also provided appropriate justifications, and also showed how the methods should be specifically applied in the given scenario.

For Part d), although there is no one correct answer here, good answers backed up their choice with sound reasoning.

Question 5

This question required you to demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge to a specific scenario.

Part a) was generally well answered, including illustrative diagrams of steps in the models. Good answers provided additional explanation from the candidate's own experience.

For Part b), good answers correctly described what is meant by the term 'participatory design'; in particular mentioning user involvement and when this occurs and why. Excellent answers also provided a good example or a case study from the literature.

For Part c), although there is no one correct answer here, good answers provided a suitable example. Excellent answers also included an appropriate justification for their choice in the given scenario.

Examiners' commentaries 2016–17

CO3348 Interaction design – Zone B

General remarks

This examination aimed to test your general understanding of the syllabus, involving application of knowledge to a variety of scenarios. It is important that you read and answer questions carefully. Only three out of five questions should be answered and if you answer more, only the first three are marked.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question aimed to test your ability to demonstrate understanding and apply knowledge to this specific design scenario.

Part a), good answers chose appropriate prototyping methods and described them in detail. It was desirable to highlight the iterative nature in which these methods should be applied. Excellent answers also showed how these methods should be specifically applied in the given scenario.

Part b), good answers included well-designed mock-up sketches (for example, wireframes, storyboards, user flow diagrams) as well as useful descriptions. Excellent answers also described in detail how the prototypes adhere to specific design principles and in particular how these differ in the cases of websites and mobile sites.

Question 2

This question required a good general knowledge of evaluation methods.

Part a) was generally well answered, requiring you to name quantitative evaluation methods and provide brief descriptions showing how they could be used in the given scenario. The most common error here was to confuse the distinction between **quantitative** and **qualitative**. Three methods were required, and if fewer than three were provided, this immediately lost some of the available marks.

Part b) was generally well answered and required candidates to name qualitative evaluation methods and provide brief descriptions on how they could be used in this scenario. The most common error here was to confuse the distinction between quantitative and qualitative. Three methods were required and if fewer than three were provided, this immediately cost some of the available marks.

Part c) required you to create realistic and plausible scenarios focusing on the use of the device (for example, describe how a person would interact with the system to perform tasks and achieve goals). Good marks were achieved where the scenario reflected the story of the user and activity (that is, it focused on user needs, expectations, actions and reactions). **Two** scenarios were required; where only one scenario was provided, this immediately cost half the marks available.

Part d) required an outline of an evaluation plan; including users, a timetable, methods and metrics in the description. Good answers provided detail and realistic sequencing. The evaluation method should be appropriate for the task and the choice should be fully justified. The description of users should include the number of users, and how they would be found, together with a brief description of their characteristics. You should also mention the data to be collected, and how it would be analysed, as well as the performance measures to be used.

Question 3

This question required you to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Internet of Things with respect to designing interactions and the domain of HCI. It was generally poorly answered, with the most common faults being:

- a very short essay
- incoherent argument.

Good answers were written in an appropriate essay style, with a coherent structure (for example introduction, discussion with balanced argument and finished by drawing conclusions). Excellent answers also showed evidence of wider reading, providing the candidates with more material from which to form strong, coherent arguments.

Question 4

This question required an understanding of user-centred design methods and how they could be applied to the given scenario.

For Part a), good answers provided a description of user-centred design and why it is useful. Excellent answers also mentioned specifically how user-centred design methods could be useful in this scenario.

For Part b), although there is no one correct answer here, it was important that candidates related their answers to the scenario. Good answers covered criteria such as including a good sample of the target population and a range of users (for example, including experts/novices and extremes of the spectrum).

Part c) required you to describe two methods and outline advantages and disadvantages with respect to the task. **Two** methods were required; where only one method was provided, this immediately cost half the marks available.

For Part d), although there was no one correct answer to this part, you were required to provide sources of information that were specifically relevant to the task such as documentation, experts, shopping data, etc.

Part e) required you to mention relevant prototyping methods of both low and high fidelity. Good answers contained a description and explained why they would be useful in the given scenario.

Question 5

This question required knowledge of common design concepts.

Part a) was generally well answered. Good answers described the differences between internal and external consistency and external correspondence and provided examples.

Part b) required knowledge of the common design concept and you needed to demonstrate this knowledge through **two** examples. As two examples were required, if only one was provided, this immediately cost half the marks available.

Part c) was generally poorly answered. Good answers described Norman's models (that is, user's model, designer's model), including illustrative diagrams for clarity.

Part d) required you to provide two examples with respect to the domain of interaction design. Good answers included illustrative diagrams with the descriptions and related them to real world situations. As two examples were required, if only one was provided, this immediately cost half the marks available.