Functional Skills

Information and Communication Technology

OCR Report to Centres

September 2012

Functional Skills Information and Communication Technology Level 1 (09876)

Report on the work of the candidates

Using the Internet and Email

Many candidates performed well in this task. Candidates were required to produce a screen dump showing the search that they had carried out and create the required email message. However, a number of candidates lost marks for failing to:
- provide evidence of the search criteria or use complete search criteria
- include an appropriate subject line in the email to describe what the email was about. (The majority of candidates accurately entered the recipient's address and included the information found within the email.) Emails prepared by candidates should ensure that all standard elements are included, for example the subject field content is appropriate.

Candidates should be made aware that some widely used reference websites (eg Google Maps) may not provide the specific information required.

Producing a Flyer

Candidates selected appropriate software and scored well in this task. When presenting information candidates are required to evaluate the selection, use and effectiveness of ICT tools and facilities used to present information. For example, they should consider the location of combined information and how this information is presented. A number of candidates lost marks for the following:
- adding other text to the flyer, apart from the text provided and the text supplied in the question paper, or editing the text provided; this was not necessary
- the text was not presented in a consistent manner; ie the sub-headings were not all formatted consistently and different to the body text and the title was not emphasised
- images that were not appropriate for the flyer were included
- additional material, supplied in the question paper, to be added to the flyer was not entered accurately.

Using ICT to Find and Select Information

Candidates were required to produce lists based on subsets of the data. Most candidates attempted this task and produced lists. However, a number of candidates lost marks for failing to:
- select the correct subset of data; in some instances records were missing
- include a title for each list, so that purpose of the list was apparent
- make some selection relating to the columns to display in the list. Many candidates included all the columns of information.

Producing a document to collect data

In many instances this was well done. In some cases candidates failed to leave sufficient space within the document so that somebody completing the document had space to supply the necessary details.

Protecting Data

Candidates were required to protect the data in a specified file. Evidence of protecting the original data file or protecting the data within the spreadsheet or database package was acceptable. A higher proportion of candidates evidenced this than in previous papers. The majority of candidates provided evidence of accessing the password facility and entering a password. In a small number of instances candidates protected the structure of the spreadsheet file and this does not protect the data within the spreadsheet.

File Management

Candidates were required to provide evidence of file management. Most candidates evidenced a folder they had created although this did not always have a meaningful folder name. In some cases the filenames included 'task 2' etc. The concept of meaningful folder names and filenames appears to be problematic for many candidates. Files should be saved with meaningful filenames for all tasks. Filenames should relate to the scenario and the filenames should clearly indicate the content of the files. Filenames such as 'Task 2' do not indicate the content of the files in a meaningful manner.

Guidance for Centres

- Centres are provided with two versions of the data files by OCR. Candidates should be provided with only the version that they have been prepared to use (ie either the .doc or the .txt version of the files).

- Candidates are not required to produce a narrative describing step by step how the tasks were completed.

- Centres should ensure that printouts are of an adequate quality to be read.

- Candidates should ensure that screen dumps are of a legible size.

- Candidates must use appropriate search techniques to locate and select relevant information. (See skill standard 1.5 on page 19 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates should be able to select suitable information from sources found. (See skill standard 1.6 on page 19 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates should be able to use communications software to meet the requirements of a straightforward task. (See skill standard 1.9 on page 23 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates should be able to effectively filter data and give it an appropriate title. (See skill standard 1.8 on page 21 and skill standard 1.10 on pages 23 and 24 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates should be able to effectively combine information within a publication. (See skill standard 1.9 on pages 22-23 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates should be able to demonstrate security practices. (See skill standard 1.4 on page 19 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates should be able to manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval of information. (See skill standard 1.3 on page 18 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)

- Centres should ensure that all staff delivering the qualification are familiar with the content of the OCR Deliverers' Handbook. This can be found on the OCR website http://www.ocr.org.uk/download/sm/ocr_52248_sm_fs_del_hb.pdf

- Sample assessment and resource material is located on the OCR website. Candidates should be familiar with such material.

Functional Skills Information and Communication Technology Level 2 (09877)

Report on the work of the candidates

Using the internet

This task was reasonably well done. Candidates lost marks for failing to:
- provide evidence of the search they carried out to find the information required (eg a screen dump showing search criteria used in a search engine)
- use a search string that included all the appropriate key words to make their search more efficient
- select all the details required.

Using ICT to perform calculations

Most candidates produced a solution using ICT. The main reasons candidates lost marks are shown below.
- Many candidates failed to plan the task effectively and left out one or more steps in the task.
- Some candidates failed to construct the formula(s) required accurately.
- Some candidates failed to provide evidence in the form of a formula printout. Some did not print the spreadsheet showing all the formulas (ie they produced a screen dump that showed a formula in one cell) and lost the mark for replication.
- Some candidates used label(s) for the new value(s) calculated that did not accurately describe exactly what those value(s) were.
- A few candidates failed to format consistently the new value(s) calculated.
- Few candidates applied appropriate titles, labels and legend to the chart they produced.

Using ICT to enter, develop and refine a graphic

Most candidates produced a solution using ICT. The main reasons candidates lost marks are shown below:
- inconsistent alignment of text and unequally sized objects
- inaccuracies in spelling or inconsistent use of capitalisation.

Combining information to produce a slide presentation

Although the majority of candidates combined the relevant pieces of information with the text provided, very few candidates achieved full marks.
- A few candidates altered or added to the text provided.
- Many inserted items in addition to those requested. In some instances candidates added two maps as they had not made a selection. Many candidates inserted different information from that selected or prepared earlier in the paper.
- Many failed to insert the various pieces of information in appropriate locations within the presentation text. Many inappropriately inserted all the required information at the end of the text.
- Many failed to arrange the various pieces of information in the slides carefully, which led to a lack of balance in the presentation.

- Many failed to evaluate the presentation of the slides effectively, with marks being lost for inconsistent formatting of bullets, body text and headings.
- Very few added an appropriate title for the presentation.
- Many did not crop the screen dumps that they inserted into the presentation.

File management and using email

Candidates were required to create a new folder and prepare an email. Few achieved full marks. The main reasons candidates lost marks are shown below.
- Many candidates failed to name the new folder and files they had created with meaningful folder/filenames.
- A few candidates made errors in the email address entered.
- A few candidates failed to enter a subject for the email. Some of those who did enter a subject for the email failed to give due thought to what that should be.
- Few candidates attached the folder they had created to the email.

Guidance for Centres

Candidate success appears to be very centre dependent. Issues appear to be that:
- candidates have not presented evidence in valid, efficient formats, eg
  – by using a formula printout to show evidence of formulas used in a spreadsheet,
  – by using a screen dump of the search criteria used in a search engine,
  – by using a screen dump of a final email or printing a copy of the email message.

- while centres are provided with both versions of the data files by OCR, candidates should only be provided with the version that they have been prepared to use (ie either the .doc version of the files **or** the .txt version of the files).

Skills that need to be developed are detailed below.
- Candidates need to demonstrate that they can select and use only the information that is required. (See Skill Standard 2.5 on page 30 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates need to learn how to use ICT for a complex data handling task by processing and analysing numerical data (See Skill Standard 2.7 on pages 32-34 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates need to learn how to display numerical data in an appropriate graphical format with appropriate titles, labels and legend. (See Skill Standard 2.7 on pages 32-34 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates need to learn to evaluate their use of ICT tools when presenting information. (See Skill Standards 2.6 and 2.10 on pages 30-32 and page 37 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates need to learn that an email should contain a suitable subject so that the receiver knows what the email is about.   Candidates need to learn how to attach a folder to an email. (See Skill Standard 2.8 on page 34 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates need to learn to use folder/filenames that explain the content of the folder/file. While the use of filenames such as 'Task 2a' helps the candidate identify the files they have used in the test, it does not demonstrate their ability to name files effectively outside of a test situation. (See Skill Standard 2.3 on page 29 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)

- Screen dumps should be of a legible size.

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