

Information and Communication Technology

Level 1 09876

Level 2 09877

OCR Report to Centres

September 2011

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

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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 done and create the required email message. However, a number of candidates lost marks for failing to:

- provide evidence of the search criteria (or they used incomplete search criteria and, in some cases, provided only the evidence found)
- include an appropriate subject line in the email to describe what the email was about. Emails prepared by candidates should ensure that all standard elements are included
- evidence that the information they had found was attached to the email.
- ensure that screen dumps were sized so that the information was legible.

Producing a Letter

Candidates selected appropriate software but did not score well in this task. Candidates are required to combine information for a specified publication. They must be able to evaluate the selection, and consider the location of combined information and how this information is presented. Candidates lost marks for failing to:

- add standard letter information to the text provided.
- not balancing information in the letter in terms of the size of the image(s), additional information and text provided

Using ICT to Perform Calculations

Candidates were required to provide evidence of how they had used ICT to perform calculations, for example a formula printout. However, a number of candidates lost marks due to the following:

- providing only a value printout, losing marks awarded for the formula(s) used.
- failing to format values appropriately
- failure to include appropriate labels to describe the calculated values.

Using ICT to Find and Select Information

Candidates were required to produce a chart based on a subset of the data. Most candidates attempted this task and produced a chart. However, candidates lost marks due to the following:

- failure to produce the chart type selected in the question paper
- failure to include meaningful headings, legend, axis labels and axis titles to explain the data that had been charted.

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 package were both acceptable. 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.

File Management

Candidates were required to provide evidence of filenames created. Many candidates failed to achieve the mark for this task. In some cases no evidence was provided. In other cases the filename included 'task 2' etc. The concept of meaningful 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 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 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 combine information within a publication. (See skill standard 1.10 on page 23 of the OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates should effectively use appropriate software to process and analyse numerical information. This includes printing the spreadsheet showing all formulas. (See skill standard 1.8 on page 21 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates should be able to effectively produce a chart from selected data and give it appropriate titles and labels. (See skill standard 1.2 on page 17 and skill standard 1.7 on pages 20 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)
- 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 material is located on the OCR website. Candidates should be familiar with such materials.

Functional Skills Information and Communication Technology Level 2 (09877)

Report on the work of the candidates

Using the internet

This task was generally well done. Candidates lost marks for failing to:

- provide evidence of the search they did 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 only the information that was required.

Using ICT to perform calculations, to find and select information and display numerical information in appropriate graphical format.

Most candidates produced a solution using ICT. The main reasons candidates lost marks are shown below:

- some candidates failed to provide evidence in the form of formula printouts. Some did not print the spreadsheet showing all the formulas used and lost the mark for replication
- error(s) were present in the formula(s) eg brackets were omitted or in an incorrect location or the formula was incomplete as it contained only part of the calculation required
- charts were not accurately labelled with axes labels, axes titles and chart title
- labels were generally applied to the new column/field of data
- some candidates highlighted selected records; this was not efficient as search criteria could not be applied
- most candidates printed their list including the column that contained the discrete information that was the basis of their filter; this should not be included.

Combining information to produce a newsletter

Although the majority of candidates used appropriate software to combine the relevant pieces of information with the text provided, very few candidates achieved full marks. The main reasons candidates lost marks are shown below:

- text was provided for the newsletter. The majority of candidates edited the text; this was not necessary. Most candidates succeeded in adding the chart, table and information found from the internet, although frequently in an incorrect location
- many failed to arrange the various pieces of information in the newsletter carefully, which led to a lack of balance in the document. Line spacing was not balanced
- column widths for tables inserted were not wide enough to display the information, for example single words were wrapped onto two lines. Screen dumps inserted into the newsletter had not been cropped so that they contained only the information required. Many screen dumps included, for example a browser toolbar, spreadsheet row and column headings.

File management and using email

Candidates were required to evidence the organisation of their files and preparing an email. Few candidates achieved full marks. The main reasons candidates lost marks are shown below:

- few candidates named any new folder with a meaningful folder name (ie one that indicated the contents of the folder)
- most candidates moved the files created into a new folder but some failed to use meaningful file names (ie ones that indicated the content of the file)
- most candidates prepared an email but failed to enter a subject for the email. Those who did enter a subject for the email failed to give due thought to what that should be (eg something about the presentation files)
- not all the required files were attached 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 the OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates need to learn how to use ICT for a complex data handling task by processing and analysing numerical data, displaying numerical information in graphical format and using appropriate fields to organise data so that it can be filtered/queried etc. (See Skill Standard 2.7 on pages 32-34 of the OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates need to learn appropriate layouts for different types of documents. (See Skill Standard 2.9 on pages 35-37 of the OCR 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 the OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates need to learn that an email should contain a suitable subject so that the receiver knows what the email is about. (See Skill Standard 2.8 on page 34 of the OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates need to learn to use folder and file names that explain the content of the folder or file. While the use of file names 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 the OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Screen dumps should be of a legible size.
- Centres should ensure that printouts are of an adequate quality to be read.
- Candidates are not required to produce a narrative of how the tasks were completed.
- 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
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