

Functional Skills

Information and Communication Technology

Level 1 09876

Level 2 09877

OCR Report to Centres

January 2012

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

- provide evidence of the search criteria or used incomplete search criteria and, in some cases, providing only the evidence found
- 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.

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, consider the location of combined information and how this information is presented. However, a number of candidates lost marks due to the following:

- adding other text to the flyer apart from the text provided or editing the text provided; this was not necessary
- information was not presented within consistent page margins, information in the flyer was not balanced in terms of the size of the image(s) and text and white space was not balanced
- failing to select an appropriate image from those provided and in some cases adding all of the images provided, some of which were not appropriate to the flyer. In some instances, surplus material was not cropped from the image.

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. Whilst many candidates were able to calculate the values required, some candidates provided an incorrect total for the values
- the income earned had to be calculated; some candidates failed to do this or had errors in the formula
- failure to include appropriate labels to describe the calculated values.

Using ICT to Find and Select Information

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

- failure to select the correct subset of data which required the use of 'greater than' in the selection criterion. Frequently candidates selected 'greater than or equal to' and had additional records in the list
- in a small number of instances it was not possible to identify what search criteria had been applied.
- failure to include a title for the list, so that the purpose of the list was apparent, yet alone one that was meaningful.
- in some cases, failing to make some selection relating to the fields to display on the list. Many candidates included the ID field in the list, which was not necessary.

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. 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.

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 complex task. (See skill standard 1.9 on page 23 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates 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 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)
- 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. However a number of 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 all the information that was required.

Using ICT to perform calculations and to find and select information

Most candidates understood the task and produced a solution using ICT. The main reasons candidates lost marks are shown below.

- A lack of evidence in the form of formula printouts. Some did not print the spreadsheet showing all the formulas used and lost the mark for replication.
- Labels were generally applied to the new values although many were misspelt.
- Most did not format the result of their calculation as currency.
- Most candidates filtered the data although many only used one of the two criteria.
- Most printed their list including the column that contained the discrete information that was the basis of their filter, this should never be done.

Using ICT to draw and label graphics

Many candidates scored very well in this task. However, a number of candidates lost marks for:

- overlapping parts of the object that they had drawn and broken lines
- not adding all the required components of the graphic
- not removing the text box borders
- inaccuracy and inconsistent formatting in labels.

Combining information to produce a letter

Although the majority of candidates combined the relevant pieces of information with the text provided, very few candidates achieved full marks.

- Many failed to insert the various pieces of information in appropriate locations within the letter text.
- Many failed to enter the address of the sender and the addressee. Those that did often entered the details inaccurately.
- Few entered a date, salutation and complimentary close. Those that did often used an inappropriate complimentary close.
- 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. Screen shots inserted into the letter had not been cropped so that they contained only the information required.

File management and using email

- Most candidates created a new folder. However few named it with a meaningful folder name (ie one that indicated the contents of the folder).
- Most moved the files created into the new folder but again some failed to use meaningful file names (ie ones that indicated the content of the file).
- Most prepared an email but most 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 say (eg something about the letter files).
- Few candidates attempted to compress their folder and attach it to the email. Most attached individual files to the email.

Guidance for Centres

Candidate success appears to be very centre dependent. Issues were:

- candidates did not present 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.
- 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 for (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 27 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates need to learn how to use ICT for a complex data handling task by using appropriate fields etc so that data can be filtered/queried etc. (See Skill Standard 2.7 on pages 29-31 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates need to demonstrate that they can work with objects and texts boxes to create and label a graphic. (See Skill Standard 2.6 on pages 27-29 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates need to learn appropriate layouts for different types of documents. Candidates need to know the standard information required in a letter. (See Skill Standard 2.9 on pages 32-24 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 27-29 and page 34 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. (See Skill Standard 2.9 on pages 32-24 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates need to learn how to compress a folder so that they can attach it to an email. (See Skill Standard 2.3 on page 26 of OCR's 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 26 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)
- Screen dumps should be of a legible size.
- Centres should ensure that printouts are of an adequate quality to be read.

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