Functional Skills

Information and Communication Technology

Level 1 09876

Level 2 09877

OCR Report to Centres

March 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 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 Presentation

Candidates selected appropriate software and some 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 presentation apart from the text provided or editing the text provided; this was not necessary
- the text was not split across an appropriate number of slides; often all of the supplied text was on a single slide
- the text was not presented in a consistent manner; ie the headings were not all formatted consistently and different to the body text and in some cases the body text formatting differed from slide to slide
- the size of the image to be used was not considered
- additional material to be added to the presentation was not accurately selected and the heading used to describe the text was not formatted the same as other headings.

Using ICT to Find and Select Information/Perform Calculations

Candidates were required to produce a list that showed 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 candidate 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 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 in the list. Many candidates included all the columns of information or did not display the column that contained the appropriate variable data for each record
- data had to be identified through a variety of means such as the use of MIN/MAX functions, sorting the data or filtering the data. Many candidates did not show that they had used ICT to do this by including a formula printout/screen dump or printed list of sorted data etc and provided only the data required.

Protecting Data

Candidates were required to protect the data in a specified file. This task was well done. Evidence of protecting the original data file or protecting the data within the spreadsheet package was 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 within the spreadsheet.

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 only 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 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 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 poorly done. Candidates lost marks because:

- they failed 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)
- they failed to use a search string that included all the appropriate key words to make their search more efficient
- they fails to search the website find to select only the information that was required.
- They stated that it would be appropriate for someone buy or download anti-virus software, rather than to run or use it.

Using ICT to perform calculations, and to find and select information

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
- most candidates were unable to construct formula(s) that carried out the calculation that was given to them in the test paper
- labels were generally applied to the new data although many were misspelt
- most candidates filtered the data successfully although some showed that they calculated the required value for the specified products only without carrying out the required filtering/sorting.

Using ICT to produce a graphic

Most candidates produced a solution using ICT. However, some candidates failed to use ICT to produce the required graphic. The main reasons candidates lost marks are shown below:

- some candidates failed to label streets on the graphic clearly
- a number of candidates failed to indicate the warehouse in the correct location
- a number of candidates misspelt street names or failed to use capitalisation correctly
- most candidates failed to evaluate their graphic to ensure that elements were balanced (eg text boxes used did not cover streets).

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 arrange the various pieces of information in the letter carefully**,** which led to a lack of balance in the document. For example, a very few made sure that line spacing was consistent, many failed to crop any screen dumps used to ensure they were appropriate for a letter to a customer and many split the pages used inappropriately.
- Few candidates entered all the information that would be appropriate for a letter, ie, date, recipient's address, salutation and complimentary close. Of those that attempted to enter the standard information, many failed to use an appropriate salutation and/or complimentary close.
- A number of candidates failed to enter the sender's address. This was acceptable as the image provided or as text taken from the address image provided.
- Many candidates failed to enter the recipient's address correctly.

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 moved the required files into a new folder but again some failed to use meaningful file names for the files (ie ones that indicated the content of the file)
- most 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 customer letter files)
- few candidates attached the folder created to the email, which might have involved compressing the folder. Most attached individual files and scored fewer marks as a result.

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 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 35-37 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. (See Skill Standard 2.8 on page 34 of OCR's Deliverers' Handbook)

- Candidates may need to know how to compress folders so that they can then be attached to emails. (See Skill Standard 2.3 on page 29 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 29 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.
- 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.