Functional Skills

Information and Communication Technology

Level 1 09876

Level 2 09877

OCR Report to Centres

February 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 they used incomplete search criteria and, in some cases, provided only the evidence found)
- select appropriate websites
- 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.

Producing an Information Sheet

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

- Candidates added other text to the information sheet apart from the text provided or edited the text provided.
- Candidates inserted information (eg images) in the page margins.
- Candidates did not balance the information in the information sheet in terms of: the size of the images, the alignment of the images and the line spacing used.
- Candidates failed to position the images selected with the appropriate text.
- Candidates failed to use the full page for the information sheet which was to be displayed on a wall. The text size used was also inappropriate (too small) for the purpose of the information sheet.

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 reasons.

- Candidates provided a printout showing the values calculated only, losing marks awarded for the formula(s) used.
- Candidates failed to calculate any minimum or maximum values (some sorted the data instead of using the MIN and MAX function which, when replicated, would automatically calculate the minimum and maximum for the remaining weeks).
- Candidates failed to include appropriate labels to describe the calculated values.

Using ICT to Display Numerical Data in a Graphical Format

Candidates were required to produce a bar chart that showed a subset of the data. Most candidates attempted this task and produced a chart. However, a number lost marks due to the following reasons.

- Candidates failed to select the correct subset of data.
- Candidates failed to add a chart title. A number of candidates attempted a chart title but failed to enter on that was meaningful.
- Candidates failed to add axes titles.
- Candidates failed to ensure that the legend was removed, or was meaningful for the data.
- Candidates failed to make sure that the titles and labels entered were spelt correctly.

Protecting Data

Candidates were required to open a specified file using a given password and then to protect the specified file with a new password. The majority provided evidence of opening the file and accessing the password facility and entering a new password. In a small number of instances, candidates protected the incorrect file.

File Management

Candidates were required to organise the files they had created and to provide evidence of filenames created. Many candidates failed to achieve all the marks for this task due to the following reasons.

- Candidates failed to create a new folder with a meaningful folder name OR failed to use a systematic file naming convention for the files they had produced.
- Candidates used filenames such as '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 use appropriate software to process and analyse numerical information effectively. 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 produce charts and display them appropriately using titles, legends etc. (See skill standard 1.8 on page 22 of OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates should be able to combine information effectively 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 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
- locate an appropriate website that provided the required information
- 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
- most did not format the result of their calculation as currency
- charts were not accurately labelled with axes labels, axes titles, chart title and meaningful legend, if required
- labels were generally applied to the new data although many were misspelt
- most candidates filtered the data although many only used one of the two criteria
- 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 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 newsletter text.
- 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 moved the files created into a 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 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 newsletter 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 OCR's 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 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 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 Delivers' 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.

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