Functional Skills

Information and Communication Technology

OCR Report to Centres

August 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 for using 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 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
- the income earned had to be calculated; some candidates failed to do this or had errors in the formula. Some candidates failed to format the income values to 2 decimal places.
- 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 either 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.

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 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 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 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 selected incorrect data to chart and some charted all the data.
- Charts were not accurately labelled with axes labels, axes titles, chart title and meaningful legend, if required.
- Some candidates failed to construct the formula(s) required accurately
- 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.

Using ICT to organise information and analyse a data set

- Most candidates filtered the data although some did not use an inclusive criterion.
- Most included all the details in their list but some did not ensure that the data was fully displayed.

Combining information to produce a 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.
- Some candidates failed to insert the various pieces of information in appropriate locations within the presentation text.
- Many candidates failed to split the text and information that had been inserted across an appropriate number of slides.
- Many candidates failed to include an appropriate title slide on the presentation.
- Formatting of the information in the presentation was poor. Many candidates failed to use consistent formatting for body text and headings throughout the presentation.

File management and using email

- 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 say (ie something about the presentation files).
- Many candidates did not attach all the required files or attached additional files.
- 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 files).

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.
- 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. (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 2.9 on pages 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 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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