

Examiners' Reports

January 2011

J461/J061/R/11J

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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.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Chief Examiner's Comments

General comments:

This was the first session for this qualification and there were only a limited number of entries for unit B061, which is understandable after one term and very few entries for unit B062 so it is difficult to identify any trends from the information this provides.

On the whole, it was evident that the majority of candidates who did sit the examination were not adequately prepared. It is clear from the principal examiner's comments that candidates need to practise the level of response type of question. These need not be long responses. Candidates should concentrate on identifying what is being asked, considering both positive and negative aspects/benefits and drawbacks and use technical knowledge and terms in their answers.

The entry for B062 was very small and it is impossible to use the information gathered from this to provide any general comments.

B061 ICT in Today's World

The question paper performed as expected, discriminating well across the ability range.

It should be noted that candidates appear to lack sufficient skills in answering the questions that require a discussion such as questions 5(a) and 9(c). Many answers consisted of lists or generic comments on the topic given in the question rather than a balanced answer addressing all the aspects of the question. Often, it was noted that the responses did not refer to the information given in the question. Centres are reminded that candidates should have practice in answering these types of question.

Very few candidates left questions blank and candidates had sufficient time to answer the questions.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) This question was well answered. Most candidates scored high marks on this question.
(b) This question was about explaining an advantage of using netbooks, not simply of having/owning one. Better answers referred to the use for school work which was asked for in the question.
(c) This question did not require any explanations so was answered quite well. Most candidates scored both marks.
- 2 (a) Most candidates answered this question correctly but a significant few described how to create or store a backup.
(b) Most candidates answered this question well but a significant few explained why a backup would be necessary or how to use one.
- 3 (a) Most candidates answered this question quite well but too many wrote about social networking websites rather than chat rooms.
(b) Many candidates failed to score full marks as they gave repetitive answers such as "regular breaks". Centres are reminded that repetitive answers will not be given credit.
- 4 Candidates could only score full marks by describing three different features. Many candidates described the content of the presentation rather than how multimedia features could be used in the presentation to enhance it.
- 5 This question was marked using a Level of Response mark scheme. While many candidates knew about airport security, they could not discuss the use of ICT and its impact. There were few technical terms in evidence, and few candidates could discuss different impacts of the use of ICT in this situation.
- 6 This question was not well answered. Most candidates could not identify the features of a GUI and consequently could not state any benefits. Common errors were to confuse a GUI with command line interfaces and give benefits of these. Candidates appeared to have little knowledge of either.
- 7 Too many generic responses about unauthorised access and the use of passwords were seen. Few candidates could describe how encryption would work in this scenario.

- 8 (a) (i) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates.
- (ii) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (b) This question was not well answered by many candidates. Vague references to eg “see the price” were common. Candidates who scored well described the features that could be used and not simply use of the database.
- 9 (a) This question was not well answered. Most candidates described what could be done with the appliance e.g. play DVDs or wash items. The few better responses that were seen stated that embedded systems were restricted in the tasks that they could perform or limited to one task. Few candidates stated that the programming of embedded systems did not need to be altered but could allow a user to enter some instructions e.g. the spin cycle on a washing machine for different articles.
- (b) Most candidates scored well on this question but many stated sensors that do not exist or were inappropriate in this situation.
- (c) Overall, this question was not answered well as most candidates did not properly address all aspects of the question. To achieve high marks in this type of question, candidates must address all aspects of the question, in this case both the benefits and drawbacks of using appliances with embedded systems. Many candidates described only the benefits and/or disadvantages of the use of appliances without mentioning embedded systems.

B062 Practical Applications in ICT

There was only a small entry for this unit and therefore there are no comments this session.

It is worth noting that the entries made were done through the OCR repository, which made receiving of the work by the moderator quick and meant that the systems produced by the candidates could be looked at, facilitating the moderation process. It is hoped that most centres will submit candidates' work electronically in future sessions, either via the OCR repository or using CDs if they choose the postal method.

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