

Information and Communication Technology

Level 1 09876

Level 2 09877

OCR Report to Centres

November 2011

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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. In some cases the candidates used incomplete search criteria or provided only the evidence found
- 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 a Presentation

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 presentation apart from the text provided or edited the text provided
- candidates failed to split the text provided over an appropriate number of slides
- some candidates failed to select an appropriate image from those provided and in some cases added all of the images provided, some of which were not appropriate to the presentation.

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 an overall total value.
- 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 pie 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 one that was meaningful.
- Candidates failed to add values to sector labels.
- Candidates failed to make sure that the titles and labels entered were spelt correctly.

Protecting Data

Candidates were required to protect a specified file with a password. Evidence of protecting the original data file or protecting the data within the spreadsheet package were both acceptable. A higher proportion of candidates evidenced protecting data 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 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 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 as efficient as possible
- select only the information that was required.

Using ICT to perform calculations

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 a formula printout. A number attempted to provide evidence of their use of formulas by providing screen shots showing formulas in the formula bar, however, a number failed to provide evidence of all formulas used and lost marks for some formulas and/or replication.
- Labels were generally applied to the new values although many were misspelt.

Using ICT to find and select information

Most candidates attempted this task. Most candidates made the required amendments to the data file provided. However, candidates lost marks for the reasons shown below.

- Candidates were unsure how to add new data to the data file provided. Highlighting was used inappropriately by some candidates instead of the creation of a new field to add new data to the data file.
- A number of candidates did not use ICT to filter the data as required and made errors in the list.

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 for the reasons shown below.

- 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. 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 for the files created (ie ones that indicated the content of the file).
- Most candidates prepared an email as required but few attached the folder as requested (ie by compressing the folder and then attaching it to the email).
- Most candidates 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 newsletter files).

Guidance for Centres

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

- 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.
- 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 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 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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