

Information and Communication Technology

Level 1 09876

Level 2 09877

OCR Report to Centres

December 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 (or they used incomplete search criteria and, in some cases, 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 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, considering 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 and punctuation to the flyer apart from the text provided or editing the text provided
- not presenting information within consistent page margins, not balancing information in the flyer in terms of the size of the image(s) and text and not balancing white space
- failing to select a suitable image(s) that was appropriate for the text from those provided for the flyer
- failing to select the required records from the dataset provided or failing to add the records to the flyer
- failing to format the records inserted so that it was clear to a reader what they were about (eg by the inclusion of field/column headings, by adjusting column widths).

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 values printout, losing the marks awarded for the formula(s) used.
- failing to calculate the new price or having errors in the formula
- failing to include an appropriate title for the new price list.

Producing a document to be used for data capture

Candidates were required to produce a document that could be used to collect information from customers. A few candidates did not attempt this task. Of those that did attempt it, it was generally well done. However, a number lost marks due to the following:

- adding additional text to the document that had not been provided, the text added usually repeated text that had already been provided
- failing to include labels to indicate all the information required, failing to indicate where information was to be entered (eg table cell, line) and failing to leave sufficient space for data to be entered
- spelling labels incorrectly (eg 'Country' instead of 'County')
- failing to evaluate the presentation of their document (ie balance the text provided with the text entered, balance the white space, use consistent margins).

File Management

Candidates were required to provide evidence of having created a new folder and moving files created into that new folder. They also had to provide evidence of having used meaningful folder and filenames. Many candidates failed to achieve all the marks for this task. In some cases no evidence was provided. In other cases the folder and/or filenames included were not meaningful (eg 'task 2' etc). The concept of meaningful folder and/or 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.

Protecting Data

Candidates were required to protect the data in a specified file. The majority provided evidence of accessing the password facility and entering a password. In a small number of instances, candidates protected an incorrect file with a password.

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 be able to filter data effectively and give it appropriate titles. (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 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 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
- error(s) were present in the formula(s) eg brackets were omitted or in an incorrect location or the formula was incomplete as it contained only part of the calculation required
- an inappropriate chart type was produced by the candidate. A scatter graph was required and candidates frequently produced a comparative bar chart or line graph
- charts were not accurately labelled with axes labels, axes titles and chart title
- labels were generally applied to the new column/field of data
- some candidates highlighted selected records; this was not efficient as search criteria could not be applied
- 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 presentation

Although the majority of candidates used appropriate software to combine the relevant pieces of information with the text provided, very few candidates achieved full marks. The main reasons candidates lost marks are shown below:

- text was provided for the presentation. The majority of candidates edited the text; this was not necessary. Most candidates succeeded in adding the chart, table and information found from the internet, although frequently in an incorrect location
- candidates did not perform well when evaluating the presentation of the presentation. Many failed to arrange the various pieces of information in the presentation carefully, which led to a lack of balance in the document. Line spacing was not balanced. Frequently the font size was too small, text was not split appropriately, headings were not consistently formatted and a title was not included
- many candidates failed to produce a handout version of the slides with many candidates printing the presentation with one slide per page.

File management and using email

Candidates were required to evidence the organisation of their files and preparation of 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 candidates moved the files created into a new folder but some failed to use meaningful file names (ie ones that indicated the content of the file)
- most candidates 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 presentation files)
- not all the required files were attached to the email.

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 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 the OCR 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 the OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Candidates need to learn appropriate layouts for different types of documents. (See Skill Standard 2.9 on pages 35-37 of the OCR 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 the OCR 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 the OCR 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 the OCR Deliverers' Handbook)
- Screen dumps should be of a legible size.
- Centres should ensure that printouts are of an adequate quality to be read.
- Candidates are not required to produce a narrative of how the tasks were completed.
- 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
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OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Coventry Office
Westwood Way
Coventry
CV4 8JQ

OCR Customer Contact Centre

(Skills and Employment)

Telephone: 024 76 851509

Fax: 024 76 851633

Email: vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553