

**Information Technology****Level 3****General Comments**

The focus of the paper was on mail merge, graphic and spreadsheet skills. The paper provided a good range of level 3 skills with some aspects of the paper proving quite demanding.

Entries for the test were similar to those in the same series in previous years but the percentage pass rate showed a small increase.

**Task A**

Candidates were able to import the data correctly but many experienced problems in setting the margins to the correct size. A surprising number of candidates were unable to insert the horizontal line to the required length.

All but a few were able to import the graphic but many had great difficulty in resizing it correctly. In general terms the cropping was carried out effectively.

The majority of the candidates experienced great difficulty in centring the information as directed; it is clear that few candidates are familiar with the use of decimal tabs.

The introduction and positioning of merge fields was, on the whole, well done. Some candidates used an address block which was not as directed by the question paper but it was clear from the subsequent printouts that fields were appropriately set. Some candidates lost marks for inappropriate spacing or for not replacing all words with a merge field. A few failed to printout a copy of the unmerged letter which impacted on the marks for the printout of the merged letters.

The majority of the candidates were able to produce a printout of the selected letters required although a few simply printed copies of all the letters.

Almost all were able to set up a new folder with the correct name. Not all, however, had the correct files within the folder.

**Task B**

The majority of candidates attempted this task and most were able to import the data correctly. The production of the IF formula proved quite demanding and there were some interesting and quite varied outcomes. Some candidates were totally familiar with the use of an IF / OR statement; others produced alternative, effective formulas, for example using nested IF statements. Some candidates understood the principle but did not use an absolute cell reference. This invariably impacted on their ability to replicate the formulas. There continues to be a number of candidates who do not understand the basic principles of an IF statement.

An encouraging number of candidates were able to print the required range but a few lost marks subsequently as they did not include the gridlines, row and column headings.

## **Task C**

Some candidates continue to lose marks because their files do not clearly demonstrate the use of the appropriate software. Candidates are reminded that if a list of filenames is produced then the extensions need to be included. The centre is reminded that candidates should not have access to other files during an exam.

### **Recommendations to centres**

Practice is needed in setting margins and entering a line to a specified length

Candidates should be able to import, resize, reposition and crop an image

Candidates should be familiar with the use of decimal tabs

Further practice is needed in the setting of merge fields

Candidates should be able to produce all types of formulas required at Level 3 with particular emphasis on different aspects of the IF statement

Candidates should be able to select specific areas of the spreadsheet for printing

Candidates must be able to set up folders and files with the correct names

Impress upon candidates the need to follow the test instructions carefully and accurately

Centres **must** ensure that candidates have fully covered the criteria set out in the key skill test specifications which can be found on the QCA website.

Mariette Wyatt  
Chief Examiner  
Information Technology Key Skill