

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

This was a well balanced test providing a good range of the level 3 skills. Candidates responded well and although the entry numbers were slightly lower than in November 2004, the percentage pass rate showed a significant improvement. The focus of the paper was on a database and query with word processing skills including the ability to import and position a graphic.

**Task A**

The majority of the candidates successfully imported the data; there were, however, still candidates who lost a mark for the incorrect naming of the file. Candidates were able to produce the table design showing correct field names although a few had an additional ID field. Most were able to set the primary key and data types including the logical fields.

The validation rule caused a few problems with a number of candidates using 'AND' instead of 'OR'; the validation message proved more straightforward.

Some candidates still have difficulty in producing a report with the required number of records. Whilst the majority of candidates produced a report of some sort, there were candidates who did not have the correct records. These had clearly not produced a query according to the required criteria with the result that the report contained either too many or too few records. Most had selected the correct fields. The ability to group and sort is improving although it continues to be an issue for a few.

**Task B**

Despite experiencing a few problems in setting the margins to the correct size, the majority of candidates were able to import the data correctly. All but a few were able to import the graphic, position it and use word wrap. The setting of left tabs was generally done well but many candidates, once again, experienced great difficulty in setting decimal tabs.

A very small number of candidates did not appear to have the wherewithal to use mail merge but, apart from these few, the introduction and positioning of merge fields was 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 and the correct file.

## **Task C**

There are still a minority of candidates who continue to lose marks because their files do not clearly demonstrate the use of the appropriate software. Centres are reminded that candidates should not have access to other files during an exam.

### **Recommendations to centres**

Skills relating to validation rules need further development

Candidates need to be able to produce a report using specified criteria

Practice is needed in setting margins

Candidates should be familiar with the use of decimal tabs

Further practice is needed in the use of mail merge

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

Candidates need to have covered fully the criteria set out in the key skill test specifications which can be found on the QCA website.

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