

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

The paper had a high percentage of level 3 skills across all the tasks making it a challenging paper. The focus of the paper was on spreadsheet and database skills. Entries for the test were a little lower than in the same series last year but the percentage pass rate was comparable to similar tests.

**Task A**

Almost all candidates imported the data successfully into a spreadsheet although a few lost marks for not formatting all the necessary cell ranges to currency and 2 decimal points. Candidates found the next part of this task quite difficult as the main formula required them to use a LOOKUP table. Some candidates were totally familiar with the use of a LOOKUP; a few produced an alternative formula, for example using a nested IF statement. Some candidates understood the principle but did not use an absolute cell reference which invariably impacted on their ability to replicate the formulas. A number of candidates correctly used a named range rather than an absolute cell reference. Others generated an individual formula for each item but this meant that they did not employ the full range required by the LOOKUP table.

The IF statement in the Discount column also caused some problems with errors in both the logic and the THEN /ELSE; many candidates here also failed to use an absolute cell reference.

Whilst a number of candidates successfully hid the required columns, a significant proportion of candidates did not print the required cell range and many did not include row and column headers. There were quite a few candidates who produced no formula printout at all.

**Task B**

The majority of candidates produced a printout of the table structure although in several instances there was no evidence of the data itself actually being imported. Those candidates who imported the data successfully usually had the correct field names although some had not set them and still had Field 1, Field 2 etc. Some candidates included an ID field. Most candidates were able to set the data types.

The correct validation rule caused problems for quite a number of candidates; many did not use 'OR' and some produced the correct rule but as a text string. It was surprising that several candidates had difficulty in displaying all the data when printing the table design.

In the main quite a number of candidates were able to produce a report with the correct records. Others had produced records as a result of an incomplete or incorrect query and this meant that some marks were lost. Other issues in the task focused on the inability to display the information fully whilst others found the addition of a correct title or the report footer to be a problem. Where grouping and sorting had been attempted it was done well and ascending and descending order now appears to be less of an issue.

## Task C

Candidates are reminded that they may no longer use a list of filenames; the paper now states explicitly that a screen dump showing the filenames must be produced. Some candidates continue to lose marks because their files are presented as text files.

Centres are reminded again that candidates **must not** have access to other files during an exam.

## Recommendations to centres

Candidates should be able to address all types of formulas required at Level 3 including the use of LOOKUP tables

Candidates need to be able to hide columns

Candidates need to be able to print a specified range showing row and column headings

Ensure that candidates are able to display full the table setup

Practice is needed on validation rules using OR

Further practice is needed in entering the required criteria when producing a report

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

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

Mariette Wyatt  
Chief Examiner  
Information Communication Technology Key Skill