

June Test Series - 2006

Chief Examiner's Report

Information Communication Technology

Level 3

General Comments

The percentage of level 3 skills represented in the paper was high resulting in a challenging paper. The focus of the paper was on database and spreadsheet skills. Entries for the test were similar to the same series last year with the percentage pass rate at a comparable level.

Task A

Almost all candidates produced a printout of the table structure although, on occasion, there was no evidence of the data itself actually being imported. The correct field names were usually imported although some still had Field 1, Field 2 etc. and a few had an additional ID field. Many candidates had difficulty with producing the correct validation rule with some using 'AND' instead of 'OR' and others producing it as a text string. The validation text, however, was usually correct.

In general all the data was displayed when producing the table design. An increasing number of candidates produced this evidence in a series of screenshots rather than just one; care must be taken, in these circumstances, to identify the correct field for the validation rule.

Most candidates were subsequently able to produce a report although many had difficulty in generating the correct records. Quite a number produced only 2 records as a result of an incomplete or incorrect query. There were other incorrect selections or, on occasion, no selection at all; this meant that some marks were lost. Many lost a mark for their inability to display the information fully whilst others found the addition of a correct title or the report footer to be a problem. The ability to group and sort was demonstrated well by most.

Task B

Most candidates attempted this task. They were able to import the data correctly and format the correct columns to currency and the appropriate decimal places.

The production of the formulas proved very challenging and some candidates produced some quite varied outcomes. The formula for questions 5a/b was straightforward although the IF / AND formula in 5c proved more challenging. Marks were lost for an incorrect logical operator or because a single IF was used with no logical operator included at all. There continues to be a number of candidates who do not understand the basic principles of an IF statement

Some candidates did not use an absolute cell reference but were still able to produce an effective formula. However the lack of an absolute cell reference meant that marks were often lost for replication. A few produced alternative formulas, for example using a nested IF statement. Most candidates were able to hide the necessary columns but many did not include column letters and row numbers which meant that marks were lost.

The data for the chart was usually correct. Few candidates produced a stacked bar chart and there were many problems with the correct x axis labels and the legend.

Task C

A few candidates continue to lose marks because their files are presented as text files. Candidates are reminded that a list of filenames is no longer acceptable.

The candidates should not have access to other files during a test.

Recommendations to centres

Ensure that candidates are able to import data correctly and set field names and types

Practice is needed on validation rules using AND and OR

Practice is needed in using the required criteria when producing a report

Candidates should be able to address all types of formulas required at Level 3 including the use of operators such as AND / OR

Practice is needed in producing appropriate charts

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

Centres must ensure that candidates do not have access to other files during a test.

Chief Examiner
Information Communication Technology Key Skill