

Chief Examiner's Report June Test Series – 2004

Information Technology

Level 3

General Comments

The paper provided a good range of level 3 skills across the various tasks. Some aspects of the paper were quite demanding but were still well in line with level 3 requirements. The focus of the paper was on database and spreadsheet skills. Entries for the test were a little lower than in the same series in previous years but the percentage pass rate showed an encouraging increase.

Task A

Most candidates imported the data successfully with correct field names although some had Field 1, Field 2 etc. Candidates were able to set the data types although a few had difficulty in setting the logical field. The correct validation rule was produced by some but it caused problems for many; the validation text, however, was approached with a much greater degree of confidence.

Very few had difficulty in displaying all the data when printing the table design.

On balance quite a number of candidates was able to produce a report with the correct records. Others had produced a set of records that resulted from an incomplete or incorrect query and this meant that some marks were lost. Many were unable to fully display the information whilst others found the addition of a correct title or the report footer to be a problem. The ability to group and sort is improving although it continues to be an issue for a few.

Task B

The majority of candidates attempted this task and most were able to import the data correctly and to format as required. The production of the formulas proved quite demanding and produced some quite varied outcomes. Some candidates were totally familiar with the use of an IF / AND 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.

Quite a number of candidates successfully sorted the data although a few did not sort on all columns. The quality of the graph was quite varied; few candidates produced a correct, stacked bar chart. The chart frequently dealt with the wrong data; some candidates included Total Sales. Too often the legend contained the wrong information or referred to 'series'.

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 candidates should not have access to other files during an exam.

Recommendations to centres

Ensure that candidates are able to set data types

Practice is needed on validation rules

Practice is needed in selecting the correct records when producing a report

Candidates should be familiar with grouping and sorting

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 spreadsheet data to produce an accurate chart

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.

Chief Examiner
Information Technology Key Skill