

Chief Examiner's Report

June Test Series 2007

Information Communication Technology

Level 3

The Paper

The focus of the paper was on spreadsheet, word processing and mail merge skills. The paper provided a high number of level 3 skills with some aspects of the paper proving very demanding for many candidates. The number of entries for the test was similar to those in the same series in previous years but the percentage pass rate was slightly down.

Task A

The majority of candidates attempted this task and most were able to import the data correctly. The production of the formula proved quite demanding, requiring an IF / AND. There were some interesting and quite varied outcomes including nested IF statements, and occasionally the use of an IF / OR statement. Others produced alternative, effective formulas. Some candidates understood the principle but produced only a single IF and some did not use an absolute cell reference. The latter invariably impacted on their ability to replicate the formulas. There still appear to be a few candidates who do not understand the basic principles of an IF statement.

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

There were disappointingly few candidates who were able to produce the correct chart. The majority of errors related to the correct labelling of the axes and the positioning of a correct legend, although the ability to produce a stacked bar chart eluded many.

Task B

Candidates were able to import the data correctly with a few experiencing problems in setting the margins to the correct width. Many candidates were able to set the information into two columns but a surprising number was unable to insert the vertical separator line appropriately.

Using the find and replace facility seemed to cause a few problems and it was evident on occasions that the relevant words had simply been re-typed. However, overall, the alignment of the information using tabs was done well and it is encouraging to see that candidates are increasingly familiar with the use of decimal tabs.

The introduction and positioning of the merge fields was, on the whole, also well done. A few candidates used an address or greeting block which was not as directed by the question paper but it was clear from the subsequent printouts whether fields were appropriately set. Marks continue to be lost for inappropriate spacing or for not including all the items that required a merge field. A few failed to printout a copy of the unmerged letter and this 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 and only a handful printed copies of all the letters.

Task C

Candidates are reminded that a list of filenames is not acceptable. The test paper clearly states that the list of files must be in the form of a screen dump. The centre is reminded that candidates should not have access to any other files during an exam.

General Comments

There was a surprising number of papers that included pages with no name. Centres should be aware that the test paper reminds candidates several times to put their name on every page. Pages with no name are not marked. Names can be handwritten.

An increasing number of papers are submitted in the wrong order. It is helpful if candidates put their papers together in printout order.

If candidates are including pages that they do not wish to have marked it is helpful if these are put together at the back.

Recommendations to centres

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 including gridlines, row and column heading on the printout

The skills relating to the production of a correct chart need revisiting

Practice is needed in setting margins and entering a separator line

Candidates should be familiar with the use of find and replace

Further practice is needed in the setting of merge fields

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

When papers are collected it is helpful if they are organised in printout order.

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 Communication Technology
Key Skills