

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

The percentage of level 3 skills across all the tasks was comparable with papers from previous series. The focus of the paper was on spreadsheet and word processing skills including graphics.

There was a similar number of entries in comparison with the same test series last year but the percentage pass rate was perhaps slightly lower. This was probably as a result of the formula which was quite challenging.

Task A

The majority of candidates imported the data successfully into a spreadsheet, although a few lost marks for not formatting all the necessary cell ranges to currency and 0 decimal points.

A number of candidates either did not address all three formulas or did not produce a formula printout, although it appeared that they had generated results. This was costly in terms of marks. The first formula was fairly straightforward but quite a few candidates failed to use an absolute cell reference in the second formula. The generation of the main formula proved difficult and many produced a single IF formula. Some were able to use an IF / 'AND' in some form or produced an alternative formula, for example using a nested IF statement. Some candidates understood the principle but, as with the second formula, did not use an absolute cell reference which invariably impacted on their ability to replicate.

Whilst a number of candidates successfully hid the required columns, many lost valuable marks because they did not include row and column headings. A proportion of candidates did not print the required cell range.

Using a filter to generate the correct rows was well done on the whole but, once again, many lost marks because they had not included the row and column headings and some had not used an automated process. Where slightly different criteria were used some still gained some marks.

Task B

The importation of the data was done correctly but there seemed to be quite a few who experienced problems in setting the margins to the correct width. The majority were able to set the information into three columns but a surprising number did not fully justify the text. Only a few were unable to insert the vertical separator lines appropriately.

Using the find and replace facility seemed to cause a few problems with variations in case and spelling. Normally the graphic was correctly imported and positioned, although some candidates were less confident when it came to resizing. Aligning the information using tabs caused quite a few problems and many were able to set only one of the tabs correctly.

The introduction and positioning of the merge fields was, on the whole, done well; however, spacing sometimes cost marks and occasionally candidates did not replace all the required

fields. A few candidates used an address or greeting block which was not as directed by the question paper but it could be seen from the subsequent printouts whether fields were appropriately set. A few failed to print out 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 may not use a list of filenames; the paper states explicitly that a screen dump showing the filenames and icons must be produced. Some candidates continue to lose marks because their files are presented as text files or HTML.

Centres are reminded again that candidates **must not** have access to other files during an exam. A centre may be referred to Compliance if inappropriate files or folders are present.

Recommendations to centres

Candidates must be able to format data correctly

Candidates should be able to generate an IF / AND formula as required at Level 3

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

More practice is required in using a filter

The setting of margins should be taught as a basic skill as should Find and Replace

Candidates should be able to set merge fields individually

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

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

It would be very helpful if candidates were required to put their test paper printouts in the order in which they are generated.

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