

CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT MARCH 2004

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LEVEL 3

General Comments

This test was provided some good opportunities to demonstrate a range of level 3 skills. Some candidates found it quite demanding but overall performance was encouraging. The focus of the paper was on database and spreadsheet skills and included the ability to import and position a graphic and to produce selected printouts. The number of entries was similar to the January test series and the percentage pass rate was also comparable.

Task A

The majority of the candidates successfully imported the data and most were able to set the primary key. A surprising number had difficulty in setting to currency or to two decimal places.

A wide range of validation rules were entered but many were incorrect; marks continue to be lost because of minor errors when entering the text message. Only a few had difficulty in fully displaying the table design.

Some candidates are still not able to produce a report with the required records whilst others found the addition of the 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

Nearly all the candidates attempted this task with the majority being able to import the data correctly and to format as required. On the whole candidates successfully imported and positioned the graphic although a small number used an alternative image. The majority of candidates formatted all the necessary columns as currency but, when sorting, many sorted on one column only. Many candidates had successfully hidden columns but the lack of column letters and row numbers meant that marks were lost.

The production of the formulas was, on the whole, well done. Some candidates were unable to use an absolute cell reference but were still able to produce an effective formula; the lack of an absolute cell reference, however, meant that marks were lost for replication.

Replication to alternate cells was well done by most. Candidates should ensure that they enter the formula for a total so that an empty row is not included.

The majority of the candidates were able to produce a printout of the selected range required although some failed to include row and column headings with gridlines.

Task C

Some candidates lost marks because their files did 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. Centres are reminded that, during an exam, candidates should not have access to other files.

Recommendations to centres

Ensure that candidates are able to set data types and can generate a fully displayed printout of the table design

Candidates need more practice in setting up a validation

Further practice is needed in selecting the correct records when producing a report

Candidates should be familiar with grouping and sorting

Centres need to ensure that students are familiar with all types of formulas required at Level 3

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.