

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

The paper had a high percentage of level 3 skills across all the tasks, making it a challenging paper. The focus of the paper was on database and spreadsheet skills.

Entries for the test were a little lower than in the same series last year, but the percentage pass rate was comparable to similar tests, if not slightly higher.

**Task A**

The majority of candidates produced a printout of the table structure, although in some instances there was no evidence of the data itself actually being imported. Those candidates who imported the data successfully usually had the correct field names, although a few had included an ID field. Some candidates had Field 1, Field 2 etc. Most candidates were able to set the MedForm field to logical.

The correct validation rule caused problems for quite a number of candidates; some did not use 'AND' and some produced the correct rule but as a text string.

In the main quite a number of candidates were able to produce a report using some of the selection criteria. Some had the correct records; others had produced records as a result of an incomplete or incorrect query and this meant that some marks were lost. One of the main issues in the task was the inability to display the information fully; others found the addition of a correct title or the report footer to be a problem. Where grouping and sorting had been attempted it was generally done. Some were only able to sort; sorting in ascending and descending order now appears to be less of an issue. The majority of outcomes showed the graphic imported and placed correctly.

**Task B**

A substantial number 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 2 decimal points.

Some candidates did not produce a formula printout although it appeared that they had generated results. This was costly in terms of marks. Many found the generation of the main formula quite difficult, producing either a single IF formula or an incorrect formula. However, many were able to use an 'OR' in some form or produced an alternative formula, for example using a nested IF statement. Some candidates understood the principle but did not use an absolute cell reference which invariably impacted on their ability to replicate the formulas.

Using a filter to generate the correct rows was well done on the whole. Some had used slightly different criteria but still gained some marks. Many lost marks because they had not included the row and column headings and some had not used an automated process. Whilst a number of candidates successfully hid the required columns, a significant proportion of candidates did not print the required cell range and many did not include row and column headers.

## **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.

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 need to be able to import fields correctly

Practice is needed on validation rules using AND

Further practice is needed in entering the required criteria when producing a report

Candidates need to be able to display all fields in a report fully

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

Candidates need to be able to hide columns

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

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.

Chief Examiner  
July 2008