**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied
January 2011**

**Applied Information and
Communication Technology**

IT01

**(Specification
8751/8753/8756/8757/8759)**

Unit 1: ICT and Society

Report on the Examination

Unit 1: ICT and Society (IT01)

Centres new to the unit should also refer to Reports on the Examination for previous series.

General comments

It was very apparent that all centres had prepared their candidates well for the examination and some excellent work was seen. The standard of responses to the task was generally high, with many candidates presenting their work extremely well and gaining high marks for their work.

The task this series seemed to have been much more accessible to candidates with the result that the overall marks achieved were higher than in many previous series.

A significant number of candidates submitted excessive numbers of repetitive screenshots most of which did not contribute to the marks given. A short set of well selected screenshots with suitable commentary generally gains more marks than reams of poorly explained pages. Candidates are advised to consider how best to spend their time during the Controlled Conditions in order to maximise their marks.

Candidates should only include work that is required for items (a) to (o) in the Candidate Booklet. Multiple copies of questionnaires should not be included, as a single completed copy and a summary of responses show what research or testing has taken place.

Most candidates submitted their work in the order of the tasks in the Candidate Booklet and numbered all pages consecutively as required. The candidate's name, examination number and centre number should also be put on every page. The majority of work was submitted as requested, securely bound using treasury tags. If A3 pages are submitted these must be secured in such a way that they are able to be opened easily so that the whole page is clearly visible when turned.

In this series the quality of written communication was assessed for the first time in item (k). Candidates who showed a thorough understanding of the issues involved, addressed their points clearly to the audience and presented their work appropriately gained high marks. Work that was illegible in the printed version gained few marks. This was often due to the choice of font style, colour combinations or poor print quality. Some candidates had identified that their work was illegible in hard copy and had amended the printed copy so that it could be read. It was possible to give these candidates appropriate credit.

It was a concern that some evaluations commented that candidates had not used the web design software before and spent the first few hours familiarising themselves with it. These candidates were obviously disadvantaged and centres are strongly advised to ensure that their students are familiar with the software to be used before controlled conditions sessions commence.

Centres are reminded that all scripts should have a Candidate Record Form securely attached, signed by both candidate and supervisor. The examination scripts should be accompanied by the Attendance List, Centre Declaration Sheets and Record of Controlled Conditions.

The task

Candidates were asked to produce a set of web pages to inform newspaper readers of how charities use ICT to raise awareness and obtain donations and to support groups and individuals across the world. The newspaper also wanted candidates to illustrate how ICT has changed the ways in which people can support charities and any risks involved for them. The newspaper also wanted a section that explained the relevance of the Data Protection Act to charities.

Tasks carried out during Investigation Time

Items (a) and (n)
Almost all students gained three marks in this section. A few failed to gain the third mark because their monitoring did not explain the reasons for making changes to the plan.

Item (b)
Many candidates presented a significant volume of research with little explanation of the target audience and so gained little credit for all this effort. Those candidates who described their audience well and discussed the impact of the audience's characteristics and/or requirements on content and layout gained maximum marks.

Candidates who gained high marks asked and answered questions such as:
- Who might read my webpage/newsletter?
- What do I know about them?
- How can I find out? e.g. sample of a questionnaire
- What other web pages/newsletters may appeal to the same audience and why?
- What are the needs of my audience in terms of layout and content?

Item (c)
There was clear evidence that many students did not have an understanding of what is meant by evaluation criteria. Instead of posing questions that could be used to assess the effectiveness of the pages created in fulfilling their purpose and satisfying the audience, many candidates produced 'to do' lists or commentaries.

Those candidates that listed evaluation criteria clearly related to the scenario and suitable for assessing appropriateness for audience and purpose gained full marks.

Item (d)
Most students gained three marks in this section by showing that they had used a range of sources and by following the guidance for writing a bibliography in the Candidates' Booklet. Candidates should be encouraged to use both online and offline resources.

Item (e)
Those candidates who produced sketches that were well annotated, and included notes about their suitability for the audience gained three marks. A few candidates achieved only one mark for providing simple designs that only labelled text and image areas.

Item (f)
The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate that they had tested their designs on members of the target audience and had then drawn conclusions from their testing, thus gaining both available marks.

Item (g)
Some very good clear designs were seen, with excellent annotation. However many candidates did not include all measurements and properties for the range of features that would be used, and so did not gain high marks. A very few candidates showed exactly how all the pages were to be laid out and explained all the features. These candidates gained full marks.

Item (h)
Most candidates provided clear screen shots showing all the files of textual material and image files necessary to complete the examination tasks, as required. Screenshots that show only folders of image files or text files are not sufficient to gain the available mark.

Item (i)
Those candidates who carefully chose the screenshots provided were able to clearly point out the range of features used and explain most of them in the context of the web pages. They were then able to relate the facilities used to the audience, thus gaining high marks. Fewer candidates achieved the sixth mark as their explanation did not show sufficient understanding of fitness for purpose.

Item (j)
The majority of candidates were able to show how their work was composed and were able to cross reference all their text and images to their research files. These candidates were awarded five marks. Very few candidates were able to demonstrate clearly the development of their work, for the sixth mark.

Item (k)
In this series the assessment of this item also included the quality of written communication in the pages produced. The quality of written communication assesses the candidate's ability to use correct, clear, English with good spelling and punctuation, as well as presenting the work in a way that is fit for the purpose and intended audience. This was assessed over the whole content and layout of the web pages. In addition, the candidate's understanding of the issues posed by the task was assessed in this item.

The full range of marks was seen with over half the candidates getting more than half marks.

Work varied widely in the quality of written communication and understanding of the issues included in the task. To score high marks candidates needed to demonstrate a good understanding of the issues, use good English with appropriate vocabulary to explain their points and present their work appropriately for the target audience.

It was evident that most candidates had researched the topic well and clearly understood the role of ICT in raising awareness of, and obtaining donations for, charities. A good range of examples were seen including using charities' own web sites, social networking and support through other companies' sites, desktop publishing for leaflets and newsletters, email, text messages and the use of ICT in creating TV advertisements. Various methods of on-line payments were also considered. Several candidates also addressed the risks involved in making payments online and hosting websites.

Many candidates were also able to explain the implications of the Data Protection Act for charities.

Fewer candidates were able to explain how ICT has changed the ways in which people can support charities, but some excellent explanations were seen by those who did.

Similarly, only a few candidates described appropriate ways in which ICT can be used to support groups and individuals across the world. These students described some interesting examples such as a database of victims of the Haitian earthquake, online counselling and project management programs.

Item (l)
The standard of evaluations was high and most candidates scored at least two of the three marks available. These candidates evaluated their set of pages as a whole, also relating each page to both the purpose and the audience. They also explicitly referred to their original evaluation criteria.

Item (m)
Nearly all candidates were able to evaluate their own performance and described how they overcame problems. Only a few referred back to item (j) in order to illustrate how these problems were overcome, as required in the brief. Therefore the majority of candidates only gained one mark for this Item.

Item (n) - see (a) and (n) above

Item (o)
Most candidates produced screenshots of their files in Controlled Conditions, but many did not make it clear which files contained their research material, instead annotating their finished documents. What is required to gain the mark available is to show any additions or amendments made to the list of their research text and image files. If none was made then a screenshot with a statement to that effect was sufficient to gain the mark.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results statistics page of the AQA Website.