

Examiner's Report

January 2010

GCE

GCE Applied ICT 6953 Paper 01

The Knowledge Worker

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Overall Comments

Important information

This specification has been updated and ALL candidates will be assessed on the updated version from SUMMER 2010. This version which has a blue cover and has been sent out to centres, many centres have attended the free inset sessions.

Examined Units

It was clear from the candidates' answers that centres are using past papers to prepare candidates for the examination. This is good practice, however the candidates still need to look carefully at the question or task set, there are variations from one series to another, and candidates need to be prepared to carry out tasks from any area of the unit specification.

Unit 3 - The Knowledge Worker(6953)

General

In general most candidates attempted the paper in a logical fashion, showing evidence of good preparation. There is still, however, too much reliance on the similarity of the papers between one exam series and another. In this paper once again there were some marginal differences in what was required from one or two of the questions and although these were fairly simple and number of candidates answered the question in the way required in previous papers, thereby losing marks needlessly. It should be emphasised to the candidate that reading the paper and understanding what is required is a necessary action if good marks are to be achieved.

Activity 1

As usual this question was generally well answered however, many candidates repeated exactly the information contained in the initial paragraphs from the scenario while giving the current situation less prominence which gave them few marks. Frequently candidates failed to indicate that the project they were concerned with was the egg protection programme. The sex of the turtles was dependant on the average temperature of the nest, candidates often missed out the 'average', which again lost the opportunity of gaining a mark. The 'Threshold line' was included by the majority although not all stated that below this line the hatched turtles were males and above it females.

When stating the decisions to be made all but a few stated the number of nests to be moved, the second mark for indicating over the next 5 years was achieved by fewer candidates.

When describing a good solution a number of candidates discussed the accuracy of the data rather than focusing on the desired outcomes for the turtles.

Many candidates stated assumptions for the last part, as for previous exams, rather than focussing on solutions. Those who did so usually managed one mark, but poor wording often prevented them from getting more. Most failed to see long term good of turtles as a good solution.

Several students gave answers more in line with activity 2 here.

Activity 2

This was less well done than in the previous, with few candidates managing even half of the 15 marks available.

Only a few candidates were able to imply the relationship between the numbers of nests below the threshold against the high water mark and state why it was needed by the model. Candidates frequently mentioned that the inaccuracies were due to students taking the measurements rather than focussing on the errors to the measurements. The majority stated their chosen data file although sometimes the justification was quite weak.

In discussing the external factors that could affect accuracy some included quite lengthy discussions on data measurement rather than actual external factors.

However, a high proportion of candidates were able to gain one or two marks from the Line_exam.txt section although reasons why the data could be inaccurate were often poorly explained.

Many candidates managed a mark for global/climate change somewhere in the activity. Many were pre-occupied with the weather but didn't expand enough to get a mark.

Activity 3

The majority of candidates successfully worked through the spreadsheet exercises, achieving high marks; although some failed to produce printouts with gridlines, row numbers and column headers, which reduced their overall mark for this activity. A very small number produced screenshots which failed to gain the candidates any marks for worksheet printouts. Candidates should be reminded that if they do not supply what is asked for in the examination they are unlikely to get many marks.

Importing Data- the majority of candidates scored well on this section.

Threshold - usually completed successfully; a few used displayed data rather than the formulae and in some cases the formulae were not completely visible.

Back Numbers - usually this worksheet was displayed with the correct formulae although again some candidates failed to completely display the formulae; often rows 2-5 were displayed rather than the sated 1- 5

Summary - A common error was entering the correct formula in cell B8 to read the correct high water measurement. Few were able to enter an appropriate formula to calculate the percentage increase in surviving adult turtles for 2010 to 2011. Many had no idea of how to calculate a simple percentage increase. Several students used the wrong cells rows 14 and 15 instead of rows 4 and 5.

Many candidates appeared unfamiliar with setting the required conditional formatting although most were able to use the model to produce projections for the turtles.

Activity 4

Candidates are still poorly prepared for this section, the majority of reports lacked structure and cohesion and generally were not written as reports, many using a memo format. Charts/Graphs where they were included had either poorly labelled axes or had no relevance to the report.

The most obvious weakness with this activity is that many candidates still do not use a report format/structure for their recommendations - very few include a suitable title or sub-headings, but the main reason for not gaining the report structure mark, when otherwise presenting a reasonably structured activity, was the failure to include a date. Sub headings are still inconsistent or non-existent.

Most candidates used a screenshot to show at least some of their proposed solution and identified equal male/female numbers as the reason for making this recommendation. Only a minority managed to include an overall increase in turtle numbers.

A large number of candidates included graphs, which were generally more appropriate and better labelled than for previous sessions, though only a small minority managed to get both the marks available on this occasion.. Sometimes the candidate relied on graphs alone to provide the information for the 3 decisions, however, this was less successful as they failed to provide sufficient labelling or detail to allow actual figures to be read, and so were not able to access the marks.

Many candidates were successful at identifying some other factors to be taken into consideration without necessarily providing a solution..

There were, once again, a great many examples of very poor grammar and inappropriate use of language.

Few high marks were seen on this occasion, a typical score being 4/5 or less, with only a minority managing 7/8 and above

Activity 5

Very poorly completed, with the majority of candidates saying how well the model performed and providing inappropriate recommendations for improvement.

Once again, this activity was weak with very few candidates gaining more than a couple of marks. Many candidates did not attempt this activity, or made no comments that gained marks.

Some did manage to say enough about arriving at a solution, or ease of use, and a few suggested some data, such as information on the number of eggs in a nest, that might be useful to the model. Few convincing improvements to the model were noted this time.

Too many commented on their own performance and not the model.

Administration

There are still plenty of instances of scripts not being assembled correctly, including examples where all, or most, candidates from a centre assembled their folders incorrectly. The main problem is still that to the printouts being attached incorrectly to the coversheet. There were fewer examples of printouts being presented in the incorrect order or without headers and footers.

All printouts should be attached to the cover sheet via a **single** treasury tag to the hole available in the top left corner of the inside of the cover sheet as shown in the instructions. There should be no need to punch extra holes in the cover sheet and the treasury tag should be passed through the cover sheet and the printouts only once. The instructions are clear and the examiners would be grateful if centres could remind candidates to do this.

Grade Boundary January 2010

6953	Total	A	B	C	D	E
Raw Mark	90	64	56	48	40	32
UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40

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