

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2011

Applied GCE

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Information and Communication
Technology (6953)

Paper 01 - The Knowledge Worker

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General Comments

In general most candidates attempted the paper in a logical fashion, showing evidence of good preparation. Candidates seemed to be well prepared and were able to access all of the paper.

Overall Comments

As seen in previous sessions, candidates within the same centre often produced work of a similar standard and, again, those who did poorly tended to have problems with activity 3.

Many candidates produced work with very poor spelling and grammar. This was particularly evident for the report where quality of written communication is tested. Most candidates attempted all questions and in general there did not appear to be any evidence to suggest that students did not have enough time to complete Activities 4 or 5 as most scripts were complete.

Activity 1

Most candidates scored well on the first part of this activity. Maximum marks for this section was not an unusual occurrence. There was sometimes a lack of attention to detail for example not specifying hours for timings and missing out the £ sign. Although good marks were achieved a lot of irrelevant detail was included such as how Michelle got to set up Lyonair. Although candidates do not lose any marks for introducing irrelevant detail this does waste time and some way of discouraging excessive detail may well be introduced in future examinations.

The second section, part (b), saw most candidates getting at least 1 mark. Most got 'set a ticket price' and it was not unusual to read 'set ticket prices for all routes' in one sentence to get both marks.

Several candidates created their own 'section c' adding in assumptions they were making. This clear evidence of teachers using past papers and the PE report in a prescriptive way.

Activity 2

This activity still presents difficulties for many candidates despite the clarity of the question. Part of the problem may have arisen when the candidates were faced with a third data set. However, they have been taught to expect this.

In the first section many candidates made comments relating to the reliability of the information rather than the reputation of the source. Most candidates made a good choice of data, but often failed to justify their decision.

The second section was not answered as well as it should have been, with many candidates misinterpreting the question. Most candidates wrote about the problems of data collection which was not what the question was asking.

The third section was better answered. Many students gaining maximum marks as they garnered the information for the spreadsheet.

Activity 3

In this activity, there was much more evidence of the tasks being accessed well and very clear evidence of pre-preparation and tutoring. There were numerous examples of whole centres with all candidates giving similar answers to all sections. Some of these were thrown by the minor difference between the practice model and the live exam one.

Candidates handled the concept of absolute addressing much better than in previous years showing a much better spreadsheet skill set, although some students still used the SUM function inappropriately.

When converting 'flight profit' to 'weekly profit' many candidates correctly used an IF statement. Most candidates got the IF statement correct, but some of those that did not used M8*7 for all flights. This would not only lose the mark for a working formula, but also meant the candidate would not be able to access many marks for a solution. A good percentage did manage to unmerge the cells to get be able to print the correct columns although many failed to make sure the label was in the cell printed.

Most candidates did get a solution to gain one mark but a lot had made errors earlier with formulae so missed out on a number of easy marks, as getting the model to show a reasonable profit was not taxing. There was the bizarre situation of a large number of candidates not printing this page so losing at least 8 marks.

Activity 4

Fro activity 4 candidates were asked to produce a report for the management of Lyonair. Many candidates struggled with the demand of the activity and were not able to produce a sensible layout for the report. There was also still too much evidence of memos and letters. This is probably a leftover from previous examination series and shows an over-reliance on past papers. Candidates are still not using sub-headings as well as they should do to improve the layout.

Most candidates did state ticket prices, but too often the word 'about' was used.

Still too many candidates explained what they did rather than what the figures show Lyonair and how that would inform a decision.

Candidates tended to be MB1 or MB3. Those who did get a good hold on this activity did very well with some good ideas about factors that could affect the profitability.

The graph / charts were not always well addressed. Many did produce a graph, but as with previous series' the axes were not always appropriate nor was some of the evidence.

Many candidates had used solver and this showed on the title of the graph.

Activity 5

As in past series candidates found this activity difficult, but it was encouraging to see pockets (generally centre-wide) of good practice. There were a lot of simplistic comments that showed no understanding. Too many gave 'rote' responses about "it was easy to enter the numbers...". Centres need to encourage candidates to evaluate and practice this important exam skill. The majority of students did get the ease of use marks, although these were tried and tested comments from past series.

Comments for improvement still tended to focus on the cosmetics, rather than the model, but there were some valid comments made about paying off the loan or linking fuel prices directly to a website to update them constantly. Too many candidates, though, merely stated their idea, but failed to evaluate why this would improve the model or how they would do it.

Overall, there was much more prose than in previous years indicating candidates are better prepared and are using their time better.

There is evidence that some centres do little in this section and focus more on the others.

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