



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2012**

ICT

INFO3

(Specification 2520)

Unit 3: The Use of ICT in the Digital World

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Schools and colleges are reminded to read this report in conjunction with the published mark scheme, which includes example answers, and the section in the Specification where the performance of candidates at grade A and E is described.

The examination consisted of two parts: Section A - structured questions based on pre-release material; and Section B - questions requiring extended answers. Schools and colleges are reminded that all students should be familiar with the pre-release material supplied to them prior to the examination. This is emphasised, as comments in some scripts suggested that students had not seen the pre-release prior to the examination. This could explain the significant differences between the marks gained for Section A compared with Section B; higher marks in Section A suggested that the pre-release had been studied in depth, whilst higher marks in Section B suggested this essential preparation had not taken place.

SECTION A

Question 1(a)

Whilst students found this to be a straightforward question, with more than two thirds getting three marks or above, some answers were not in the context of ICT and others made references to tasks more suited to operational level staff.

Question 1(b)

This question was not well answered, with few students achieving marks in the top band and only a third achieving six marks or above. A significant number of students confused the technology life cycle with the systems development life cycle. Although some students were able to discuss the technology life cycle, they seemed unable to relate this to Eurotradeon and use of leading edge technology.

Question 2

This question was answered well. Most students described some aspects of outsourcing and cloud computing, and around two thirds of students achieved more than half of the marks available. There was, however, some misunderstanding of what was meant by “service provision”. Also, many considered cloud computing to be only suitable for data storage.

Question 3

Students fell into two groups: those who had studied the Directive and could describe the main features, and those who just imagined the likely content. The former group impressed the examiners with comprehensive answers that demonstrated a detailed knowledge and complete understanding of the issues surrounding implementation of the Directive. The latter group frequently wrote about Data Protection and Sale of Goods issues, using comments such as “customer confidentiality must be protected” and “goods must be as described”; these are valid concerns when purchasing online but do not form part of the EC regulations and gained no marks. Approximately a third of all students gained no marks for this question.

Question 4(a)

Most candidates answered this question well, recommending online training methods or CBT, and three quarters gained three marks or more. There were some excellent justifications, with students discussing the relevance of their recommended training method by making valid comparisons with inappropriate methods.

Question 4(b)

Students responded well to this question and provided a variety of suitable training methods. Many related their answers to the pre-release by describing particular people or types of jobs where training was required, with some students achieving maximum marks before the end of their answer.

Question 4(c)

Most students suggested that a help desk be used as a support method and around half gained the full three marks available. Some students answered this question in the context of training, rather than support, and gained no marks.

SECTION B

Question 5(a)(i)

Linear development methodology was clearly understood by some students, although some concentrated on describing the advantages and disadvantages of a linear approach, rather than giving the requested explanation.

Question 5(a)(ii)

Few candidates achieved high marks for this question, with many repeating the answer given for 5(a)(i) or rewriting the stem of the question.

Question 5(b)

Many students had difficulty explaining how an iterative method is used, or confused iterative methods with linear methods. Many students answered this question in the context of linear, rather than iterative, methodologies. A significant number did not attempt this question.

Question 6

Most students achieved high marks in this question. Students failed to gain marks by giving one word answers that were not actions or where the intended meaning was ambiguous. Some students used the same action twice, despite the clear warning in the question stem.

Question 7(a)

Although there was some confusion between strategy and systems, students generally gained high marks for this question.

Question 7(b)

This was poorly answered, with few students understanding the link between ICT provision and business goals.

Question 8

Many essays were in the good mark range, with only a small proportion reaching the high mark range. This may have been because very few students approached the question from an organisational viewpoint and discussed issues from an individual's perspective. Some of the "emerging" technology quoted was many years old, although most students covered social and environmental issues.

This question was attempted by most students and most appeared to have sufficient time to complete the essay.

The quality of written communication was slightly better than that in past examinations, although there is still room for improvement. Students should be encouraged to practise their handwriting skills, as these appeared to degenerate towards the end of the essays. A few essays were well planned, with paragraphs carefully linked, although these were the exception rather than the rule.

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