



General Certificate of Education

Applied Information and Communication Technology 8751, 8753, 8756 & 8759

IT03 Data Handling

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

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Unit 3: Data Handling (IT03)

AO1 assesses the practical aspects of the solution, in particular whether the software used has been utilised to produce an appropriate solution for the client. The wording of some rows on the Marking Grid is very similar to some of those in AO3. However, AO1 is concerned with the practical aspects of creating the solution, whilst AO3 is concerned with the design of the solution and consideration of the inputs, processing and output required to ensure that they meet client requirements.

Some candidates showed that they understood what the client was expecting the data handling solution to do and how the solution would meet the client's needs. The better candidates described the processing and outputs well by, for example, listing the data items that would be included on an invoice and the format that it would be produced in. Weaker candidates provided lists of the queries to be produced but only described them in general terms.

A substantial number of candidates provided evidence that their data structures, data types and formats had been specified and implemented correctly, with the appropriate explanations and gained high marks for this. Some, though, had not accurately specified these prior to implementation and in some cases they were incorrectly implemented. In particular, a number of candidates had specified or created data structures that were not truly relational, showing only 1:1 relationships or relationships between incorrect fields. Solutions which only contain tables related by 1:1 relationships are not appropriate. Candidates should provide a 'data dictionary'; some form of entity relationship diagram; show the tables at the implementation stage and show the relationships that have been created between tables. Candidates who did provide all of these things generally scored higher marks than those who did not.

As well as specifying their data structures candidates should design the processing that will take place and the outputs that result. Many candidates only showed the results of processing and query by example grids, or report design views. To gain full marks the queries and reports that will be produced, or forms based on queries, should be designed to show what processing will take place.

It was clear that many candidates understood and could implement measures to ensure the validity of data inputs, also explaining why this was necessary. It was also clear that the majority of candidates did not understand how to ensure that the data being input was correct. Of those candidates who did provide evidence that they had implemented appropriate measures to ensure correctness of data inputs, many had suggested that they would instruct the user to check data against the original source, or put instructions to that effect on data input screens. Many candidates confused the validity and correctness of data inputs.

Although some candidates were able to gain high marks on many rows by explaining what they had done in terms of how it met the client needs, these were a minority. This was often because the needs of the client had not been well described originally.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.