



General Certificate of Education

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

IT15 Supporting ICT Users

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2008 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX
Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

Unit 15: Supporting ICT Users (IT15)

Principal Moderator's report

The unit is based on setting up and running a user support service for an identified group of users. Also required is a system for recording the problems, a user guide to accessing the support service and a help sheet for commonly used software or hardware problem, for instance "How to create pivot tables in MS Excel".

Many candidates produced excellent work for this unit, their portfolios providing copious evidence of some effective user support services, some within their own establishment, some at other educational establishments and a few in real situations outside their schools or colleges.

Unfortunately, many other candidates did not complete the portfolio in the logical way – some failed to do any real practical work at all. Some used a set of centre-given problems and used the current school/college logging system to record them. Some did not provide a useful way to record ICT problems at all.

A01 – Providing User Support service - Practical work

Row 1 – Many candidates had recorded a good range of problems that covered the required types, gaining 1 or 2 marks quite easily. For the 3rd mark, there had to be evidence of feedback being given to the users and some did have this evidence, either as a tear-off slip on their forms, or as emails.

Many problems were trivial, as were the solutions offered. This is not providing a good service and does not show the competence of the support person; hence the requirement for a mixture of simple and complex problems.

Row 2 – Many candidates had recorded requests for software installation or un-installation, or a request that meant both had to be done, plus some sort of software setting request, to gain 1 or 2 marks. The third mark again depended on feedback being evident.

Row 3 – If the problems were solved, then most gained 1 or 2 marks, but many candidates failed to provide a separate written explanation, so failed to get the 3rd mark.

Row 4 – Many candidates had used good clear recording systems to record the problems and solutions, gaining 1 or 2 marks. Problems passed on to more expert help were sometimes identified, with no explanation as to why, although some did explain the reason and gained the 3rd mark on the row. Some recording systems had a mechanism for organising the problems, such as by category, a problem ID or a date/time, so that like problems could be easily picked out. Only a few stronger candidates produced evidence that this could actually take place, so only these few gained the 4th mark.

Row 5 – The majority of candidates gained a mark for their help sheet. Most got some feedback from a selection of users and produced a better version for the 2nd mark.

Row 6 – To gain both marks for this row, candidates should have recorded details of the steps they took to work safely with computer equipment when providing the user support service – many did not do this. A witness statement can be used to confirm that a candidate has worked safely.

AO2 – User aspects

Row 1 – Most candidates scored on this row with brief or full descriptions of the potential users of their proposed service

Row 2 – Most candidates scored 1 mark on this row for a brief description of user's roles. Better descriptions scored 2 marks.

Row 3 – Many candidates described the current support service very briefly, or failed to do so at all; others only described their proposed service and only a few said how the proposed service would improve the provision currently in place.

AO3 – Planning & Designing a User support service

Row 1 – Many candidates failed to write up any investigation of the current service, and so could not be awarded any marks on this row. Those that had, and who had then written about their planned new provision, got 2 or 3 marks. If they had checked those plans back with the users of the current service and amended the plans, they would have been able to gain 4 or 5 marks.

Row 2 – Some candidates produced designs for a problem recording system that were partly workable, used them for a few problems and then, after some user feedback, refined the designs until they were satisfied that the problem recording system covered all aspects required. This is sufficient to gain the full 4 marks on this row.

Row 3 – Most candidates produced a workable guide to the user support service, gaining up to 4 marks. Few wrote about and justified the design in terms of the needs of the service users. Many did not produce a guide to the support service, but a user guide to using a PC or items of software.

Where the support service was to be accessed via an on-line form, then it was correct to show how to find the form and how to fill it in. Some candidates chose to produce the guide as a poster, which gained them marks on the next row, but failed to provide all the necessary information required for the guide, which should contain trouble-shooting ideas to common problems. These candidates did not gain the full marks available.

Row 4 – The format of the guide is the medium through which it would be distributed to the potential users of the service, rather than which font and what size and colour text would be used.

A04 – Evaluation

Row 1 – Most candidates scored at least 1 mark. Some candidates, in this and many other rows in AO4, concentrated on the system they had produced, rather than the service they had offered, and so gained fewer marks.

Row 2 – many candidates did not provide time estimates (in hours) for each of the tasks listed in their action plans and so gained only 1 mark on this row.

Row 3 – Witness statements, matching the candidate's planned milestone dates with actual dates achieved, would be a useful way of supporting the evidence that the candidate has provided. Some candidates did not provide good evidence that they had met deadlines.

Row 4 – Many candidates scored 1 or 2 marks on this row by asking for comments about their help sheet and user guide. The higher marks would be gained by also having feedback on all

aspects of their service – on the method of contact; on the efficiency of the service provided, response times, effective problem resolution, keeping the problem loggers informed and so on.

Row 5 – Most candidates scored only 1 or 2 marks on this row, failing to include any sort of test plan for their service.

Row 6 – Many candidates failed to score here, because they concentrated on their problem recording system rather than the user support service. Only a few candidates were able to critically evaluate their solution, by using the results of testing and user feedback, to score the higher marks.

Row 7 – There were many ways to show communication skills in this unit: the help sheet, the user guide, the write-up of problems and feedback to users. Most candidates scored 2 or 3 marks, but many portfolios were not put together in a logical way, which made them difficult to follow.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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